

By God's perfect timing, when I flew into Southern Sudan, I arrived just in time for the inauguration of the new bishop for Lui diocese in Western Equatoria. The largest Protestant denomination in Sudan is the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS). Originally established by Church of England missionaries, the ECS remains Reformed and Evangelical, mercifully spared from the devastating cancer of liberalism that has eroded most of the Anglican community world wide.

Since the war began, most ECS bishops have been appointed and installed outside the country in neighbouring Kenya or Uganda. So this instalment of the new bishop was a most significant and important social event – because it took place inside Sudan, in the newly liberated areas east of the Yei river. By God's grace, in the cargo I was smuggling into Western Equatoria were thousands of copies of the new (650 page) Moru Hymn book, prayer book and catechism. In 1996 I had brought in the first Moru catechisms and in 1997 the Moru Hymn books and prayer books. Now more were needed, so instead of three separate books we chose to combine them into one thick hard-bound book – with all the new Moru hymns. When the Christians in Moruland saw the new books there was much rejoicing and excitement.

The Bishop's consecration service was the most strategic opportunity possible for the distribution of these new publications, because almost every Moru pastor was present for this historic event. They were each able to return to their congregation with these precious publications.

Two years before, I had stood in Lui shortly after it had been liberated from the Arabs. The devastated town was deserted, with no civilians living there at all. Amidst the trenches, fox holes and the debris of war Rev. Jefferies and I held a prayer meeting with the small platoon of SPLA soldiers stationed there. We praised God for the great work that had been pioneered by Dr. Kenneth Fraser who had first come to Lui in 1920. (Dr. Fraser had established the first hospital, the first school and the first church in Moruland.) I prayed that the Lord would again bring life out of death; that this town of Lui, the birthplace of Christianity in Moruland, would be restored; that the hospital would be repaired and again be used for the healing of bodies; that the school would again be rebuilt and used to renew minds and that the church – which the Muslims had destroyed – would be revived and would again be filled with people worshipping our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Two years later we could rejoice that all those prayers had been answered in a most wonderful way. The Kenneth Fraser Memorial Church was overflowing with over 3 000 people singing

praises to God. The school was again a vibrant place of learning. The hospital was fully operational providing the finest medical treatment available anywhere in Southern Sudan. The market place was full. Lui was bursting at it's seams with over 6 000 inhabitants.

The transformation of Lui from an occupied government garrison town to a liberated area full of vitality was dramatic. As an important and fast growing centre in New Sudan, Lui had also become a target for the NIF government's bombing campaign. The SPLA warned us that the government of Sudan (GOS) air force was going to bomb Lui on Sunday to disrupt the bishops' consecration service. There was serious talk about shortening the service, moving locations or even postponing the event, because of the fear of bombing. I strongly urged the leaders to go ahead with the planned service and not to allow the Muslims to cause us to give in to fear and be deviated.

As it turned out a rain storm erupted just as the service began! We all arrived in sunshine and departed in sunshine, but during the service heavy rain protected the church in Lui from any bombing raid that the NIF government forces may have been planning. That night we screened the Jesus film in the church and it was packed to overflowing.

After the consecration service, Steve travelled with the new Bishop, providing him with the transport to visit his diocese and conduct services throughout Moruland. Steve complemented his ministry by preaching, screening the Jesus film, presenting Gospel Recordings audio visual Bible stories and distributing Gospel literature.

Steve and I also conducted a God and Government Seminar for 25 military chaplains and commanders and a Reformation and Revival Seminar for 80 school teachers. All told, the Frontline team presented over 250 lectures or sermons inside Sudan. We also distributed over 23 000 Christian books and Bibles in 14 languages throughout Southern and Central Sudan. Despite every attempt by the National Islamic Front government to destroy the Christian Church and prevent missionary work in Sudan – they have failed. The church in Sudan is vibrant, steadfast and growing at an unprecedented pace. And more Muslim's are coming to Christ in Sudan than anywhere else.

“Cush will submit herself to God.” Psalm 68:31

Dr. Peter Hammond

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