

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

Department of Mission Studies



**MISSIONARY METHODOLOGY
IN SOUTHERN SUDAN
1955-1999**

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

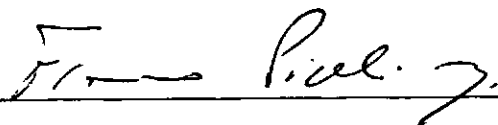
I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflections. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed 

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Date: February, 7th, 2001.

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed 

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Date: February, 7th, 2001.

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Paul Idra, mccj

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I became interested to write about missionary methodology in Southern Sudan in these past years of my theological studies here in Tangaza College. The mission studies gave me ground to tackle this research work. The Comboni missionaries working in Southern Sudan annually attend their general assembly here in Nairobi due to the instability of the place and usually I have the opportunity to attend. Their sharing in the assemblies moved me personally and I questioned myself of the methodology they applied in this difficult moment.

One particular thing that caught my attention was in the general assembly of 2000 when they were reflecting on how people should not look at them as one of the many Non Governmental Organisations working in Southern Sudan. Indeed, there is a danger here because the missionaries are also involved in human promotion and in this situation of war, the people can easily look at the foreign missionaries as providers of food, clothing and so on. On the other hand the missionaries can easily forget the proclamation of the Gospel.

In the first chapter, I have dealt with the geography and the history of the country of The Sudan. Here I considered the political situation, the ethnic groups, the religious affiliations and the actual standard of living in Southern Sudan. These give us somehow a clear picture of what is happening really in Southern Sudan.

In the second chapter, I looked at the Missionaries who have been working there. These missionaries are mainly the Comboni missionaries, the Mill Hill missionaries, the Society of Jesus and the Salesians of Don Bosco. There are other missionaries certainly working in Southern Sudan, but I limited myself to the main Catholic Missionaries working there.

In chapter three of this research work, I dealt with the missionary activities and methodologies being followed so far in Southern Sudan. It is not what they failed to do or

what they are supposed to do. Here I dealt with the proclamation of the Gospel, human promotion, language study, formation of agents of evangelisation and Catechemenate.

In the last chapter I considered the theological reflection and I gave practical suggestions of Church activities and methodologies based on the reflections of the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference.

In this research work I did not limit myself to 1955-1999 but I went backward to some past years to trace the earlier missionary activities and methodologies to give meanings and basis to missionary activities and methodologies from 1955-1999.

CHAPTER ONE: SOCIAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with a social analysis of the situation of Southern Sudan from 1955 to 1999. We will present the political background of the country and explain how the people of Southern Sudan are organised in regards to ethnic groupings and religious affiliation. This chapter will also show us briefly the present standard of living in the situation of war. Since, there are many things to take into consideration, I will obviously have to omit certain materials in order to present a concise picture of my subject matters.

1.1 GEOGRAPHY AND ETHNIC GROUPS

1.1.1 GEOGRAPHY

Sudan is the largest country in Africa occupying about one million square miles. Sudan is also one of the first African countries to reach independence on 1st Jan. 1956. Khartoum occupies the position of the capital city. Sudan is surrounded by nine countries: Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. Arabs and arabised races inhabit the Northern part of the country, most are Muslims. The South on the other hand is populated by Africans. Most of whom are pagans and Christians.

The name Sudan is an Arabic word, "Bilad al Sudan", meaning the land of the Blacks. "With this name the Arabs intended to designate that African region inhabited by blacks by people of lighter complexion. The area never had clearly defined boundaries. At

first it meant the area south of the Sahara Desert, East of the Senegal region, and West of Ethiopia."¹

1.1.2 ETHNIC GROUPS

Sudan has over 500 ethnic groups. The ethnic groups in Southern Sudan consist mainly of nomads and farmers. "The people of Southern Sudan have been categorized into Sudanic, Nilo-Hamites and Nilotes. The Sudanic tribes occupy western Bahr el Ghazal, western Equatoria and the Nimule area of Eastern Equatoria. They are agriculturalists in terms of traditional occupation. The largest tribe in this ethnic category are the Azande.

The Nilo-Hamitic tribes, according to tradition migrated from the East. The Nilo-Hamites are divided into agriculturalists and pastoralists. The pastoralists are, among others, the Latuka, Mundari, Toposa, Murle, and Didinga; the agriculturalists are the Bari speaking tribes, Bari, kakwa, Kuku, Mundari, Pajulu and Nyambwara. The Nilo-Hamitic tribes are generally egalitarians. Fellow tribesmen are expected to defend their tribe and pay respect to the elders and accept the authority of the rain chief.

The Nilotes mainly occupy the swampland of Southern Sudan. They are cattle owners and in terms of complexion, they are amongst the blackest people in the world with shining and hairless bodies. Moreover, they are amongst the tallest people in Africa. They are compared only to the Tutsi tribe of Rwanda and Burundi whose average height reaches about 71 inches. The Nilotes may have come to their present homeland from the North following the White Nile by formidable alien foes. Other Nilotic tribes, especially the Dinka, Nuer, Shiluk, strongly believed that they are natives of the Nile Basin."²

It is very important to mention that the pastoralists are the largest ethnic groups in Southern Sudan. "The nomadic Dinka are by far the largest ethnic groups with three

¹ Giuseppe Caramazza, Verona Fathers and the Catechumenate, (Chicago: 1989), 4.

² Akol Rual Deng D., The Politics of the Two Sudans, the South and the North 1821-1969, (Sweden: 1994), 16.

million members.”³ The nomadic Dinka move from one end of the country to another, grazing their animals. They depend totally on their animals for their living.

1.2 HISTORY

1.2.1 POLITICAL SITUATION

Sudan is one of the countries in Africa that has been in a difficult situation experiencing a civil war for over forty years. Before she received her independence from the hand of the Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1956, there was already evidence of disunity. The history of this war goes back to the colonial era when the administration of the country was divided in two separate sections. There was even, a rule that nobody from the north could go to the south without a permit. Northern traders were forced to leave the south, the Arabic language was not to be used and even Arabic dress was not to be worn in the south. The policy changed after World War II because of Britain's interest in the Suez Canal, and the pressure exerted by elite groups from Northern Sudan. Britain gave in to the pressure and suddenly in 1946 united the two parts of Sudan. This unity is an imposed unity, it has no basis and therefore, the northerners and the southerners find it difficult to coexist. The Muslims in the north insist that they must apply their values on the whole of Sudan. They insist that Sharia Law (Islamic law) and the Arabic language must be applied to the political and social structures of the country. Naturally, this has received much opposition from the Southerners.

“On 16 August 1955, the parliament unanously voted to speed up independence. Tensions degenerated into open revolt on the 18th of August 1955. The Equatorial Corps were ordered to lay down their arms by the government, they refused and started the killing, joined by the civilians in the uprising. Two hundred and sixty one Northerners and seventy-five Southerners were killed. Because of the British mediation, the rebels’

³ John Baur, 2000 Years of Christianity in Africa, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1994), 397.

commander, Renaldo Lolya surrendered. Unhappily, the repression, which followed, was often bloody and cruel. Even the schools were closed in all Southern Sudan and the whole year was lost. Some of the mutineers fled and vanished in the bush with their weapons. It was the beginning of the civil war."⁴

The Southern Sudanese felt betrayed by the Condominium rule as it favoured the Northerners and urged the South to remain united in what they termed the new state of Sudan. This is the main reason for the first seventeen years of civil war in Southern Sudan, which was started by the Torit Mutiny.

"On the 1st Jan.1956, Sudan became an independent republic. The primary political parties were from the North and the South was left out even though it had a Southern party advocating either separation or at least political confederation. In such a confederation, the three provinces of the South would have equal footing with the six Northern provinces. But the provisional government from the north was not ready to compromise the unity of the country."⁵

In 1958, General Ibrahim Aboud made himself chief of state with a single programme for the whole country introducing Arabic, and a single religion, which was to islamise the whole country. "Foreign missionaries were pressured to leave the Sudan and many Christians were killed by the Sudanese army. In July 1965, many people ran to the neighbouring countries as refugees."⁶

The war in the south was becoming complex. The foreign powers intervened in the Sudanese internal problems. Egypt and Russia were helping the government and on the other hand Israel was helping the Southern freedom fighters. In 27th Feb. 1972, an Addis Ababa agreement was signed which seemed to bring an end to Southern problems, but in fact, "The Addis Ababa agreement was only the beginning of a more difficult job; the

⁴Miguel A. Ayuso Guixot, and Gino Barsella, Faith in Sudan, No. 4, Struggling to Be Heard. The Christian Voice in Independent Sudan 1956- 1996, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1998), 18.

⁵ Tschuy, Theo., OP, Ethnic Conflict and Religion Challenge to the Churches. (Geneva, Wcc 1997). 34.

⁶ Ibid.,35.

promotion of economic and social development in the South and the strengthening of the bond of unity in the Sudan.”⁷

Despite the difficulties ahead the Addis Ababa agreement did bring the “Anyanya 1” war to an end and temporarily the Southern Sudanese tasted at least what they called a short period of peace. However, this agreement did not solve the problems of Southern Sudan. “ The implementation of this agreement was not easy because of the disastrous economic and human situation in the South and the difficulties of bringing the war situation under control. In 1973, the UN High Commissioner for refugees announced a programme for the repatriation of a hundred and eighty thousand Southern refugees from the neighbouring countries in the South.”⁸

Another war waged by the SPLA against the Khartoum government broke out in 1983 and it still continues today. The causes for this present war can be attributed to the fact that the ruling administration was always insisting that Sudan has to be monolithic and the monolithic situation has to be based on Islam and Arabism. The Southerners have rejected this approach since they are Christians and they have other values, which they think should be reflected in the social and political set up of the nation. This second phase of civil war in the Sudan started in 1983, the regime of Jaafar Nimeri divided the South into three states with their capital in Juba, Wau and Malakal. His administration insisted that the people from these respective places should go to develop their areas of origin. To make matters worst, he also introduced Islamic Law, also known as the "September Law" in Sudan and this according to the government was to be applied to the whole country. The southerners felt uneasy with this and in that same year, they took up arms against the government of Khartoum. "It is quite clear to say that the war between the Muslim in the Northern part of Sudan and the Christian and the traditionalists in the Southern part of Sudan is due to the will of the North to make the whole Sudan an Islamic state against the

⁷ Ayuso, *Struggling*, p.47.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

wishes of the Southerners. In this last period of war, the Khartoum government is trying to Islamise and arabize the South by force. However, "Religion is not the only factor in the Sudanese war. This was clearly seen when the government forces divested the Nuba Mountains, an area with a Muslim majority, which had rebelled for economic reasons. Moreover, the discovery of oil in Bentiu in Southern Sudan in 1978 became an additional incentive for the government to maintain the region within Sudan and for Southerners to keep fighting for the full separation."⁹

In 1989, Lt. General Omer Hassan el Bashir came to power in a bloodless coup. Omer Hassan el Bashir and his national revolutionary command council aimed at fostering good relationships and unity with the Arab countries. As a result, they based their ruling ideology on Islamic teachings. This obliged them to rule the country through Islamic law (Sharia). On the other hand, Lt. General Omer el Bashir and his Islamic Fundamentalists are still instigating an excessive war in Southern Sudan. They were also using "Sharia" as a tool to unite the Northern Sudanese with the Southern Sudanese. "For Muslims Fundamentalists, the war in the south is clearly a crusade, a religious war. It is presented as such without the least nuance; by Muslim preachers in Khartoum and Juba as well as by fund-raisers on behalf of the crusade throughout the Sudan and by recruiters of Muslim fighters (Mujahadiin) to participate in the holy war (Jihad) in the South. In Juba, the Southerners fear the Mujahadiin like the plague."¹⁰ Indeed, the Mujahadiin are fighting hand in hand with the government army in the South.

In August 1991 SPLA split into two factions. The main stream of SPLA was still under John Garang and commander Rick Machar led the other group. Commander Rick Machar is a Nuer from Western Upper Nile. He was of the opinion of separating South Sudan from Northern Sudan which is oppose to John Garang ideology of unity and a secularised Sudan.

⁹ Tschuy. T. O.P. Cit P.37.

¹⁰ Amecea Documentation Service No.379, (23/1992).

This split created ethnic differences between the two largest ethnic groups of Southern Sudan. In actual fact, it resulted into an internal war between these tribes. However, these are not the only divisions in the movement, there are other small divisions too (Didinga against Dinka, Dinka against Dinka and Nuer against Nuer).

“ The death toll of this second war has already reached 1.5 million. Moreover, the war is costing the government more than a million dollars a day, while it has to face inflations at a rate of 300 percents as it happened in 1995 and 1996.”¹¹

Since independence from British rule, the people of Southern Sudan have never had a chance to live in peace. A generation has already been lost in this never-ending conflict between the North and the South.

1.3 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

The people of Southern Sudan are mainly Christians and the followers of traditional Religions. However, the influence of Islam is very high. The policy of the successive governments in Khartoum is to Islamise Southern Sudan, whom they believe block the penetration and the expansion of Islam into the interior of Africa.

The history of religious affiliations in the Southern Sudan goes back to the British colonisation of Sudan and their influence in the Southern part of the country. The British administration divided Southern Sudan into a Protestant zone and Catholic zone. This was not in fact something new to the British because they had a policy of " divide and rule". The river Nile is the dividing line of these territories, which became known as the Eastern bank and the Western bank. Initially Catholics and Protestants were to work in their own zones. However, "in regard to the "sphere zone" a compromise was reached with the Protestants, particularly the Anglicans: Catholics were first allowed to open a procure in Juba, which was on the Western side of the Nile and therefore, a prohibited zone to them;

¹¹ Tschuy, T., O.P Cit P.38

then, in 1935, in a meeting sponsored by the governor, the fathers from Rejaf were allowed to visit the Catholics in the Western zone, even as far as Yei area."¹² Though Eastern Bank was under Catholics influence, the Africa Inland Church was present.

" In Eastern Equatoria, the Africa Inland mission, which had taken over the stagnant CMS work in 1949, had only a few hundred members. However, AIM had moved rapidly towards self-government. The first pastor of the Africa Inland Church Andrea Vuni Walle, was ordained in June 1956.

The Sudan Interior Mission had entered Sudan in 1937, when their missionaries were forced to leave Ethiopia following the Italian Invasion. Like the Africa Inland Mission in Eastern Equatoria, they were in Upper Nile and Blue Nile provinces for a relatively brief time and saw little response for the labours."¹³

There was a very clear sign of rivalry as one examines the history of religious affiliation at the very beginning of the missionary influence in the Southern Sudan. This might be due to the sphere of influence. The Protestants however, even tried to force the British administration to expel Catholics from Sudan or at least from some parts of Sudan. "CMS, since the early 1940s, especially through the missionary leadership in this matter of Bishop Gelsthorpe, had been developing a long national pastorate. Alongside the growing body of evangelists, lay readers and women's workers, who essentially ran the one word of churches and spreading centres throughout Western Equatoria, the heartland of the Episcopal Church."¹⁴

Before the missionaries came to Southern Sudan, the people were already religious because they followed their own religious affiliation. They were engaged in African traditional religions. This, however, does not mean that now the people of Southern Sudan do not follow traditional religions. It is important to note that even today the ties of the

¹² V. Dellagiacoma, History of the Catholic Church in Southern Sudan 1900-1995, (Khartoum, 1998),43.

¹³ Roland Werner, William Anderson and Andrew Wheeler, Faith in Sudan, No. 10, Day of Devastation, Day of Contentment. The History of the Sudanese Church across 2000 Years. (Nairobi, Pauline Publication Africa, 2000), 395.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 395.

people with the traditional religions are so high that even some of those who have become Christians in one way or another practice traditional religions. Just to mention one example. The veneration of the ancestors is very important in most of the ethnic groups as it is in other parts of Africa. Though the people become Christians, they do not forget their union with the ancestors and the living dead. Therefore, it is not a surprise that sacrifices to the unknown gods and spirits still continue. These practices are usually evident when misfortunes hit a household, or village, also in time starvation, out break of disease or other misfortunes. Usually when there are misfortunes of this kind people question themselves, "why only me and no another person?"

1.4 STANDARD OF LIVING

The long raging civil war in Southern Sudan greatly affected the standard of living, causing a dramatic decline. South Sudan is reduced to a very big global village. There is lack of developed infrastructure especially in the rebel control areas.

The dictatorial regime of Khartoum is carrying out successive bombing of the civilian targets in the Southern Sudan making the living conditions difficult. Because of this since 1983, thousands of Southern Sudanese fled to the neighbouring countries.

"At the moment, civilians in Southern Sudan are being bombarded by government forces. Many people in Southern Sudan are refugees within their own country. Others have left Sudan and are living in Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Zaire. In the refugee camps, it is possible to see thousands of graves because the food and medical assistance being granted did not reach the refugees in time. Thousands of children and old people are presently dying of cold, disease or hunger. During my last visit to Uganda was on 26th January this year. I found thousands of refugees in transit camps dying from thirst, or diarrhoea caused by dirty water. Inside Sudan we also found the same situation in camps set up for internally displaced people. In one area, there were 20,000 displaced

people and 16,000 Toposa cattle; all are drinking from one spring. The people drink once every 24 hours while the cattle drink every 48 hours.”¹⁵

Millions of Southern Sudanese have been displaced and are living in precarious conditions in camps either in neighbouring countries or in the desert of Khartoum.

“This civil war in the Sudan has assumed savage, fratricidal and genocidal dimensions for the last (16) years. We came to know that it has claimed almost 2 million lives, most of them innocent civilians. It has caused the displacement of our 4 million persons, many of whom are refugees within our region. Furthermore, the prolonged instabilities of the Sudan have affected the neighbouring countries.”¹⁶

Beside the deaths caused by the civil war, famine has also become a common feature of life in various part of Southern Sudan causing the deaths of thousands of people. In the recent years, Bahr el Ghazal is the most affected area in the South. One of the root causes of the famine is the long drought that hit Southern Sudan in recent years.

Medical assistance has proven extremely difficult for many Southern Sudanese, especially in areas that are not reached by the numerous Non-governmental relief organizations operating in the Sudan. However, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the disaster relief program inaugurated in April 1989 under the auspices of the United Nations and funded in large part by the United State, was a unique response to the terrible situation of Southern Sudan.

“Camitato Collaborazione Medica (CCM), an Italian Non-Governmental organization has been working in Southern Sudan since 1983 mainly on health development projects. The Camitato Collaborazione Medica (CCM) was formed in Turin, Italy, in 1968 with the purpose of promoting international Aid by the assistance of civil volunteers to health programs.

¹⁵ Amecea Documentation Service, No.411, (4/1994): 2.

¹⁶ Amecea Documentation Service, No. 505, (5/1999):1.

Working closely with the world health organization, UNICEF, EEC and other Aid agencies, CCM intends to promote, besides the development of curative medicine, the implementation of primary health care and expanded programs of immunization.

Through the tireless and well calculated effort made by CCM's East Africa project co-ordinator, Roberto Bronzino, thousands of the needy population in South Sudan now have hope for life and reason to smile."¹⁷

In 1994, when the Archbishop of Canterbury visited Southern Sudan he had this to say, "In South Sudan, I was brought face to face with the fundamental issues of life and death, isolation and deprivation, hunger and pain. I have seen harrowing sights; people have begged me for help, for peace, for food, for an ambulance, for a hospital, training for teachers, but above all to notice them. They feel forgotten. They will always remain in my heart."¹⁸

Education is lacking in most parts of Southern Sudan. In the major towns of Southern Sudan still Khartoum government, Juba, Wau and Malakal schools are operating but the standard of the schools are affected dramatically due the poor living conditions of the people. Teachers are unpaid in most cases for some months as a result they even stop teaching. In the rebel-controlled areas, education is still at its cradle stage with thousands of children without education. This raises serious questions for the future of Southern Sudan especially in terms of economic and social development.

One of the most painful things in Southern Sudan despite the tragedy of the civil war is the long standing presence of slavery. It is good to recall here the history of its existence in Southern Sudan. "Slavery has existed in Sudan for thousands of years and was never more widely practiced than in the nineteenth century. Efforts against the slave trade were made during the era of Khedive Ismail (1863-1879); when the slave-trading areas of Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal were added to the territory of Sudan. The most effective

¹⁷ New People Feature Service No. 22, (1st January 1994), 4.

¹⁸ Amecea Documentation Service No. 411, (4/1994), 4.

anti-slavers of the period were the two successive English administrators of Sudan, Samuel Baker and Charles Gordon. Daniel Comboni will also be remembered for his untiring fighting against slavery in the Sudan. The Mahdist Revolution (1881-1885) began in Kordofan and was supported by Arab Sudanese for religious and political reasons, but also because they stood to benefit from an Arab government that would allow the slave-trade to continue unharassed. After the British, under Kitchener, conquered Sudan in 1898, the slave trade was finally ended by closing off the south of Sudan to the Arabs of the North. Not surprisingly, when the British left Sudan in 1956, the Southerners immediately revolted from the northern-dominated government.

Since the current civil war started in 1983, thousands of black Sudanese from the Nuba Mountains and from the Bahr el Ghazal region have been taken into slavery. The precise number is not known, but human rights groups speak in the range of four thousand to tens of thousands. The slaves captured in the war are often sold in slave markets in the south and in the western Sudan. There are many reports however, that some slaves are taken out of the country and sold in hidden slave markets in Libya, Chad, Mauritania, and the nations of the Persian Gulf. Wherever they end up, Sudanese slaves are used for the most menial labour often literally the biblical "hewers of wood and drawers of water."¹⁹ Slavery has been going on secretly in different forms for a long time. However, since the war started it surfaced and is carried out openly. "In 1987, two professors in the university of Khartoum wrote a book on slavery where they documented evidence of Dinka children being taken from their homes and sold in Western Sudan and Khartoum. There were cases of a child being sold at S/ 10. As long as the war continues and the government continues to recruit and arm militias, the problem of slavery will not be easily solved."²⁰

¹⁹ Michael Parker, *Faith in Sudan*, No. 4., *Children of the Sun: Stories of the Christian Journey in Sudan*. (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2000), 36.

²⁰ *New People Feature*, No. 1, (1992): 6.

CHAPTER TWO: CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

INTRODUCTION

In late 1999 and early 2000 the three main Christian Churches in Sudan celebrated their centenary of the modern establishment of their Churches in the Sudan. Pioneer missionaries of the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian traditions all arrived in Khartoum within a few weeks of each other. It was indeed a poignant gathering, but all three, most notably the Catholics have been shaped and inspired by a much longer history, reaching back into the middle of the previous century.

In this chapter, I shall dwell on the brief history of the Catholic missionaries in the Southern Sudan from 1955 to 1999. The Catholic missionaries who were working in this part of the country were mainly the two congregations of the Comboni Missionaries, the Mill Hill Missionaries and the Society of Jesus.

2.1 THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES

The Comboni Missionaries have a very long history in the Sudan. In the year 2000, they celebrated the centenary of their presence in the Sudan. This joyful moment reminded the Comboni missionaries and the Sudanese at large of the long and painful history of the first missionaries who came to Sudan. At that time the Southern Sudan like the interior of African was unknown to the Western world. However, the river Nile provided the gateway to further discoveries by both explorers and missionaries.

The history of the Catholic Church in Sudan cannot be narrated without mentioning the Comboni Missionaries. By the Comboni Missionaries, I mean these two institutes of the Comboni missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, consisting of fathers and brothers and the institute of the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

The history of the Comboni missionaries goes back to Daniel Comboni himself, the founder of the institute, who first came to Sudan in 1858 as a young priest of Don Mazza institute. He stayed in a place called Holy Cross in Southern Sudan. When he went back, he kept thinking of Central Africa and he proclaimed, "Africa or Death."

Daniel Comboni came, worked, suffered and died in Sudan. Here he got the inspiration for his prophetic plan to save Africa through Africa. It was through his encounter with the reality of Central Africa, and Sudan in particular that he founded his own institutes to evangelise this poorest and most abandoned part of the world.

The Comboni Missionaries, who, following in the footsteps of their founder Daniel Comboni, are committed to the evangelisation of the poorest and most abandoned. They opened their first missions in Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal, among the Dinka and Shilluk respectively. It seemed the missionary works was primarily directed to Southern Sudan because of some difficulties in relating to the Sudanese government. "Bishop Roveggio thought of using Khartoum as a base of evangelising Southern Sudan. He came down to the South together with some missionaries and opened the first mission in Lul, among the Shilluk on March 1901. However, he did not stay long, he died in Berber on 2 May 1902. He was succeeded by Franz Geyer as the Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa. He continued with the work of evangelisation of Southern Sudan. He established missions in Kayongo, Mbili and Tonga in 1904."²¹ These were the first missions established in Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile regions.

"The Comboni Missionaries have had a continuous presence in the evangelising field in Southern Sudan, though the political and social events did not allow a continuous and progressive work of evangelisation among the Sudanese. In 1995, after alternative phases, the Comboni Missionaries' presence became juridically a Delegation with its headquarter in Nairobi and the confreres working in the "Liberated Areas" of Southern

²¹ Wheeler, *Devastation*, p. 217.

Sudan. Presently, the Comboni Missionaries are present in the Diocese of Malakal (Nyal and Eastern Upper Nile); in the Diocese of Rumbek (Anangrial, Maial Lou and Mapuordit); in the Diocese of Torit (Kocoa and Narus) and in the Diocese of Yei (Lomin/Kajo keji).²² On the other hand, the Comboni Missionaries of Khartoum province are also working in some towns in Southern Sudan. They have three communities in the South: Wau, Raja and Malakal. Though these towns are in Southern Sudan, they are under the control of the Khartoum government. Thus, preventing them from coming under the jurisdiction of the Comboni Missionaries of South Sudan Delegation.

2.2 THE MILL HILL MISSIONARIES

The Mill Hill missionaries began working in the Prefecture of Malakal mainly among the Shilluk, however, the work of evangelisation was difficult especially during the first world war. They replaced the Comboni missionaries who were by then known as the Verona Fathers. When they replaced the Comboni missionaries, they continued with the same work. "The Mill Hill Fathers were the first English Catholic Missionary Society. However, because of the extent of the British Empire, they were in demand in many places. They included British and Dutch missionaries in their number. They agreed to take over the four mission stations in Upper Nile and the new mission was placed under Monsignor Hant. Education and other mission activities struggled under the Mill Hill Fathers as it had under the Verona Fathers (Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus). They did, however, attracted more vocations to the priesthood. One of those was Pius Yukwan, who became the first Shilluk Catholic priest, and eventually a Bishop in Upper Nile."²³

²² Directory of Evangelisation of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, (1998): 6

²³ Wheeler, Devastation, p. 299.

The British authorities asked the Mill Hill missionaries to replace the Comboni Missionaries in the Upper Nile region because they were worried about their territory in the Eastern Sudan due to Italian invasion of Ethiopia. "Events in the 1930s made it increasingly difficult for the Italian Missionaries in Sudan. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 made the British authorities anxious about the security of their Eastern border with Ethiopia. In Europe, war became increasingly likely, with Britain being threatened by the alliance of Germany and Italy. So when the Italians expelled almost all the Protestant missionaries from Ethiopia in 1937, there was a strong desire both to take revenge for this action and to protect Eastern Sudan from the possible security threat posed by the presence of Italian missionaries not far from the border. There was a lot of anxiety about the Italian missionaries far west in Bahr el Ghazal or further South on the Bahr el Jebel. So the removal of the outspoken Bishop Zambonardi was demanded, and the withdrawal of the Italian Comboni Missionaries from Upper Nile and their replacement by the Mill Hill Fathers."²⁴

When the Comboni missionaries of the Heart of Jesus were sent away from the Prefecture of Malakal, the Comboni Sisters continued to work there and are still present. However, the Mill Hill Missionaries faced a lot of difficulties in their missions in Upper Nile when they replaced the Comboni Missionaries. This was not only because the Shilluk were difficult people to deal with and had little interest in education or the Christian religion but also because they had little resources to run the missions and they were even very few in number. "The Mill Hill mission had very limited resources in terms of money and personal to deploy in Upper Nile, and by the time they were expelled in 1964 the Prefecture of Malakal was in a state of decline. In a letter written to the general chapter of the mission in 1963, which caused angry responses, Fr. Versluys complained of the long

²⁴ Ibid., 301.

history of neglect, as he saw it, of the Malakal Prefecture. He complained of lack of money, resources and vision."²⁵

The expulsion of the missionaries from Southern Sudan in 1964 made things difficult in the Prefecture as it was in the other parts of Southern Sudan. The work of evangelisation came to stand still leading to a great sense of discouragement.

2.3 THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

The Society of Jesus are still working in Sudan. They are mainly involved in teaching in the major seminary. Due to political instability, the national major seminary is now based in Khartoum instead of Juba in Southern Sudan. However, the Jesuits are also currently running a secondary school in Wau.

2.4 THE SALESIANS OF THE DON BOSCO

The Salesians of Don Bosco are working in Wau diocese, in Wau town and Rumbek diocese, they are also in Tonj. They are involved both in pastoral field and youth ministry.

²⁵ Ibid., 300.

CHAPTER THREE: MISSIONARY

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses in a particular way on the missionary activities and methodologies in Southern Sudan. However, we will not limit ourselves only to the year 1955-1999, but we will also examine earlier missionary activities in order to gain a clearer understanding of the missionary activities of 1955-1999.

We will mention some of the difficulties faced by the missionaries in those years in carrying out their activities especially during the military regime of Abdud 1958-1964. The missionary activities referred to are the proclamation of the gospel, human promotion, language study, formation of the agents of evangelisation and catechumenate.

In this chapter, we will only deal with what missionaries have done so far in Southern Sudan and not what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do them. In using the term missionaries we are referring to both catholic and Protestant missionaries.

3.1 PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

"The Synod recalls that to evangelise is to proclaim by word and witness of life the Good News of Jesus Christ, crucified, died and risen, the way, the truth, and the life. To Africa, which is menaced on all sides by outbreaks of hatred and violence, by conflicts and wars, evangelisers must proclaim the hope of life routed in the Paschal Mystery."²⁶

Proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ has been and still is the fundamental objective of evangelisation in Southern Sudan. However, the long lasting civil war, hatred and violence in this part of the country has greatly hindered the proclamation

²⁶ John Paul II, *The Church In Africa*. No. 57, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1995).

of the Good News. In many parts of Southern Sudan, the missionaries are still involved with first evangelisation and this they do through their own witness of life. In some places, it is even the first time the people have seen a priest or hear about the Good News of Jesus Christ. The African Synod reminds us that, "the first proclamation ought to bring about this overwhelming and exhilarating experience of Jesus Christ who calls each one to follow him in an adventure of faith. This task is made all the easier because the African believes in God the creator from his traditional life and religion and thus also open to the full and definitive revelation of God in Jesus Christ, God with us, Word made flesh. Jesus, the Good News, is God who saves the African...from oppression and slavery"²⁷

One may raise a question of what happened with the work of evangelisation as history tells that around 1900 or even before that the missionaries had already entered Southern Sudan?

The work of evangelisation has been rather a difficult task especially due to the civil war. In addition to this, some tribes of Southern Sudan including the major tribes are cattle owners and hence, adopt a nomadic lifestyle. As with many nomadic tribes, missionary activities prove to be very difficult and a slow process. We have heard testimonies from the missionaries working for instance among the Pökot, Turkana, Massai in Kenya, Karimonjong in Uganda and Dinka, Nuer and Toposa in Southern Sudan. These tribes and many others depend primarily on their animals for everything. "At first the language seemed difficult to learn, but even more difficult were the Toposa themselves, even if they looked simple, open and jovial. They were difficult in their attitude toward religion, not because of any hidden hostility, but because they thought it superfluous. In fact, they were completely absorbed in their cattle, which they followed into the bush and savannah from morning till evening, even sleeping in the open with them. The cattle, especially the cows, were everything to them; meat, milk, blood; a dowry in exchange for a wife or wives; and

²⁷ Ibid. No.43.

symbol of power. It was quite understandable, that they exalted their cattle with dances and songs.

The boys, who normally shepherded cattle and other animals had to leave them when they came to the mission for school and catechumenate; and for that reason, their parents or elder brothers complained and often spent many patient hours in trying to persuade them to return home to their work."²⁸

Apart from the difficulties of entering into the mentality and attitudes of cattle owners, evangelisation in the Southern Sudan has also been rendered difficult by the successive governments of Khartoum. While the governments always gave the impression that they supported the freedom of religions, in actual fact, they limited the missionary activities in the South. In fact, it has been a clear policy of the government to promote the islamization and arabization of the South. "In February 1960, the government imposed Friday as a holiday and Sunday as a working day over the whole Sudan, with the provision for Christians to enable them to attend Sunday service. The move caused widespread and immediate protests and student demonstrations in the South. The government's reaction was extremely harsh. Three students from Rumbek secondary school and the Catholic priest Paulino Dogale, who typed a leaflet to encourage a boycott of lessons on Sundays were arrested and sentenced to prison."²⁹

The persecution of the Christians continues in the South with increasing pressure from the government. "A most severe blow to the Christian Missions was delivered on 15th May 1962 with "The Missionary Societies Act" designed to restrict the missions movement, to organise their relations with the state and to encourage the process of the Church Sudanization, it practically killed all possible missionary activity in the Sudan, as it required a written permission from the council of ministers for all new initiatives of any

²⁸Michele Rosato, *My Forty Years in Africa*, (Bologna: Editrice Missionaria Italiana, 1985), 8.

²⁹ Ayuso, *Struggling*, p.29.

importance. Though, according to the letter, it did not seem to be meant only for Christians, but also for non-Christians, and to be aimed mainly, if not exclusively, at foreign missionaries and designed to encourage the Sudanization of the Church personal, it had actually been planned already three years before to put an end to Christians missionaries' activities and had its roots in the islamization policy of the government."³⁰

The foreign missionaries and a few local ministers were accused of helping and collaborating with the revolutionaries who were fighting in the Southern Sudan. "Most of all the foreign missionaries were accused of having played a role in 1955 Mutiny; an accusation that had already been ruled out by the commission of inquiry that investigated on the disturbances. But they were accused of having played the dangerous role of implementing an agreement calling for a policy of separation. The government charged that missionaries had a heavy responsibility for the Southerners' secessionist movement. The missionaries always telescoped bygone slavery days and kept hammering that history will repeat itself. This is factually true: for many missionaries did. But this is not the whole truth. For the implementation was that all missionaries were enemies of the Arabs, and that they never ceased teaching about slavery. This is of course is very far from the truth. The major source of reminders concerning the Arab slave trade was at home, in the village, and from the older people. The reason why this old enmity flared into rebellion is due to the mistakes and injustice inflicted since 1953, and not any incessant reminders from missionaries. The missionaries never joined or co-operated with conspiracy, and in fact, the government could never give any proof of it."³¹

There were so many other things the foreign missionaries were accused of. This eventually led to the expulsion of the foreign missionaries from the Sudan in 1964. "According to the government statistics, at the time of the expulsion there were six hundred and seventeen Christian missionaries working in the Sudan: two hundred and

³⁰Ibid.,31.

³¹Ibid.,35.

eighty two (two hundred and thirty one Catholics and fifty one Protestants) working in the north and three hundred and thirty five (two hundred and seventy two Catholics and sixty three Protestant) working in the South. The two hundred and seventy two Catholics and twenty-eight Protestant, all working in the Southern Sudan, were expelled. Comboni Missionaries official statistics speak of two hundred and fourteen Catholics missionaries expelled: a substantial difference that shows the little concern of the Sudanese authorities on correctness of statements in the whole operation. However, by 8th March the expulsion of all missionaries was completed. On the same day, in Khartoum, the Catholic ordinaries wrote a letter to the minister of interior answering all the accusations and stating that the operation was not meant to punish criminals, but to suffocate the Church in Southern Sudan. The last big group of the missionaries left the Sudan on Sunday night, 8 March 1964.¹¹³²

Truly, this somehow became a reality. The Catholic Church suffered more than the Protestant Churches. "Faced with such a problem, the Protestant Churches generally, and the Anglican Church Missionary Society in particular, had less to fear. They had prepared their community to be more self-reliant and had prepared more local pastors. They had smaller numbers; they did not have more than a hundred thousand faithful. They also were on better terms with the authorities. Catholics had bigger numbers and a more complex organization; moreover it took longer to prepare Catholic priests. Catechist had become the real reference points of the Catholic communities and their local leaders. In fact, the most important consequence of the expulsion of the missionaries from Southern Sudan was that the nature of Christian organization was drastically changed. Local priests and pastors did their best: But a decisive role was played by catechists and other lay ministers. Sudanization had been achieved, and the martyrdom and the exile experience that would have made the Sudanese Church grow to maturity, was about to come. It started with the

³² Ibid.,33.

attacks on the seminaries (1965) and the ferociousness of the civil war, which touched especially the Catholic Church and forced almost all priests, religious and seminarians to flee to Uganda. There they survived, re-organized and prepared themselves for their return seven years later, when peace eventually came."³³

3.2 HUMAN PROMOTION

"Integral human development, the development of every person and the whole person, especially of the poorest and the most neglected in the community is at the very heart of evangelisation."³⁴

Human promotion cannot be separated from the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ especially in Southern Sudan, a place torn apart by civil war, hatred, and violence. In fact, "Between evangelisation and human advancement, development and liberation, there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelised is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment of love without promoting in justice and peace the true, authentic advancement of man?"³⁵

All the missionary' congregations present in Southern Sudan down through history were involved in one way or another in the promotion of human dignity; both the Catholic and protestant Churches are involved in this important field. These important fields include education, health centres, boreholes and promoting human dignity through justice

³³ Ibid., 34.

³⁴ John Paul II, *The Church in Africa*, No. 68.

³⁵ Ibid., 68.

and peace. Schools are the first priority these days since through them leaders could be formed for the near future. In the history of the Sudan, the missionaries are always the first to build schools and to start to educate the people.

However, this is a delicate area to deal with in our missionary methodology. If we are not careful in handling human promotion, we might end up promoting our own selves as missionaries. It is sometimes the case that people can mistake missionaries as a Non-Governmental Organization working with them rather than ministers who proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. It must be noted that while there should be no obstacle to human promotion, there should be a balance between human promotion and the proclamation of the Gospel. It is also highly possible that if lay people are trained properly, they would be far better than missionaries in dealing with this issue of human promotion.

The Comboni Missionaries following the footsteps of their founder are fully involved in this important field in different parts of the world. "Comboni lived and ministered in the 19th century which witnessed the rise of the Christian social teaching showing the awareness that evangelisation should bring about an integral transformation of society. Mission and evangelisation are not only for the foundation of Christian communities where Christ has never been announced but also for the liberation from whatever enslaves the human persons and tarnishes their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Daniel Comboni was aware of the danger of one-sided evangelism focused only promoting Church gears. He wanted a missionary activity which would enhance all dimensions constituting the human person: human, religious, social and so forth."³⁶

The Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus working in Southern Sudan wrote these in their directory concerning human promotion:

"1-We promote the development of the whole person since humanity is the call to live as children of God. Full human development is at the very core of evangelisation. By

³⁶ Ayuso, *Struggling*, p.71.

promoting it, we recognise human dignity and its rights: life, food, education, family life, work freedom...etc.

2-We try to avoid dependency and paternalism. We encourage, and promote self-reliance and income generating projects by working with people. We bring about self-awareness on the basis of self-support, commitment and accountability.

3-Education is a very important means to achieve full human development. We are encouraged to get involved in this field. Special attention should be given to the education of the girls."³⁷

3.3 LANGUAGE STUDY

Language study is very important for the missionaries. Without proper knowledge of the local languages, a missionary can do very little. It is one of the important ways of entering into the life style of the people, their cultures and customs. In some ethnic groups, one sometimes hears the local people complaining and saying that, "this particular missionary priest, brother or a sister is not interested in us because he\she refuses to learn our language," it is true. Missionaries should be open to learn the local languages where they are working to avoid prejudice towards the cultures and customs of the people they are serving.

In the past missionaries had few facilities to learn the local languages of the places they were sent. This is not only true in the case of Southern Sudan but also in many parts of the world where the missionaries were starting first evangelisation. There was an absence of textbooks and written materials to facilitate easy learning. It is very important to mention here that most of the first missionaries struggled by themselves to learn the local languages. We can find this especially from the writings of the founders of our missionary congregations and testimonies of some missionaries. It is also a blessing that some of the

³⁷ Comboni Missionaries, *Directory*, p. 13

missionaries were helped by their fellow missionaries who had been in a particular mission for a long period of time. Surely, they had learned the local languages and they were able to help the young missionaries to enter into the reality of the culture, custom and language. "I was extremely fortunate for Fr. Sisto Mazzoldi had actually founded that mission eleven years earlier. He loved the Toposa people very much and knew their language and customs. I could not have a better teacher. Because he was forced to stay in his room due to illness, many times during the day he would see me cross the veranda and call me saying, "come let us study a little Toposa language." Naturally from the language study, we passed on to the life in the mission and to the people."³⁸

Some people call the African languages "dialects," but most tribes have their own language different from the others. Missionaries were usually the first to transcribe these languages. They wrote the first grammars books and dictionaries. In the case of the Toposa, Fr. Sisto Mazzoldi and Fr. Lino Spagnato, who were the first missionaries, put the language in written form by publishing the first books. They started with a catechism for the Toposa people.

3.4 FORMATION OF THE LOCAL AGENTS OF EVANGELISATION

"Evangelisation needs agents. "For how are men to call upon him [the Lord] in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?"(Rom. 10: 14-15). The proclamation of the Gospel can be fully carried out only through the contribution of all believers at every level of the universal and local Church."³⁹

³⁸ Rosato Forty, p. 7.

³⁹ John Paul II. The Church in Africa, No. 88.

The missionaries took as their first priority to form agents of evangelisation. They started with the formation of the catechists though they were not sent to catechetical centres of today's standard, they were trained by the missionaries. The catechists also worked tirelessly in the proclamation of the Gospel. "These were local people whom the missionaries had trained to become teachers of the faith to their fellow people. The catechists were in charge of organising the catechumenate at all stages. In close collaboration with the fathers and sisters, they were the closest living example of what it meant to be a follower of Christ, to those who wanted to embrace the faith. The catechists used to teach religion in the primary school and visit the various villages whenever the missionaries would go on safari. They would gather the people in groups and assist the missionaries in the effort to introduce the novelty of the Gospel into the lives of the people. It was also an advantage that the catechists would know best the actual situation of the people whom the missionaries wanted to evangelise. Being very familiar with the people's cultural reality, they were the privileged instruments through whom the gospel could be transmitted in a language familiar to them."⁴⁰

Indeed, the importance of the catechists cannot be forgotten. In these present days, they continue to play an important role in the field of evangelisation. One of the outstanding catechists to be remembered is Baptist Mufigihi of Deim Zubeir and Placido, the father of Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir of Khartoum Archdiocese.

The Missionaries also opened minor seminaries and a junior secondary school in Okaru in 1928 and Bussere in 1933 respectively. This was to facilitate the easy work of evangelisation in the future. "In 1946, the seminarians of Bussere joined those of Okaru for a year, but the idea of having only one minor seminary for Sudan was soon abandoned and Bussere again received seminarians from Bahr el Ghazal, Mupoi and Malakal. The seminarians were attending the courses of the intermediate school, and had their own

⁴⁰ Andrew Wheeler, Announcing the Light. (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2000), 214.

residence and their own time-table and discipline. Until 1964, the students of the minor seminary had completed the four years' primary course and attended five years in the intermediate when they joined the major seminary. It is to be noted that the first secondary school in the South was opened in Rumbek in 1948. Until then the government had not allowed private schools at this level. Bussere intermediate, acknowledged and subsidized by the government represented at that time the highest academic school in the Southern Sudan."⁴¹

The missionaries were very interested promoting local vocations and "The first attempt to encourage priestly vocations was made by Fr. Bernabe' in the year 1920-1922. Two students expressed their desire to become priests, but they did not persevere. A second beginning is credited to Brother Bortolo Fabris, who often spoke of the priestly vocation with his workers. It was the year 1929. About the same time Fr. Manso took particular care of some intermediate students who showed some signs of vocation. Among them was Ireneo Wien Dud who later became a priest and a Bishop. In the year 1930 the apostolic delegate Msgr. Hinsley recommended a few candidates should receive some lessons of Latin at Mblili. The apostolic delegate then suggested that the seminary should be joined to the intermediate school."⁴²

Sudan has grown rapidly concerning the agents of evangelisation. "In 1974 the Holy See created the Local Hierarchy in the Sudan. One ecclesial province was established in the North, consisting of the Archdiocese of Khartoum and the suffragan diocese of El Obeid. The other was in the South, consisting of the Archdiocese of Juba and the suffragan diocese of Malakal, Rumbek, Tombura/Yambio and Wau. The *jus commissionis*, the responsibility for planting and administering the Church was taken away from the foreign missionary institutes and given to the local clergy. Sudanese Bishops were appointed for each diocese, thus recognising that the Church in the Sudan had grown to maturity. In

⁴¹ Dellagiacoma, *History*, p.72.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 71.

1976, the Sudan Episcopal Conference was finally organised as the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC), with the task of fostering the growth of the Church in the Sudan, in collaboration with all other ethnical, social and religious components of the country."⁴³ With the creation of the local hierarchy in the Sudan, the Sudanese Churches was becoming more Sudanese. The Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference had full responsibility over the Sudanese Church and they started carrying out the process of Sudanization of the Church. This also meant the formation of the Christian leaders. The Protestant Churches became Sudanese earlier than the Catholic Church. The Episcopal Church was entrusted to the Sudanese Bishops in 1974, when Bishops Allison retired."⁴⁴

3.5 CATECHUMENATE

In the directory of evangelisation of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus South Sudan delegation, it is written under Christian initiation:

"1-It is one of the first priorities of evangelisation. We put special attention to the catechesis of children and adults according to the directives of RCIA.

2-The aim of evangelisation is to bring the catechumens to a true conversion and a deep experience of Christ.

3-From the beginning, we should create in the catechumens and in the communities the awareness of missionary commitment: the one evangelised must become evangeliser. "See that in all pastoral centres where we are working, there needs to be a clear missionary dimension, both "ad intra", in regard to the local society and church, and "ad extra", right from the start of evangelisation." [Ca. 97,104.3]

⁴³ Ayuso, Struggling, p. 56.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

4-The running of catechesis for the children and catechumenate should not be the task of the parish priest and the catechists only, but of the Christian community which must be involved regarding the acceptance of the candidates, their training, etc."⁴⁵

This directory gives more a recent approach of Christian initiation and catechumenate. In the beginning of mission in the Southern Sudan, the missionaries adopted the "Pius X catechism". "Pius X catechism was very demanding and difficult to translate. It presented the foundational teaching of the Catholic Church and began with the traditional proofs that God exists, important no doubt, in Europe but not a matter of dispute in Africa. The catechism was a European doctrinal lesson. However, the way that the Kayango missionaries approached the catechism, through thorough discussion with the catechism class, led to better understanding on both sides. In particular it helped the missionaries to speak in an intelligible way to their African catechumens. But, like Angelo Vinco many years before, they were not yet hearing what Africans thought, and felt and feared. This was a problem for the Protestant missionaries as well."⁴⁶

Catechism class was also a great help for the Southern Sudanese. It was for them a way of knowing about God, but also it helped some to know how to write and read. "From the very beginning the catechumenate included other subjects besides religious instruction. Clearly, the first missionaries felt that they were not called to a mere preaching of the word but they were aware of their role in the integral promotion of the people. Indeed, the first reading and writing classes were inadequate as they formed the initial effort to reinforce their role as evangelisers of the whole person. The missionaries did not solely address the religious dimensions of the people but they tried to direct their attention to the diverse aspects of people's lives."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Comboni Missionaries, Directory, p. 9.

⁴⁶Wheeler, Devastation, p. 206.

⁴⁷ Caramazza, Catechumenate, p.108.

The local catechists carried out the task of instructing the catechumens. The catechists were generally from the area. They were people who had minimum knowledge of how to read and write. However, " they understand and have the duty of communicating to others that they are volunteers at the service of God and the Church, consequently the Church gives them the recompense of the apostle. i.e. that necessary for a modest life-style according to the life of the people."⁴⁸

In fertile areas, the catechists are self-sufficient. Apart from doing their activities as catechists, they also cultivate. On the other hand, the catechists are also highly respected by the people. They are the first to come into a closer encounter with the people. Therefore, generally, they know the people; they visit the people and the families. They also receive moral and material support from the people. "Thus the catechists received a salary that varied with the responsibilities. This salary was however insufficient to support the catechist and his family. As a result catechists were forced to work on the land or to perform other activities in order to support themselves. The missionaries who themselves were generally of poor means, tried their best to help those catechists who were in particular need, especially when a dowry had to be paid."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 103.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This is the last chapter of this research work and it deals with theological reflections and practical suggestions regarding missionary methodology in Southern Sudan. The theological reflection will be based on the previous chapters. On the same way, the practical suggestions are to complement the previous chapters especially the chapter about missionary methodology that is chapter three. Therefore, this chapter is not about what missionaries have done so far or what they are doing as it is explained in chapter three, rather what missionaries are suppose to do in war torn Southern Sudan. I still strongly feel that the missionaries working in Southern Sudan have still much to do especially with the threatening situation of war, violence and injustices of different kinds. This is not necessarily following the old missionary methodology being applied so far, but rather trying a new methodology while reading the signs of the time.

4.1 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Sudan has been in war and a difficult situation more than 40 years now. The civil war started actually before she could receive her independence from the hands of the Anglo-Egyptian administration on the 1st January 1956. Sudan experience a short period of so-called peace with the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement in 1972. However, in 1983, another civil war more serious than the previous one broke out again.

It is difficult to say when this war will come to an end and how the future of Southern Sudan will be. The Church suffers a lot in this situation and its suffering has a very long history. The worst blow was the 1964 expulsion of the foreign missionaries from Southern Sudan in particular and Sudan in general. It is quite clear that history is repeating

itself as the aim of the successive government of Khartoum is to islamise and arabise the Southern Sudan.

There seems to be really no hope for the future of Southern Sudan. Children are born in the civil war and they grow up in this war. What they know and experience is war, violence, tribalism, injustices of all kinds and all kinds of unbearable situations. Thousands and ten of thousand do not know what is peace. They do not know what is education or health care. The only thing they know very well is the noise of Russian made antenov. In these situations, many people are asking themselves, "Where is God?" Is God present in the history of Southern Sudan? Has he abandoned his people? If at all he is present in the history of Southern Sudan, why does he allow such evils to happen?

These have been and they are the cries of our people of Southern Sudan. But I think, despite these situations of war, violence and injustices of all kinds, God has not forgotten his people. He is present in their history. I would like to compare the history of Southern Sudanese with the history of the Israelites in Egypt under slavery and their journey to the Promised Land. The book of Exodus is the best Biblical book to reflect on in such situations.

The Israelites suffered ruthless treatment under Egyptian authority. They were oppressed and their human dignity violated, but God was with them. He liberated them from those terrible situations and led them through the desert to the Promised Land. What does this have to say to the Southern Sudanese in this present moment of their history?

4.2 PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

"In Africa, the need to apply the Gospel to the concrete life is felt strongly. How could one proclaim Christ on that immense continent while forgetting that it is one of the world's poorest regions? How could one fail to take into account the anguished history of a land where many nations are still in the grip of famine, war, radical and tribal tensions,

political instability and the violation of human rights? This is all a challenge to evangelisation."⁵⁰

Southern Sudan is not spared by the challenges put forward by the Special Assemble of the Synod Fathers. It seems as if the Synod Fathers addressed it particularly to the situation of Southern Sudan. The question that came to my mind immediately is how to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in this situation of war in Southern Sudan today? The situation is indeed very complex and difficult. The people have experienced the division caused by the present civil war, and by religious and social conflicts. I want to mention only some of the evils, which are the direct products of such war. The war has displaced millions of people and caused thousands of people to become refugees. Some of the evils brought by this present war are famine, paralysed economy, broken families, total breakdown of the educational system, lack of essential social services, hatred, a mentality of violence as a way to solve problems and claiming rights, less of traditional values, tribalism and to mention a few.

Women, children and the youth are those who suffer most from this situation. They are also those who are exposed to violence, theft, drugs, sexual abuse of all kinds. The Church in this situation found herself between the rebels and the Khartoum Government. The Khartoum Government from time to time looks at the Church, especially the Catholic Church as a friend and a supporter of Guerrillas in the Southern Sudan, hence an enemy of the Government. In such a complicated situation how are we as agents of evangelisation to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The missionaries are called to preach Jesus Christ, the crucified and the risen Lord but in a way that touches the lives, the problems and the deep questions of the people they are called to serve. These people who are physically, psychologically, morally and

⁵⁰ John Paul II, The Church In Africa, No. 51.

spiritually broken down need to the relevance of the Good News in their concrete loves. Our proclaiming of the gospel should make the people feel that Jesus is in their history.

The proclamation of the gospel should come from our own life experience and the experience of God. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter, "Redemptoris Missio" No 42 echoes Pope John Paul VI saying, "People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching and in life and action than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the 'witness' par excellence (Rev, 1:5, 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness. The Holy Spirit accompanies the Church along her way and associates her with the witness he gives to Christ (cf, Jn, 15:26-27)".⁵¹

Indeed, I think, the situation of Southern Sudan is inviting us missionaries that our proclaiming should also go hand in hand with the way we live. The Rule of life of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart Jesus No 46 puts emphasis on the encounter with God, it says, "The Missionary is called to witness and proclaim the Father's love which he experiences in personal communion with Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He therefore, centres his entire existence on his encounter with God, forming with his brothers a praying community." And in No 46.1, it continues, "The missionary acknowledges that he can do nothing without Christ who sends him, and that the spreading of the gospel is linked to prayer. Without it he would lack an irreplaceable inner power and soon his activity would be pervaded by a purely human outlook. Prayer is, in fact, his daily bread. Again somewhere it is said that, the missionary who does not have a strong sense of God and a living interest in his glory and welfare of souls, lacks the attitude necessary for his ministry and ends up in emptiness and unbearable isolation."⁵² Therefore, we missionaries have to make the above our principle of life.

⁵¹ John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, No. 42, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1991).

⁵² Pietro Chiocchetta, Daniel Comboni: Papers for the Evangelisation of Africa, (Bologna: Editrice Missionaria, 1992), 264.

In the pastoral letter of the Sudanese Catholic Bishops' conference: Vision, Mission and Values. (Mission Statement), the Bishops wish to adopt as their rule of life the Scripture text that Jesus applied to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." (Lk. 4:18-19) and they continue, " In keeping with the Mission Statement of Jesus we, Catholic Bishops of Sudan, make the following our pastoral priority:

- a) To proclaim the Good News of salvation with renewed vigour and zeal.
- b) To intensify our efforts for the on-going Christian and Spiritual formation of our people.
- c) To help our people better understand the real nature of the Church and of her role in Society.
- d) To defend and promote human dignity.
- e) To stand always for justice and truth.
- f) To educate and urge our faithful to practice peace and reconciliation.
- g) To live and promote dialogue rather than confrontation with those who act and think differently from us.
- h) To set up ministries that enables our people to work more effectively for their own integral human development.
- i) To support the poor and needy as they struggle to change and improve their condition of life.
- j) To co-operate with all people of good will in their effort to restore justice and bring peace to our country.

THESE ARE THE VALUES WE SHALL CULTIVATE WITH GOD'S HELP:

- a) Faith and Trust who is always present to us, and never denies us the grace we need in our life and our work.
- b) Hope in the power of Jesus' Resurrection; guarantee that we too will triumph over death and evil.

- c) Openness and docility to the Holy Spirit who inspires and strengthens us.
- d) Honesty and truth in all circumstances.
- e) Solidarity with the suffering and the needy.
- f) Compassion towards the suffering and the poor just as Jesus taught us.
- g) Co-operation with one another in the Spirit of Collegiality.
- h) Reconciliation in the situation of tension and conflict."⁵³

Indeed, these are very beautiful and important pastoral priorities and values put forward by the Catholic Bishops of Sudan. If they are implemented they will give a new reality and aspect of evangelisation in Sudan.

"Africans are community based people. They live in extended family, villages and towns unions, association and initiation, age group etc. Even in the local Churches there are all kinds of sodalities, societies and fraternities in which individuals interact with one another and they experience self-fulfilment. Breaking up local Churches into small basic communities of faith would, therefore, be an effective strategy for a deeper life of faith among the people."⁵⁴ Our people in Southern Sudan need to be reminded, that the Gospel values need to be created. The situation of war, violence and injustices of all kinds created new ways and mentalities of perceiving things. In fact, even the African values of sharing and hospitality are fading away. "I am because we are, we are because I am" is in fact disappearing. Our community needs to be strengthened and the best way according to me is to strengthen existing small Christian communities in our parishes. The Small Christian Communities help us not only to know their situations of sufferings, but also to interpret their situations in the light of faith. They should be trained and formed to analyse their social situations.

⁵³Comboni Missionaries, *Directory*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ B. Okolo Chukuwudum, "The African Synod: Hope for the Continent's ! liberation", (Amecea Gaba: Publication Spearhead, 1994), 71.

CONCLUSION

This research work though it has not been an easy work, really helped me to go back to my roots. I am now able to see clearly the political situation in Sudan in general and Southern Sudan in particular. Many people are saying the problem of Sudan is religious. The Southerners blame the Northerners for trying to islamise and arabise South. It is true, but today, I am also much convinced that the problem in Southern Sudan is not only religious, but also ethnic, especially in Southern Sudan. Today, Dinka are fighting against Dinka. Dinka against Didinga, Nuer against Nuer etc.

The missionary activities and methodology in Southern Sudan went through a transformation. In the past the methodology applied by the missionaries was sacramental in regard to proclamation of the Gospel but now they use the Small Christian Communities, of course sacraments remain at the center of the Gospel. In regard to human promotion, the methodology was much of dependence. The missions were to provide things to the Christians. They were building schools, health centers and material things. The present methodology focuses on the person. The missionaries having realized their past mistakes emphasize self reliance. However, this sometimes seems a bit difficult in the many parts of Southern Sudan due to the situation of war.

The pastoral priorities given by the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference are important to reflect and implement now with the present reality of Southern Sudan. I think, the pastoral priorities and values proposed by the Sudanese bishops if they are implemented, with God's help will give our people of Southern Sudan hope for the future.

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