

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*The Concept of Sedik El Aziz/Sedika El Aziza (Genuine
Friendship) Among the Sudanese Muslims at Malakia in Juba
and Its Missiological Implications for Christian Witness*

BY
BISMARCK MONDAY AVOKAYA

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Missions Studies (Islamic Emphasis)*

JULY 2007

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July, 2007

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

THE CONCEPT OF *SEDIK EL AZIZ / SEDIKA EL AZIZA* (GENUINE FRIENDSHIP) AMONG THE SUDANESE MUSLIMS AT MALAKIA IN JUBA AND ITS MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed) _____
Bismark Monday Avokaya

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

The study attempts to investigate the concept of *sedik el aziza / sedika el aziza* (genuine friendship) among the Sudanese Muslims at Malakia in Juba and its missiological implications for Christian witness. Twenty selected Muslim informants were the main sources of information for this study. Three main research questions were designed to help carry out the study: firstly, what do you understand about *sedik el aziza / sedika el aziza* as a Muslim in Malakia? This is to help the researcher to understand the emic view on the concept as perceived by the Muslims. Secondly, what impact do you think *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationships have on the communal life of the Muslim in social life, economical life and political life? This is to help the researcher to understand the impact on socio-economical and political life of the Muslim. And thirdly, in what ways do you think *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationships impact the religious decision making of a Muslim. The intent is to help the researcher to understand the impact it has on a Muslim's decision making especial in relation to conversion. Also, the researcher had some ethnographic observations on Muslim relations in three places: restaurant, tea shop and some shops.

The results show that *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is a cordial relationships between two individuals or more and is derived from the Muslim concept of *Ummah*, over and against the tribal or national identity. It is primarily based on true love; actions of kindness, trust and confidence which involves the idea of honesty as well. Socio-economically and politically, *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact both positively and negatively depending on the common interest. For instance in social life, it impacts the behaviour (or life style) and views either positively or negatively. Economically, there is inter-dependency where the individual friends depend on each other. Also, there is an element of economic empowerment when one is not financially stable or of life skill training for those who are in need. However, at times there is economic dependency, which has negative impact. Regarding politics, most friends seem to come from the same political persuasion though, at times, some are from different persuasions. But the key in the relationship is respect for each other. Regarding the impact on religious decision making, the following were found: knowing the interest of the un believing friend comes high. The life of *iman* (or faith) or living an exemplary life as a Muslim is second in rating and associating with the unbelieving friend might cause him/ her to decide for *iman* was also rated.

Based on these findings, it becomes necessary for the Sudanese Christians at Malakia in Juba to consider these characteristics as significant in establishing, promoting and maintaining meaningful relationships with their Muslim neighbours.

TO

This work is dedicated to the following: Mr. & Mrs. Christine Martin, Mr. & Mrs. Jill Robins, Mr. & Mrs. Bryn Bartlett and the members of their church, Mr. & Mrs. Mortimer, my mother Grace Äniṅwa Avoro, who never went to school but she was the first to take me to school. To my wife Rina (whom I refer to as my 'sister'), and to our children: Rebecca, Joseph and Woodman Jeke.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CES: Central Equatoria State.

CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

DVCAA: Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

ECS: Episcopal Church of the Sudan

GOS: Government of Sudan

GOSS: Government of Southern Sudan

GMSM: Gordon Memorial Sudan Mission

HOD: Head of Missions Department

KTN: Kenya Television News

MRDA: Mundri Relief and Development Association

NCP: National Congress Party, of President Omer el Bashir.

NEGST: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology

NIF: National Islamic Front

OCTeam: Overseas Council Team. This Council raises funds for NEGST in UK.

PACC: Pan African Christian College.

SPLA: Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army

SPLM: Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement.

SSDF: South Sudan Defence Force

SSDF: South Sudan Democratic Forum.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Before presenting a case for *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* (genuine platonic friendship between males/ and genuine platonic friendship between females respectively), we must come to grips with some fundamental questions concerning the nature and lack of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* among the people we are looking at in this context. Why is it not easy for some people to have genuine and true friendships with others? Is it simply because they are not interested in others or is it a result of negative experiences? Does religious belief encourage genuine friendship between people so that they co-exist in acceptance of one another, or is it their religious beliefs which prevent them from living in friendship with others and in peace? Looking at Malakia, we can better answer these questions if we consider briefly some of the historical factors that took place at Malakia in particular and Juba in general. However, before we do that, let us give an overview of the general background in Sudan.

Sudan by 2002 was estimated to have a population of about 37,090,298 (Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2003. © 1993-2002). And it is generally believed that:

About 70 percent of the people of Sudan are Muslims, some 15 percent are Christians, and most of the remainder follow traditional religions. The people of northern Sudan are predominantly Sunni Muslims (Sunni Islam). Most of the people in the south either practice traditional religions or are Christians. The official language of Sudan is Arabic; English is widely spoken, and African languages are used in the south. A program of Arabization is in place to encourage greater use of Arabic in the south

(Ibid.).

Nevertheless, some people are doubtful as to whether Muslims are 70 percent of the population. It is difficult to verify the facts. Historically Sudan was at war before independence. Although Sudan gained its independence in 1956 from the British, the relationship between the North and the South has never been easy for various reasons. As a result of this, wars have been fought for years, and both Muslims and non-Muslims have suffered severely under the successive regimes based in Khartoum. One of these devastating wars was the last one between the former Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which ended over two years ago in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). However, even at the event of this peace agreement the late John Garang echoed the following concern to his counterparts in Khartoum in his speech that:

... either we implement this agreement or we take an alternative painful route –dividing Sudan into two. If Sudan will not rise to the challenges of this agreement then rest assured that it will split at the end of the six-year interim period (Daily Nation, [Nairobi], 10 January 2005).

Because of this, genuine friendship between a Muslim and a non-Muslim (or a Christian for this matter) is a challenge, not to mention the differing relationships among the other ethnic groups in Sudan.

The main argument in this study is based on the view that in Sudan the lack of genuine friendship between Muslims and non-Muslims can largely be explained by the negative way in which some Muslims have related to non-Muslims. This applies especially to Muslims in the North. This writer wishes to describe briefly some Northern policies, ideologies and attitudes because of which they have treated the Southern Sudanese, Nubians and those in Eastern Blue Nile as inferior by consistently

exploiting, enslaving and oppressing them beyond imagination over the years. This has usually been translated into actions from the Northerners which have promoted injustice in all its forms in terms of denying Southerners or the marginalised people the right of equal opportunities for better education and health, access to jobs and even the right to enjoy the benefits of the natural resources within the country. In the light of all these, how can non-Muslims have genuine friendships with Northerners, particularly Muslims?

Background of the Study

The decades of war in Sudan between the North and the South are often referred to as between Muslims and Christians or non-Muslims, even though this “represents an incorrect use of the language ... such religious language has served to confuse matters in the Sudan, with many not fully understanding it” (Loyo 2005, 4). The war has severely affected the already strained relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, though at the moment there is peace. There are several factors to be considered that generated the war over the years. For instance, let us consider the summary given by an indigenous Organisation called Mundri Relief and Development Association (MRDA) in its booklet about the war:

Several reasons can be cited as to why the North/South cleavage exists and has remained a sore point and source of conflicts. Firstly, since the intrusion of Arabs and Islam into the Sudan, the people of the South had consistently rejected the Arab-Islamic culture prevailing in the North. As a result the relationship between the two peoples had never been cordial. It was always marked by conflicts and wars. Secondly, in creating the modern Sudan, the British ignored these differences and lumped the North and South together, thus setting the stage for conflicts. Thirdly, while in control of the state that they created, the British, set the North on an enlightenment and development path but totally failed to do similar in the South. Thus they also set the stage for marginalization of the Southerners. Fourthly, despite clear disparity between the two economically, politically and educationally, the British handed over the South to the Northerners without guarantees and proper

consultation of the Southerners. Thus after discovering that they had been betrayed, the Southerners felt cheated and railroaded into a union they would not have freely agreed to over their future... that they have never been consulted over their future nor given the opportunity to exercise self-determination. Fifthly, successive Northern dominated governments continued the programme of marginalization of Southerners politically, socially and economically. Sixthly, perhaps in the misguided belief that Arabization and Islamization could bring about unity in the Country, successive Northern dominated governments embarked on a forced Arabization and Islamization programme that only served to increase Southern opposition and rejection. Seventhly, suppression of Southern aspirations by the same Northern dominated government using brutal force led to rebellion in the South (MRDA 2006, 2).

Hence, the racial, ethnic, socio-economical, political and the religious divides became stronger than ever and were entrenched beyond imagination. For instance, a simple misunderstanding between two people, a Northerner and a Southerner, could result not only in the two resorting to a physical fight (often involving the use of automatic weapons) in seconds, but also cause others from the two sides to fight just on the basis of ethnic and racial affiliation, without first establishing the cause of the misunderstanding. The case in point which is still fresh in peoples' minds is the violence which erupted in most parts of the country (including Juba) after the tragic death of the SPLA and SPLM Chief John Garang. Subsequently, "a heavy-handed response by security forces left several hundred people dead. In the aftermath there were reports of hundreds of southerners being rounded up at random, given fast trials without legal representation, sentenced to prison terms and flogging, and then transported to prisons all over northern Sudan within hours" (Ashworth 2007, 28). When one is caught in the actual war and has experienced how fatal it is, then one can understand how critical it is, as Wheeler rightly asserts:

It is difficult not to be swept up in religious antagonism when you are being bombed from the air in the name of Islam, when your churches and cathedrals are being deliberately targeted, when government bombing raids happened particularly early on Sunday mornings in the hope of catching people at church (Wheeler 2006, 89).

However, it is fair to acknowledge that although this strained relationship is mostly seen between Northerners and Southerners, differences are also evident among the Southerners to some extent. As a result, there is a lot of animosity, though people may not often admit that openly. Certainly, most people living in Juba, including those in Malakia, have experienced some of these and are likely to continue experiencing them in the future. This puts the Christian in a dilemma. Even though there has been quantitative growth of Christian churches some Christians do ask:

What ... does it really mean to be “in Christ”, or to be a member of God’s family? Southern Sudan between 1983 and the peace agreement of 2005 saw both extraordinary church growth, and terrible ethnic conflict that was destructive as the wider conflict between North and South. I remember two bishops, one Catholic and one Anglican, from neighbouring areas where there had been fighting, crying out with tears in their eyes, “Why are our Christians killing each other?” A dramatic turning to Christ has occurred in Southern Sudan, but the ties and loyalties of language, clan and family still run very deep and are often the decisive factor when conflict arises. There are some of course who have risen above ethnic hatred and mistrust and spoken for a deeper identity in Christ (Ibid. 76-77).

However, having said this, in the areas controlled by the SPLA and SPLM and other Southern factions, serious human rights abuses also occurred routinely, though it may not be in a structured and systematic way. Nevertheless, it was reported that in the places “controlled by the SPLM/A and other southern factions serious human rights abuses also occurred routinely, albeit not in such a systematic fashion. However, SPLM/A forces generally operated above the law (indeed there is virtually no legal framework anyway)” (Wathanga 2007, 28). Obviously for SPLA, SPLM and other southern factions to fall into the temptation of being oppressive as freedom fighters conforms what Cole says that, “Unfortunately, being a victim of oppression does not immune one from victimizing others” (1997, 29). Certainly this is true, but it depends on one’s choice.

In spite of these differences, God commands Christians to love all mankind including their enemies (Matt. 5: 44-45), forgive those who persecute them, and preach to all people (Matt. 28: 19-20) regardless of their colour, sex, ethnic and religious backgrounds. In view of these facts, is it not appropriate for Christians to reconsider their positions and to understand Muslim ideologies in order to co-exist charitably with Muslims? In doing so, they will be able to communicate the gospel more meaningfully, effectively and efficiently in that context. Therefore, the researcher's endeavour in this study is to seek to understand the "emic" concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* among the Muslims in Malakia and to know how it can be utilised for Christian witness.

Statement of the Research Problem

The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims has been strained for various reasons including civil war in Sudan. As a result, the natural building of genuine friendship between different members of the community and especially between the Muslims and the Christians is difficult if not impossible. However, this study is a description of the Muslim understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* (genuine friendship) and how Christians can use the concept for effective Christian witness among the Sudanese Muslims at Malakia in Juba

The Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study is to investigate and analyse the Muslim understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* to enhance Christian witness to Muslims.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to contribute greatly to the enhancement of peace in Sudan. This is largely because this model of understanding and analysis of the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* can be emulated by other people concerned for peace in the greater Sudan, apart from Juba. As Christians seek to understand the Muslim mind regarding genuine friendship, this requires them to lend a listening ear to the Muslims and thus provide a bridge for openness. This in turn sets the pace for amicable dialogue and so enhances Christian witness. Hence, this research becomes significant in its missiological impact on the Christian fraternity, not only in Juba, but also in the whole of the Sudan. Also this study is significant in that it intends to challenge some outdated prejudices that non-Muslims have had over the years towards Muslims.

Limitations

Financial constraints did not allow this researcher to travel as often as necessary to have sufficient time at the field of research. Another limitation was that this researcher had minimal knowledge of the research area, in spite of having worked in Juba as a Church minister.

The researcher anticipated some degree of suspicion, as is the case between Muslims and non-Muslims. This could have hampered the gaining of adequate information as he carried out participant observation and ethnographic interviews. In the light of this, the researcher needed the help of reliable persons to enter informally and sensitively into the different social situations so that he did not cause disruption or offence.

Lack of relevant literature on Muslims in Malakia, is another limitation he anticipated in this research. Nevertheless, this researcher believed that using some Muslim-related materials would enable him to get useful information.

Delimitations

This study is limited to the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedka el aziza*, only among the Muslims at Malakia in Juba. The researcher looked at the historical trends of Islam in the Malakia and how these have impacted on the human relationships in the community at large.

Assumptions

1. The researcher assumes that the differences between the North and South in Sudan due to historical, socio-economical, political and religious factors have severed the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims which includes Christians.
2. And lastly the researcher assumes that although this study will basically deal with the Muslims at Malakia, the findings here will not be very different from the situations in close residential areas in Juba.

Research Questions

1. How do the Muslims in Malakia understand the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*?
2. In what ways the Muslim's understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact the communal life of the Muslims in Malakia?

- a) The impact on social life.
 - b) The impact on economic life.
 - c) The impact on political life.
3. In what ways do *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact the religious decision making of the Muslims in Malakia?

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be useful to this research.

1. **Allah**: the Muslim name for God
2. **Allah hu Akbar**: *Allah* is Almighty
3. **Anya-nya one**: the first armed Southern Sudanese Movement against Khartoum.
4. **Asatiza**: plural of mistress or female teacher.
5. **Buruseki**: Bari word for Malakia.
6. **Fadal**: the Arabic word meaning to be free to do what you want/ go your way.
7. **Genuine Friendship**: friendship, genuine friendship or true friendship may be used interchangeably in this study standing for a trustworthy relationship no matter what happens.
8. **Hayi**: an Arabic word for area or residence.
9. **Haram**: that which is unlawful in Islam.
10. **Iman**: faith
11. **Interviewees**: this word is used interchangeably with informants and participants.
12. **Insh Allah**: *Allah* willing or God willing

13. ***Jalaba***: originally refers to a tribe called *Ja'aly* (or *Ja'aliyin* in plural). This tribe was notorious in slave trade that enslaved many Southerners and was known of buying slaves with fake money from the South during the era of slave trade. They put on long dress known as *ja'alabia*. The Current President of Sudan, Omer Hassen el Bashir comes from this tribe. Sometimes *Jalaba* refers to the Arabs in general with a negative connotation of someone you can not trust.
14. ***Malakia***: The Arabic word which originally refers to a civilian residential zone/ area as compared to areas in which the military or organised forces lived. However, today it refers to a common residential area in most towns of the South where people live (regardless of whether they are civilians, military or organised forces or not). In this case it refers to the one in Juba.
15. ***Nyakuron***: a residential area where this researcher lived in Juba.
16. ***Rwoda***: Islamic nursery school.
17. ***Salam***: greeting (or peace)
18. ***Salat***: prayers
19. ***Sedik***: friend (masculine gender)
20. ***Sedika***: friend (feminine gender)
21. ***Sedik el aziz***: Arabic word referring to a genuine platonic friendship between males.
22. ***Sedika el aziza***: Arabic word referring to a genuine platonic friendship between females.
23. ***Shahada***: Islamic Creedal witness: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah".
24. ***Sunna***: the way or practices of the Prophet Muhammad.

25. *Ummah*: the community of Muslims

26. *Ustaz*: Arabic word for a male teacher

27. *Ustaza*: Arabic word for a female teacher.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been written about friendship and relationship in general. This section seeks to review literature that is deemed relevant to this study. This includes a consideration of what human relations are generally, before proceeding to see what people have written about making friends. A theological perspective on friendship will be examined herein, prior to which the relations between Muslims and Christians will be underscored.

Meaning

What is the meaning of *Sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*? *Sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* are Arabic phrases for a genuine platonic friendships between males –*sedik el aziz* and a genuine platonic friendship between females –*sedika el aziza*. Unfortunately, there is no written literature on *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*. However, there are a number of definitions of genuine friendship or friendship in general. The word “friend” is defined by Collins Paperback English Dictionary as “a person known well to another and regarded with liking, affection, and loyalty”. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines “friendship” as an “act of behaving in a kind and pleasant way”. Therefore, true or genuine friendship takes place when someone has a kind, amicable, warm attitude towards another. Perhaps that is why Conrad N. Hilton’s definition of friend goes as follows:

[O]ur word *friend* comes from an ancient Gothic verb that meant ‘to love’. In the Burmese language the root of the word ‘a friend’ is the same as that of the word ‘a relative.’

Thus, the world over, a friend is someone very close to you –someone to love, esteem and respect. Friendship is a relationship freely given, an attraction freely sought or granted. Though it may carry responsibilities, it is never an obligation. Perhaps that is why true friendship is always so wonderful (Battista 2002, 166).

General Human Relation

Normally, human beings are by nature relational beings, unlike other creatures (Gen. 2: 18). Perhaps someone may object to that by saying that even other creatures are relational and only people do not understand their language. However, it is apparent that human beings are given not only the authority to rule over creation (Gen. 1: 28), but also the mandate to live in a personal relationship with one another-unlike other creatures. Some visitors to Sudan believe that the Sudanese are generally friendly and often generous in spite of the fact that they are the poorest of the poor in the world:

The Sudanese are some of the very poorest people on earth. Yet they are also some of the most generous and hospitable. Strangers are welcomed into homes for tea, food, fellowship and a place to stay overnight. Even on buses, trains, ferries and camel caravans, Sudanese people will usually share whatever food or drink they may have with those around them (Hammond 1998, 6).

This makes greetings very important for the Sudanese people. For instance, if you meet most Sudanese in the country, it would be considered unusual to pass by someone without saying *salam* (or peace); it does not matter whether you know the person or not. As long as you are a human being, you must be human to another and in the context of meeting it begins with greetings to the other person.

The other day, a Kenyan missionary who was going to Khartoum asked this researcher for some orientation. He asked, “What advice could you give me as I leave for Khartoum to work as a missionary?” This researcher replied, “Greet everyone you

meet regardless of whether you know them or not; otherwise, you will be considered to be rude in that society”. Since he is a missionary, this researcher suggested that failure to greet will have a negative impact on his missionary work. This is true even in other social contexts in Africa.

Having said that, it is fair to acknowledge that, in spite of this, when it comes to the north and south contexts, it is a different. Apparently, the relationship between the North and the South had been severely affected over the years by a number of things, including historical events. For instance, many people still vividly remember the brutal massacres which occurred in Juba and Wau in 1965, which Alier relates as follows:

In June 1965, the Constituent Assembly passed a unanimous resolution authorising the coalition government to ‘restore law and order’ in the Southern Sudan. Security forces were given ‘free hand’ to act in pursuit of that goal. It was a declaration of war not only against the Anya-nya but even more so against the vocal but unarmed Southern intelligentsia resident in the Southern –Sudan ...

Two incidents, in Juba on 9th July and the other in Wau on 11th July, resulted to the death of 473 people at the hands of the national army. One was triggered by an affray between a soldier and a resident of Juba while that in Wau occurred when a marriage party was attacked at about 9 o’clock in the evening by elements in the Sudan army (2003, 48).

This sad experience was perpetuated by the government against its own people. Similar incidents have happened many times and in many places over the years. In Juba in 1992 over 300 hundred people (but the figure was actually unknown) were killed in cold blood; among them the cousin brother (who was a Police Officer) of this researcher. They were taken to the so called “white house” (Wheeler 2006, 96) or “ghost houses” (Hammond 1998, 45) where the government or National Islamic Front (NIF) special security forces took and kept people who never returned. Such ghost houses were not only in Juba, but also in Khartoum, El Obeid, Port Sudan and other

towns as well. Although most people who were taken to those places were never seen again, a few miraculously came back and confirmed that these were places of torture:

... immersion of ... heads in water until they suffocated, burning with cigarette ends, electric shocks, mock executions, the pulling out of fingers nails, rapes and other degrading and cruel punishments (Hammond 1998, 45).

Nevertheless, it is to be noted that such tortures were not levelled against the Southern Sudanese, the Nubians and those from Blue Nile alone. Muslims who do not cherish the fanatical NIF elite ideology suffer the same fate too. This is why Brigadier Mohammed Ahmed al-Rayahal Faki gave the following testimony when he was released:

“I was tried by a secret and summary military tribunal (23/3/91) one month after my arrest ... During the 18 months I spent in Shalla I suffered: severe beatings with a water-hose and whipping on the head and all over the body, chaining and suspensions, locked in suffocating containers, sexually abused with solid articles, my sexual organs were crushed by pliers, electric shocks ...” (as quoted in Hammond, Ibid).

Events of this nature do not encourage the expected cordial relations between all Sudanese people, and especially not between Northerners and Southerners. Good relationships, which enable people to live in peace and unity, have been made difficult by such events. Relationships have become bitter in this multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious society. In spite of the fact that people are still living together in the same area, it is as if people have been forced to live together against their will, as expressed by a Mostar resident in the context of Europe:

We are forced to live together ... Because of that we are all pretending to be nice and to love each other. But, it is known that I hate them and they hate me. It will be like that forever. (said by a Mostar resident, 2001 and quoted in Stover and Weinstein 2004, 1).

When it comes to Northern and Southern relationships, some people have the same feelings as described above. However, the question is, how long can one pretend to live kindly and in “love” with those he is not comfortable with, when the reality is

different? Certainly, there are many challenges in friendship, let alone friendship between a Christian and a Muslim. When it comes to friendship between a Christian and a Muslim how difficult is it in the context of Malakia? For example, what experience do some non-Muslims who had been friends of Muslims in Malakia have? How do Southerners perceive other Southerners who relate well to those who are northerners and Muslims?

Making Friendships

The question is, how does someone make friendships in the first place? And in this case, how can somebody find a Muslim friend? Certainly, this would depend on one's geographical location, but generally friendship comes in an ordinary way, at least in this researcher's own experience over the years. For example, as Martin Goldsmith (1982, 111) says, you might meet at school, work place, market or in some social gatherings. You interacted, exchanged addresses and, at the end of the day, you became friends. Most people can not tell you at the time of meeting that they want to become your friend. However, this researcher once had an interesting experience during eleven days of training in a certain country. After a few days of training and sharing with other participants, one person 'unusually' approached him and asked, "I want to become your friend, do you accept?" "Of course I accept," he replied. Thereafter, they became friends to date. This is not always the case, but the difference was that this was with a Christian friend. Making friends with Muslims may not be as easy as outlined above, but Marsh asserts that:

Take every opportunity of being friendly with Muslim neighbors, shopkeepers, or others. Show them that you love them in practical ways [especially when they are in need and are your immediate neighbors]. Do not try to preach at them. Be a good listener. This is where we are failing ... we must listen ... sympathetically and

patiently. Then we shall understand his point of view, his difficulties, and where he misunderstands Christianity (1975, 60).

According to Marsh, this calls for an effort on our part concerning the “discipline of listening”. However, what indicates that someone is listening as expected? According to Battista, there are five steps to good listening:

1. “Sit up” and listen instead of “sitting back” and listening.
2. Show by your face as well as your posture that your mind is alert in addition to your ears being open.
3. Ask questions softly and seldom, and if you can, choose questions you are confident the other person will enjoy answering.
4. When a person talks to you seriously about himself or his accomplishments, lend him more than a sympathetic ear. Encourage him to talk some more and he will think you are brilliant!
5. Make up your mind that at least half of what you listen to is worth remembering. If it isn't, perhaps you had better upgrade the kind of listening you do, if at all possible (2002, 118-119).

Some people are good listeners, but it seems that the majority of people are not. Most of the people need to upgrade their listening skills. Probably, by showing good listening, the person will know that you are a true and genuine friend, and this takes us on to think about genuine friendship.

Genuine Friendship

What is genuine or true friendship? Benner states that:

True friends, in contrast, see each other realistically. Because they know each other so well, they know the weaknesses that are hidden from the view of those at distance. This awareness, however, does not diminish the respect, affection and admiration that they feel. But they are not prone to idolization. Friends are not fascinated by each other. Nor are they awestruck. They know each other not by the garb or persona but by the dependable and relatively stable elements of habit, character, disposition and trait. It is this down-to-earth quality of friendships that gives them stability and endurance... they are anchored in reality (2002, 68).

This suggests that true friendship is not superficial, but genuine and honest where one is open to the other without covering his or her strengths and weaknesses.

But, at the same time, even if one's weakness is exposed, it does not hinder their relationship of friendship. Moreover, Benner states that honesty is vital and without it we could not see the friendship as genuine:

Finally, honesty is not just something that friends try to practice. It is also something they delight in experiencing. The honesty that characterizes genuine and deep friendship is not just the honesty of words. It is also the honesty of being. Friends feel sufficiently safe with each other that they can relax and be what they are. Since I am already known and loved for who I am, pretensions can be set aside and I can be myself (Ibid.).

There is strong emphasis on "honesty," but is this always the case? However, it is to be noted that whatever a Muslim does is influenced by his Islamic worldview. How much the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is influenced by the Islamic worldview is difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, the Islamic worldview is worth exploring briefly.

Islamic Worldview

The question we need to ask is, "What is the Islamic worldview?" before considering the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*. This question is critical because unless we understand the Muslim worldview, we may not be able to understand what goes on in the mind of the Muslim we are dealing with. Challen underscores the significance of Muslim thought patterns in the following statement:

We need to understand the Muslim thought patterns.

It must also be reasonable to consider that we shall need to understand the direction of Muslim thought. How do Muslims think, and why do they think in the particular way that they do? How does their thought pattern consequently affect their lives? This is necessary to know so that we may proclaim the gospel message in terms that they will understand meaningful and purposeful way to the Muslim. This is not to suggest that we must compromise truth in any way whatsoever. We do not change the gospel, or any of its messages, to reach the Muslim. But we may present it in terms that they find reasonable and acceptable ... as a point of contact ... (1988, 67).

On the same note, Burnett states that:

The understanding of the culture and worldview of another people will have a great influence on our ability to identify with them. Because other people may be different from ourselves it is easy to label them as primitive, barbarian, crude, or illogical ... (1990, 240).

Probably, the Muslim theological perspective of friendship is heavily influenced by this belief. Yet the question remains, what is the Islamic or Muslim worldview? According to Safa the following gives us a glimpse:

To a Muslim, Islam is a complete system that encompasses every aspect of society. The Muslims assert that the laws of Islam meet not only the religious and moral codes of a society, but the political, economical and ethical codes as well (1996, 18).

Safa further adds that the intention of Islam is to form a theocracy where *Allah* is the ruler, thus merging religious and political issues. Such a comprehensive system governs every aspect of the Islamic society and is supposed to apply at all “times and in all places” (Ibid. 21).

It is imperative to note that the Islamic worldview differs from location to location, as Mensah asserts in his discussion that includes the need to understand the Islamic worldview (1989, 93). Kim warns of the danger of falling into the reductionism trap of scholars attempting to generalize about Islam while ignoring the “particularity of local Islamic phenomena in specific cultural contexts” (2004, 1). Yet the face of Islam in general is basically similar in all localities, especially where the orthodox aspect of the religion is concerned. Muslims worldwide confess the Islamic creed or *Shahada* that acknowledges the oneness of God and the apostleship of Muhammad. From this credal statement stems “all of Islam’s concepts, attitudes, moral values and guidelines for human behaviour and relationships”, according to Haneef (1985, 3).

The orthodox concept of Muslim community envisions the unity of all Muslims worldwide regardless of their nationality or locality. Cragg and Speight

consent that it was Muhammad who emulated the “long-standing value of collective solidarity in pre-Islamic Arabia applied particularly to tribal religion”, in a bid to form a community that was united in religion and yet transcended tribal boundaries (1988, 73). This is why as Musk states, “Many Muslims agreed that Islam should come first in their hearts, drawing their allegiance ahead of national identity” (2003, 9). Certainly, this might have been the philosophy behind the quest to make Sudan an Islamic state. Dau observes that such a quest is a recent development that has, however, met with strong feelings from non-Muslims in Sudan (2003, 43).

Tensions in Christian – Muslim Relations

The history of Christian-Muslim relations is replete with tensions. Mallouhi comments on the medieval crusades that saw Christians fight Muslims in the name of serving the Lord. Heaven was assured for those who died in the war as they fought the “infidels” (2000, 81). Amazingly, some 50,000 children are reported to have heeded the call to “go to the cross” in what was called the “children’s crusade” of 1212, where all perished. In total, about nine crusades were fought that saw the relationship between Muslims and Christians worsen. Yet Mallouhi further adds that one, Francis of Assisi, intentionally refused to be associated with the crusades and redefined the meaning of Christian to mean “not a Crusader.” He instead preferred to talk with Muslims in a friendly manner after establishing good relationships with them (Ibid., 280).

Probably, Francis’ approach of friendship and mutual understanding with Muslims would be one that could be emulated in light of the fact that Muslims have negative attitudes to Christians. Quinn and Quinn lament that many Muslims still maintain the idea that Christians have not abandoned the crusade mentality (2003, 4).

It may be true that “Christians have not abandoned the crusade mentality” but Muslims are no better especially in the Sudanese context:

I am as aware as anyone that Islam has been politically misused and distorted in Sudan to serve the ends of successive dubious regimes, but that cannot fully assuage the grief, the anger, sometimes the deep fury that, in the name of Islam, Southern Sudan has been repeatedly desolated, its people scattered, its children abused and deprived of hope. A story that repeats itself today in Darfur, in the west of Sudan.

And yet, to meet the human face of Islam in scholars, traders and the devout, is to know that there is more. There are still bridges that can be built, communities that can be rebuilt as people of different faiths work together, friendships that can be established where what is of deepest consequence to us can be shared ... where, one day, God willing, Christ can be shared (Wheeler 2006, 90).

In spite of the fact that Muslims are no better in the Sudanese context, there are possibilities of building bridges. The question is, are we willing to build bridges to establish deep working relationships leading to our sharing Christ with the Muslims in our localities? If we are not what are some of the consequences? For instance in the context of Kenya according to Johnstone and Mandryk, “Muslims have become active in reaching Christians. They are building mosques, schools and giving rewards for the conversion of Christians ...” (2001, 382). However, is this only in Kenya? As a principle is this not replicated in the Sudanese context?

Christian Perspective on Friendship

However, the theological perspective on Christian friendship seems to be quite different. For instance, Benner observes that friendship is God’s primary gift to humanity:

Friendship is one of God’s special gifts to humans. Remarkably, friendship is one of the terms God uses to describe the relationship he desires with us. Friendship is therefore no ordinary relationship. We cheapen it when we reduce it to mere acquaintanceship. The ideals of friendship are worth preserving (2002, 62).

This implies that when we express genuine friendship we are operating

not on the ordinary levels of our beings, but on extraordinary levels of divine influence. If friendship is God's distinguishing gift to mankind, then what is the theology of genuine friendship as Christians understand it in the context of Malakia? Certainly, there is a need for us to understand the theology of genuine friendship. For example, does our theology influence our conduct? Unless our theology (and here we mean sound biblical theology) informs the practice of the believer, it remains an ineffective practice of faith. However, if we take friendship to be a gift of God, gifts are given by the giver without the person receiving playing any part except the part of receiving. Does it mean when someone is not in friendship, God is to be blamed for not having given to him the gift of friendship? This is probably not the case.

Compassion in Friendship

The New Testament shows many instances of Christ having compassion on people. Twelve times, the Gospels use the phrase "to be moved with compassion" when referring to Jesus or the Father's emotional response to the people. McNeill, Morrison and Nouwen assert that the "Compassion that Jesus felt was obviously quite different from superficial or passing feelings of sorrow or sympathy" (1982, 16).

Christians are exhorted to be like Christ and be compassionate to all people in order to show genuine friendship. Francis of Assisi is often quoted as one who exemplified compassion. He saw all people as brothers and sisters needing God's grace just like himself. This made him befriend many Muslims including the Sultan of Syria (Ibid. 68). Like Francis of Assisi, Zwemer was convinced that the way to the Muslim heart was through love, as shown in the

way of the cross and as discovered by Greenway (2002, 56). This shows to the reader how, unlike others, both Francis and Zwemer identified with the Muslims, which involved an understanding of their culture, worldview and language. Certainly, as Famonure (1993, 78) observes, this can only be done effectively through immersion in their lives.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher's goal in this study was to collect and analyse primary source data. He used ethnographic interview and ethnographic observation methods of the qualitative research design. This is (to be able) in order to understand the emic view of the Muslim concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* among the Sudanese Muslim population and to show how it impacts their life style at Malakia. Using Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) model, the researcher's hope is that the approach would help him as a strategy for getting the Muslim population at Malakia to share what they perceive as insider's perspective, so as to draw inferences of its missiological implications for Christian witness. In this regard, the researcher consulted the local and key personnel who knew the historical background of Malakia. Also he used library research as a secondary source to collect data that are relevant to the study.

Description of the Field Site

There are few materials written on Juba showing how it was started. However, according to the son of the Chief of Bari, late Chief Andrea, the name Juba is a corrupt pronunciation of the name of a Bari man called Jobe. There was a man called Jobe, who used to live near the current Central Police station in Juba. However, The British could not pronounce the name Jobe properly and they ended calling him Juba. In the passage of time, the place where Mr. Jobe lived, became Juba giving us the

name of Juba town. Apart than that, there is a record that the missionary work into Juba was “extended from Malek in 1920” (Kayanga and Wheeler 1999, 71). After that “Juba became the headquarters of the GMSM when British administration moved” from Mongalla (Ibid.). In addition to that “Juba became a place of great significance during the Second World War when it became an important communications centre for British forces. Juba, developed from a village into a large town to this time. And as the writers said, “It was natural that Juba should become the centre of the rapidly growing Church in the South and so it was decided that it should be the site of a new cathedral for the Episcopal Church” (Ibid. 72). This suggests to the researcher that Juba began as a missionary centre and later the British Government in Khartoum established government Institutions in Juba.

Moreover, the writers add that “Juba became the centre for many new initiatives. A bookshop was opened which became the Apaya bookshop ...” (Ibid.). It seems to the researcher that later Juba was not only a centre for many Christian initiatives but also for the Muslims. Perhaps as a result and in the long run Malakia residential area emerged.

Like Juba, not much has been written about the people and Malakia. Therefore, it is difficult to know how Malakia started. However, there are local stories of how Juba and Malakia came into existence. It is to be noted that initially Malakia was based at the current location of Juba International Airport. However, for some reason, Malakia was moved to its current location. Initially, Malakia was called *Buruseki* in Bari language, which is known as Malakia in Arabic. The word Malakia was originally a local Arabic word for civilian to differentiate civilian living quarters from both the military and the organised forces quarters. However, the civilians meant here were by then the soldiers who retired from active military service. Nevertheless, today

the word Malakia refers to a common residential area where sometimes both military and organised forces live. So, Malakia has become a common word for residential areas, and often one could hear phrases like: *Malakia ta Mundri*, *Malakia ta Rumbek*, *Malakia ta Malakal* (the *Malakia* of Mundri, the *Malakia* of Rumbek, the *Malakia* of Malakal) and others. This does not mean that all residential areas are called Malakia, but where it is used, usually there is one Malakia in a given town. This term, Malakia, is found in the South alone and in this study, we are looking at the Malakia residential area in Juba.

Malakia is composed of 600 plots. After every hundred plots, there is a free space as a play ground for the children. It is difficult to know, how many Muslims live in every hundred plots for it is sensitive to ask about that. However, it is estimated to be half of the plots. But, following the riots at the death of John Garang, most Arab Muslims in Malakia left with their families for Khartoum. Although, currently there is peace in Juba, and a few had returned, some of them are still reserved to return. This makes the number of Muslims in Malakia less than half by estimation. And looking at *Malakia* the researcher would like to divide the population into three main categories: category 1. The *Malakia rooted group*; category 2. Those of *Northern origin or Arabised settlers*; and category 3. *The general Southern Sudanese tribes* which include Christians.

The first category which we referred to as *Malakia rooted group* is the group of Southerners whose great grand parents had come from various locations and tribes of Southern Sudan and settled at Malakia either for jobs or when Juba was forming into a town. It is hard to establish precisely when Juba town was started (as stated earlier), but it was probably around 1900. Some people say that most of the retired soldiers who first lived here were Muslims. Before retirement most of those who were

corporals in the army were from Western Sudan and were Muslims. These corporals ensured that the soldiers under them were converted into Islam. However, such claims are difficult to verify. And over the years the children of these converts have been living here, and today their descendents may not be able to trace their roots precisely like other tribes in Juba. Although, they know that they originally came from the tribes of the South like: *Bari, Baka, Latuka, Moru, Nyagbara, Zande* and the rest. But having been born, raised and continue to live here, they may not know their roots with certainty. All they know is Malakia and beyond that they know little, or nothing. Consequently, when other people are talking of going to the countryside, or having their tribal community meetings in Juba like the *Bari* community meeting and the like, it either does not make any sense to some of them, or they simply do not have a tribal community to belong to. They do have their own culture and community, however, based on their life style at Malakia which is a mixture of Arab-Muslim culture with a variety of Southern Sudanese local cultures. But generally they are aligned toward Northerners' socio-economically, religiously and politically, though they are supposed to be closer to their fellow Southerners.

On one hand, some of them feel proud that they have a special identity due to the Islamic brotherhood which makes them as if they are first class citizens. But on the other hand, and inspite of their identity of Islamic brotherhood, some of them feel that, they are still being discriminated against by their fellow Northern Muslim as second class Muslims. Moreover, most of the Southerners often refer to them sarcastically as *Yali el Malakia; aw Awlad el Malakia* (the children of Malakia or the boys of Malakia). This has a negative connotation, because those who see them and refer to them as such often see them not only as lost people, but as traitors.

However, today there is CPA between the former GOS, the SPLA and SPLM, and some of them are making efforts to establish some links with the communities of their roots, where possible. In this regard, it is fair to acknowledge that currently there are some changes under way, though it may be too early to know what will happen in future.

The second category is those of *Northern origin*, or *Arabised settlers*. This group are either Arabs, or of mixed blood with Arabs who came mainly for business, or for other reasons including former soldiers. They live here and do business as well. Some of them are resident in Malakia and others are in different parts of Juba town. Generally, they have a good business networking system. For instance, they may be compared to the Asian business community in East Africa. A few of them brought along their wives from Northern Sudan, but most of them have either married, or taken wives without proper marriage from the local population. Initially, members of this group are the most active agents for Islamisation and Arabisation at Malakia, Juba and other towns in the South. They are good in propagating Islam among their servants, trading partners and in the market places. Basically they create the concept of Arab-Muslim identity of *Ummah* among themselves and the Southern Sudanese Muslims who were won from Malakia. As usual, allowed by Islam, some of them could take more than one wife and the children born out of this relationship become Muslims automatically. Also they have a number of notable Islamic scholastic centres in Malakia like Arabic Primary Schools; *Rwoda* (Qur'anic school for children); Mosque; and Islamic organisations. In this way, they have influenced the *Malakia rooted group* with a lot of Arab-Muslim mannerism to have their own local Islamic culture. For instance, because of their influence, some religious leaders from the first category have acquired prestigious Islamic titles of honour, like *Sheikh* and others.

Certainly, with such titles the responsibilities of Arabisation and Islamisation are shifted to the local Muslims. Therefore, it is now the responsibility of the Southern Sudanese Muslims to ensure that Islam spreads to all parts of Southern Sudan and beyond. Nevertheless, they remain like backseat drivers giving the necessary advice and the much needed material and financial supports. These continued to help the spread of Islamic faith in the South.

The third and the last category is made up of the *general Southern Sudanese tribes*. These are the Southerners who are either Christians, or those who are neither Christians nor Muslims. It generally seems that they are believers of some sort, but might not have fallen into this writer's categorisation of the first two above.

Entry for Conducting the Study

The researcher was able to embark on this study after consulting with the relevant authorities and first from the members of Malakia residential area. Secondly, the government organ that is concerned with the general security of the population in Juba. To facilitate this, also it was necessary for the researcher to get the consent of the Head of Missions Department at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) on the same. The aim was to avoid creating suspicion about this study, since this is a sensitive issue. Also the researcher considered the rapport approach by contacting a Muslim leader as key personnel on the study.

Population of the Study

The population of study is made up of the Muslims at Malakia in Juba who are found in various residential areas of Malakia. The population is certainly large and not homogenous in terms of faith and practice. Both unity and diversity do exist among

them across the socio-economical, political and educational levels. There are Mosques administered by *Sheiks*, primary schools and *Rwodas*, Islamic organisations for humanitarian services and business centres.

In this regard, the population would be defined as *Malakia rooted group*; the *Northern origin* or *Arabised settlers*; and the *general Southern Sudanese tribes* some of who are Christians. However, Christians are not part of the study population. These represent the communities at Malakia. But some of those to be interviewed are the following: the resident *Sheikh*, prominent Muslim leaders in the area, an Administrative Officer (who is a Muslim), a few selected Muslim teachers, business women and shop keepers.

Sampling

There was purposeful sampling of Sudanese Muslims in Malakia. The researcher conveniently interviewed them either in their homes, schools, shop, market, or in an agreed place. As Creswell suggests purposeful sampling involves the selection of informants purposefully who would then answer the research questions (1994, 148).

Role of Researcher

Apart from one Muslim who was already known by the researcher, the researcher does not know any of the informants in this study. In this regard, the researcher and the informants are absolute strangers to one another and what brought them together is this research exercise. The researcher only interviewed the informants at their locations in Malakia either in their homes, schools, or places at their convenience. Initially the researcher had consulted the HOD of Missions Department at NEGST for advice and in terms of permission on how to go about this.

In Juba, the researcher consulted the Government area Administrative Officer (who is a Christian and whom he had known) for advice in terms of security implications. Both the HOD of Missions and the Government Administrative Officer were of help in their respective roles. For instance, the HOD suggests that for the researcher to take an official introduction letter (as he wanted) from NEGST would raise suspicion among the Muslims in Malakia. And the Government area Administrative Officer assisted by introducing the researcher to other Administrative Officers and asked them to assist the researcher where necessary.

At the event of research, it was the researcher who interviewed the participants at their various and agreed locations. This arrangement was to protect the privacy of the informants and discourage unnecessary familiarity with the researcher. The researcher chose lack of familiarity because too much familiarity breeds contempt and is likely to interfere with interviews. Also he remembers his experience of ministry in Juba as a Curate among the Moru Congregation in the Cathedral its sub-centre being based in Malakia. Such an experience exposed him to encounter some Sudanese Muslims in Juba including Malakia. Also the researcher brought to this study his experience of relating to Muslims at *Nyakuron* (which is different from *Malakia*) residential area. Apparently, this previous experience of relating to some Muslims at *Nyakuron* entails the researcher brought some bias to this study. Nevertheless, he anticipated the task of discovering a new understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* as critically significant. This researcher believes that there are concepts that can be discovered that do not exist elsewhere in Christian witness to Muslims in other contexts.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected from August 2006 to March 2007 at Malakia in Juba

through interviews with the selected informants. At least a one hour period was given for each interview. Using an interview guide, the researcher engaged the informants in informal discussions that gave information about *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* at Malakia where the informants reside. Open-ended questions were used to start discussions and other questions were based on the issues that came in the context of discussion. Face to face interviews and participant observation techniques were employed during the data collection. The researcher's intention of taking face to face interview was to enable him to gain insiders *emic* view as suggested by Malinowski (1922, 25).

The researcher used a field log book, giving a detailed account of the ways he planned to use his time when he is on the field. He evaluated this record to show how time was utilised. The researcher recorded details related to interviews and observations in a field notebook. He kept a field diary that reflected his thinking, feeling, experiences, observations and perceptions throughout the study.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the field research was analysed through etic analysis. This includes the identified and described themes revealed during the course of study. Data was organised, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded. A list of major ideas that emerged were developed. The field notes and diary entries were regularly reviewed.

In addition to that, data analysis was aided by the use of the Microsoft word program for storing and processing of data collected from the field. Important information was stored and retrieved while useless information was stored with Computer editor assistance. The edited text was arranged into key categories and themes to form findings and conclusions drawn from this research study.

Instruments Design

The researcher used ethnographic interview guide as an instrument to collect data from each informant. This was carried out “as a series of friendly conversations” as Spradely suggests (1979, 58). Also, participant observation was used during the interviews. Although the researcher is not a Muslim, being a Sudanese, in this participant observation the researcher was both an insider and an outsider to some degree as Spradley observes that:

Ethnographers do not merely make observations they also participate. Participation allows you to experience activities directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and record your own perceptions (1980, 51).

Therefore, the researcher made an ethnographic record using field notes, but avoided tape recording and photographs due to the sensitivity of the study context. However, the ethnographic interviews with note taking were carried out with the permission of the informants.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

According to Best, validity is “that quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine” (1981, 55). In this sense, two Professors from the Department of Missions at NEGST who are experts in Islamic studies, in terms of research and many years of field and teaching experience were used to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Therefore, the expertise of these skilful Professors is relied upon, to give advice so that whatever is ambiguous was removed, and that which contributes effectively to the purpose of the study and the research questions is kept.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The intent of this study was three-fold: firstly, to investigate the understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* as the Muslims at Malakia perceived. Secondly, to help the researcher understand how *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impacts the communal life of the Muslim: socially, economically and politically. Thirdly, let the researcher, to understand the impact on the Muslims' religious decision making with special interest on conversion. This chapter presents descriptions and analysis of the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*; the impacts of *sedik el aziz/ sedik el aziza* on communal lives; and its impact on religious decision making of the Sudanese Muslims at Malakia. The format in the first part follows the pattern of the research questions and sought to describe the ideas and their impacts on Muslim life and its implications for Christian witness. These descriptions include the data collected from different interviewees. The researcher's role was that of collecting and formatting the said data in ways useful for this study. Before describing the particular views and impacts that focus on *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*, it is necessary to present a summary of general observations. These observations are focused on Muslim relations with particular interest on restaurants, tea shop and shops. The observations and study tour was first done in December 2005. Interviews and data were collected between August 2006 and March 2007.

Focused Observation on Muslim Relations

During the collection of data in the different locations where Muslims were interviewed, the researcher made an observation on Muslim relations. This section deals with three places where the observation was carried out. The first gives a general view on observing Muslims at a public restaurant where they come for meals. The second is about a tea shop where they come for tea. And the third is where they sit and relax in front of their shops when there are a few customers at certain times of day.

The Restaurant

The researcher deliberately took some time to observe Muslims in restaurants and the following was observed:

Fadal: Among the Muslims in *Malakia* when you meet someone eating, he will greet you with a saying “*fadal*” even if he doesn’t know you. The popular meaning is welcome and join me (or join us) in eating. However, the researcher came to understand later that the real meaning is: Feel free to go your way (Mariam Osman Muhammad, 14th August 2006; Idris Lado, 8th February 2007). This implies that when you hear *fadal* you are not actually invited to join the person in eating, but you are given a freedom to go your way whatever your way is. Nevertheless, if you choose to go by the popular meaning that you have been asked to join him in eating, you are still welcome. But the one who said *fadal* may interpret your action of joining him in eating as either you are a hungry person, or that you don’t understand what the Arabic language entails. However, if you are already a true friend of the one who says *fadal*, he would plead with you to join him in eating.

Also the researcher observed that when a group of Muslims come for meals, they often make a joint order for food. After eating each person would offer to pay the

bill on behalf of the others. For instance, when a group of ten people ate together each person was pleading to pay the bill on behalf of others, “*la wallahi alafota gabulak*” (no, in the name of *Allah* I have sworn before you). You can imagine the noise that comes out of this. Sometimes it was discovered that the one who shouted loudest didn’t have enough cash to pay the bill on behalf of others as he suggested. But there is a sense in which each person wants to put up a brave face of not being too poor and pretends to be financially stable and able to pay.

However, it was also observed that sometimes each individual contributes a portion towards the required amount, while in most cases one person pays the whole lot on behalf of others. In this researcher’s opinion, for one person to pay the whole lot for others was not cost effective, but for the Muslims concerned this did not seem to matter.

Eating from the same plate for a group is a Sudanese culture and the researcher observed that. But he observed that usually the Muslims don’t eat all the meal they bought for they always left some in the plate. And sometimes it could be enough from one person’s meal. When the researcher inquired, he was told that whoever comes after that could get some help and this was attributed to the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad (M. Abdalla, 10th August 2006). Therefore, there is a religious connotation behind it. The Muslim tends to be mindful of others even the un-known others. Are Christians mindful of others and especially the un-known others? Moreover, it was observed that Muslim women didn’t come to have meals in the restaurants like men. And according to one informant, it is *haram* (M. Juma, 25th March 2007).

Tea Shop

First of all anytime of day in Sudan is time for tea, and taking tea is more or less like drinking water. If you are not used to taking a lot of sugar, you need to be careful when you order for the tea. Often many people come for tea. At one point the researcher observed a group of eight men came in and one person bought tea for the rest. Generally, tea with milk is expensive in Malakia or Juba unlike tea without milk. Yet the researcher observed that one person paid for the whole group. On another occasion the researcher observed that one person ordered for the six members of his group when they came in; however, he kept on ordering more tea for every other Muslim who came in when they were still there. Moreover, while he ordered tea with milk for others, he ordered tea without milk for himself. The researcher wondered why he should keep on ordering tea for others as they came in for tea. Abdalla confirmed that to the researcher that it was an act of kindness (10th August 2006).

The Shops

In most cases when business is slack the shop keepers prefer to sit together to play dominoes or cards. In such games, one observed the friendliness and brotherhood among both Muslims and non-Muslims alike in Malakia.

Also the researcher observed that Muslims and the non-Muslims discussed socio-economical trends and their impact on their lives both positively and negatively. Politically, they discussed issues surrounding politics in Sudanese as a nation. Usually pronouncing *Allah hu akbar* (Allah is Almighty) over the agonies on the political situation in Sudan. How can the GOS and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) in Darfur ever reach a peaceful conclusion? How comprehensive could that be? What is the future prospect of Sudan? Why is corruption, tribalism and nepotism so rampant in GOSS? Is this what people died for in the war? The observer couldn't hear any

responses as these as they were rhetorical questions. Nevertheless, as President John F. Kennedy states, “Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable” (KTN, Quote of the day, June 26th 2005). Other things they discussed related to religious issues on a local, national, or international scale.

Interviews

The following are the interviews carried out with selected Muslims using the guiding questions. The findings from the informants’ responses were interpreted later using an etic view and the relevant literature.

1. What is your understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*?
2. How does *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact the communal life of the Muslims in Malakia?
 - a) The impact on social life
 - b) The impact on economic life
 - c) The impact on political life
3. And how does *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact your religious decisions making?

Table 1 below shows the interview guide questions and explains their purposes.

Table 1. Interview guide questions and their purposes.

Interview Guide Questions	Purpose of the Questions
1. What is your understanding of <i>sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza</i> ?	To investigate the meaning as perceived by the twenty informants resident in <i>Malakia</i>
2. How does <i>sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza</i> impact the communal life of the Muslim	To help the researcher to understand the impact of <i>sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza</i> on

<p>in Malakia?</p> <p>a) The impact on social life</p> <p>b) The impact on economical life</p> <p>c) The impact on political life</p>	<p>the communal life of Muslims socially, economically and politically.</p>
<p>3. How does <i>sedik el aziz / sedik el aziza</i> impact the religious decision making of a Muslim in Malakia?</p>	<p>To help the researcher understand in what ways a Muslim's religious decision making is impacted by <i>sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza</i> relationships especially regarding conversion.</p>

Presentation of Informants

In this study, the informants were identified randomly from both genders. Below is Table 2 presenting the informants.

Table 2. Number of Informants:

Total Informants targeted	Number of Informants interviewed	Percentage
20	20	100%

As indicated above, all the twenty informants who were targeted by the researcher were interviewed. The information obtained was considered necessary to answer the research questions. The researcher used an interview guide that consisted of three main questions. The first question was meant to investigate their understanding of the subject being researched. The second question was intended to help the researcher to understand how *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impacts the communal life of the Muslim: socially, economically and politically. The third and final question was to help the researcher to understand the impact it has on how a

Muslim makes religious decisions especially the decision making leading to conversion. Table 3 below shows the responses of informants by gender.

Table 3: Presentation of Informants' responses by gender:

Category	Number	Percentage
Male	12	60%
Female	8	40%
TOTAL	20	100%

In the above table, and out of the twenty participants who were interviewed, twelve (60%) were male and eight (40%) were female. This imbalance was not a result of male chauvinism, but contacting female by male in an Islamic context like Malakia requires some sensitivity. Certainly this is a concern in every Muslim context (not only in Sudan), even for a lady and especially for Christian missionary ladies. For example, let us look at one of the missionary ladies' experience as reported by Adeney:

“Why do you want to study the Bible with my wife?” the well-dressed man asks Vanessa as they sit in the parlor of his home.

A man who cares for his family should ask questions when an outsider wants to begin a regular activity with his wife. It's his responsibility to know what kind of people are in his house. So when Vanessa first visits an Arab woman, she often finds herself cross-examined by the husband... (2002, 121).

Fortunately the female informants interviewed by the researcher were accessible due to the nature of their work. Three of them were *asatiza* (female teachers) and five of them have business in the market. Perhaps, it could have been difficult to interview them. Direct interpretation was used to report the findings of the study. This means, the researcher took a single research question, organised, analysed

and interpreted the informants various responses before reporting the findings that emerged from them.

The Research Questions and their Interpretations

Below are the research questions, the informants' responses and their interpretations.

Research Question 1: How does the Muslim in *Malakia* understand the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*? Table 4 below demonstrates the opinions and ideas of the informants about *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationships.

Table 4: Significant Characteristics in *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationships

Significant Characteristic	Number	Percentage
True love	7	35%
The Acts of Kindness	6	30%
Trust and confidentiality	4	20%
Honesty	3	15%
TOTAL	20	100%

When the twenty Sudanese Muslims were interviewed, the above understandings of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* emerged: that *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is a cordial relationship between two individuals or more, men or women who have a common interest. This kind of friendship is characterised by a close relationship. Those who are involved always try their best to maintain the friendship without allowing anything to spoil it. This means, when a person ascribes to *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* there is trustworthiness and credibility of confidentiality. *Sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is a genuine relationship which is more binding than often blood relation. For example, according to Sheikh Mena (among others), "*Al asbab el asasia*

le ilakati sedik el aziz wa sedika el aziza, hiya mohaba el hagigia wa moamal el kuwesa” (the foundational reason for genuine friendship is true love and acts of kindness). This means *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship is primarily based on *true love* and *kindness* actions between the said friends. It follows that, where there is no true love and kindness, there is no relationship *as sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*. Moreover, other informants state that the idea is derived from the Muslim concept of *Ummah*.

True Love

Out of the twenty participants interviewed seven (35%) which is the highest, rated true love as the most significant character. The love referred to points to the Greek love –Agape. Zwemer, the Missionary for Muslims for many years says, “... I am convinced that the nearest way to the Muslim heart is the way of God’s love, the way of the Cross” (1929, 20). This is the Scriptural love known as Agape in Greek. Wilson says:

Real friendship is imitating Christ in our relationships. We are to love each other as Jesus loved us, and he loved us enough to give his life for us. We may not have to die for someone, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love: listening, helping, encouraging, giving. Think of someone in particular who needs this kind of love today. Give all the love you can, and then try to give a little more” (2000, 233).

But could Sudanese Christian express this love as Christ? True love works when there is compassion for other people. Given the experiences of Southerners, how could someone express true love, kindness and compassion for a Muslim in a racially, culturally and historically prejudiced society? Nevertheless, how did Jesus respond in the context of racial prejudices? Consider His encounter with the woman at the well (John 4: 1-42). In this episode Jesus’ request for water is critical on two bases: firstly she was a woman, and secondly she was a Samaritan. The Jews relations with Samaritan’s were not good as John puts it, “For Jews do not associate with

Samaritans” (v. 9, NIV). The reasons were historical, going back to the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon 1 Kg. 12: 1-24 (Milne 1993, 83). And due to this historical difference, Ngewa says:

She was a Samaritan. As we are told in 4: 9, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Samaritans were regarded as racially impure (they had intermarried with settlers brought in by the Assyrians after the conquest of 722 BC) and their religion was corrupt, for the Assyrians had brought their religious ideas and worship with them ... (2003, 72).

Here is a Samaritan woman, and a Jewish man, Jesus. The relationship between Jews and Samaritans were not good, like Northerners and Southerners on one hand, and some Southerners and *Awlad el Malakia* (the boys of Malakia) on another hand. The question is, why did Jesus have to go through Samaria when Jews religious leaders who are concerned of their “purity” will not? And Ngewa gives us the answer:

... it is good to note that Jesus did not allow himself to be controlled by the self-righteous judgement of the Jews concerning Samaria. Pollution is a matter of the heart and not merely physical contact. He was not afraid of the Samaritans. He wanted his disciples to have the same view as he did... (Ibid. 65).

Jesus, because of His compassion and sacrificial love for all peoples, refused to be drawn into the old historical, political, cultural and religious divides. It is as though a Southern Sudanese Christian leader (or a Christian for this matter) overlooking the historical divides between the Southerners and Northerners. He relates freely to a Muslim member of Northern origin, or *Awlad el Malakia* (the boys of Malakia) inspite of the differences. In addition to that, and in the case of Jesus, there was the problem of gender discrimination that Jesus faced. A male Jew is not supposed to talk with a woman on the street and not only someone else wife, but even his own wife. For example, greeting alone is “forbidden” (Milne 1993, 83). Likewise, Ngewa puts it this way:

It was not acceptable for a man to talk to a woman in public. According to the belief of the time, it made him less pure.

Jesus ignored these boundaries. He saw the Samaritans as a people needing salvation. He saw in the woman the same need spiritual needs and potential that he saw in all men and women. His pastoral ministry was above the boundaries set by human prejudice (2003, 72).

This explains to us the disciples' astonishment at seeing Jesus talking with the woman, which reflects their conformity to the social and sexual prejudices of their society (v. 27). How different, is it today? Is the Sudanese Christians' relationship with Muslims in Malakia, Juba and Sudan above the boundaries set by human prejudices? Is our missiological and pastoral ministries above the boundaries set by human prejudice like Jesus? If not, what are the implications? Wilson rightly observes that:

Real friendship is found with Jesus. Because Jesus Christ is Lord and Master, he should call us servants; instead he calls us friends. How comforting and reassuring to be chosen as Christ's friends. Because he is Lord and Master, we owe him our unqualified obedience, but most of all, Jesus asks us to obey him because we love him (2000, 233).

Do we truly love Jesus? Can obedience be without emulating His own examples? Despite the justifications that one could propose for not being able to relate well with Muslims, can there be a biblical support? Copper asserts that:

I recently spoke with a Turkish man who come to know Christ from a Muslim background. He is a graduate of a University. I asked him what it was that influenced him. He told me simply that it was someone in Turkey who had shown love to him. This man was not a professional 'missionary', but he simply showed his Turkish friend the love of Christ. We must grasp the fact that the need today is for Christian people who will show genuine love and concern for Muslim men and women as they witness, whether in the West, or in the cities or villages where they live in a Muslim country... a Christian writer and thinker, has reminded us very strongly that, even though the image may be marred, each person still deserves to be treated as someone who has been created very specially by God himself (1985, 21).

Most of the Sudanese Christians have heard the story of Rev. Salvador Ali.

Rev. Ali was a Muslim and a senior army Officer in Sudan army. When he converted

into Christianity, he was threatened with death, put in jail and suffered exclusion from the community. His properties, wife and children were all taken. But God was there for him using Christians (like late Bishop Ephraim and others) they stood with him and helped him out of danger to Europe. Currently he is pastoring a Church in Holland in which many Christians who came from Islamic backgrounds from Middle East (including Iraq and Iran) were part. Also he has found an organisation serving Sudan from Holland. Rev. Ali speaks well of the true love that Christians from the Dioceses of Lui and Mundri in Khartoum had shown him when he was in need. Consequently, he considers himself a Pastor of the Diocese of Lui to date.

However, is it always possible to be friendly and loving to others where they acknowledge and appreciate your loving kindness? Of course not. Once the researcher was talking with a certain lady (Mrs. Jocelyn Sharland) about being a friend to someone and she comments: “You can be a friend to someone, but she is not your friend, just as you can be a relative to someone, but by her actions, you are not her relative” (September 7th 2006). This lady comes from a culture where relatives are supposed to be mindful and concerned of their relations, like friends. However, in her views, things have changed that is why most of her own relatives were not concerned about her, even though she claims to be concerned of them. The point she was making is that one could be a true friend to another with genuine love and kindness, even though the other person may not consider her as her true friend by her actions. Nevertheless, this should not deter you, because of your Christian missions. But what is the mission of Christians? According to Bosch:

Mission is not narrowed down to an activity of making individuals new creatures, of providing them with ‘blessed assurance’ so that, come what may, they will be ‘eternally saved’. [Though that is part of it] Mission involves, from the beginning and as a matter of course, making new believers sensitive to the needs of others, opening their eyes and hearts to

recognize justice, suffering, oppression, and plight of those who have fallen by the wayside (1998, 81).

Even Muslims are in need of justice. They are suffering for being oppressed by their religious system. In this regard, it is imperative for the Church to ensure that Christians are discipled and nurtured continually to be “sensitive to the needs of others” (Ibid), including the needs of the Muslims among them.

Kindness

Kindness was clear from the responses of the six interviewees. As stated by Sheikh Mena, *El asbab el asasia, hiya el... muamala el kuwesa* (the foundational reason is ... kindness) in *sedik el aziz / sedik el aziza* relationship. McDowell and Zaka observe that, “Make sure that your actions back up your verbal witness. You can be sure that your friend will be watching your life and attitudes carefully to see if they are consistent with your words” (McDowell and Zaka 1999, 197). Like genuine love, the issue of kindness remains critical. How a person acts kindly to another, determines whether one is a true friend, or not as Wilson states that:

Real friendship involves loyalty. What kind of friend are you? There is a vast difference between knowing someone well and being a true friend. The greatest evidence of genuine friendship is loyalty (“always loyal,” see 1 Corinthians 13: 7) –being available to help in times of distress or personal struggles. Too many people are fair-weather friends. They stick around when the friendship help them and leave when they’re not getting anything out of the relationship. Think of your friends and assess your loyalty to them. Be the kind of true friend the Bible encourages (as quoted in Wilson 2000, 233).

First and foremost, the interviewees expressed that the Muslim understanding of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is derived from the Islamic concept of brotherhood over against tribal and national identity. According to them, for a Muslim, which ever tribe he comes from, he has no tribe, for his tribe is Islam. But common sense (which is not always common) tells that this claim is not always true and the case in point is the issue of Darfur. If Islam does unify its believers across the globe into one tribe of

Islam, why are the senseless killings going on in Darfur? Of course, there are historical reasons and one reporter says, “There is no doubt that Darfur represents a massive humanitarian disaster at the moment” and this fact is attested to by many international witnesses. Nevertheless, the view that Islam is ‘the tribe’ of Muslims make the understanding of Muslim perspective on relationships critical which needs to be respected. Iqbal and Iqbal assert, “The best friendship in God’s eyes is one who does good to his friends” (Hadith) (Iqbal and Iqbal 1976, 43). Are Southern Sudanese Christians willing to do good to their Muslim neighbours?

Towards the end of the first *Anyanya one* war, there was a plane crash at Dumule in Moru area. The plane was carrying many people including Muslims. Some of the passengers died and others were injured. When the plane crashed, one of the Muslims realised that he had a broken leg and he pushed himself deep in the bush, away from the site of the crash. Later, the *Anya-nya* forces came and stormed the place. They found dead bodies and injured people. They buried the dead and took away the injured not knowing that one person was hiding. A week later, the person who was hiding, ran out of water. He tried to dig for water using his own fingers, but in vein. Finally, he wailed and people came to his rescue. He was taken to the church and a church leader offered to take care of him. He did report to the local authorities; however, he requested the authorities to allow him to care of this man. The permission was given. Later on, the *Anya-nya* authorities took the rest of the passengers near Mundri town, and allowed them to enter Mundri (by then Mundri was under the government control). However, this Muslim who had a broken leg continued to live with the church leader, until the Addis Abba Agreement was signed in 1972. They discovered that he had a big shop in Malakal in Upper Nile. They became good friends and he invited the church leader and his relatives to Malakal several times into

his own family. Some people believed that when the plane crashed, and the passengers were taken care of by *Anyanya* authorities (and this church leader), it partly contributed to the peaceful negotiation. Certainly, when the SPLA/M kept prisoners of war and handed them back alive, it made a historical record, although it was a disappointment when GOS failed to produce a single SPLA and SPLM member that it had captured in war.

Trust and confidentiality

If certain things are currently in a short supply in Sudan, then they must be *trust* and *confidence* and especially after the CPA. For instance, does the SPLA trust and have confidence in its senior Officers? Do the senior Officers trust their fellow colleagues who are now in prominent positions in GOSS? Do those who served under the former GOS trust those who came with the SPLA and SPLM? Likewise, are those who came with the SPLA and SPLM trusting their fellow brothers and sisters who were under the former GOS? Are those who came with the SPLA and SPLM not often referring to them sarcastically as *Jalaba* (in this case referring to Arabs in general)? What about SPLA and SPLM and SSDF? Obviously, whatever level, there seems to be lack of trust and confidence in the government. Some leaders are suggesting integration of the work force as the solution, be that at GOSS level, State or County. Yet others in the same system are talking of enforcing reduction of the work force. Whom do you trust? Certainly none can be trusted.

When late Dr. John Garang and the then first Vice President of Sudan, Tahar signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Nairobi, the Sudanese were among the most hopeful people of the world. Through a united opposition, they brought to an end the many years of oppressive Khartoum regime in the South. The jubilation was great and the hope was profound. It was as if the Sudanese were

Three (15%) informants mentioned honesty, which gives us low rating in the table. The researcher was surprised and he wonders why, honesty was not rated higher. Non-Muslims often accuse Muslims of dishonesty given the popular phrase *insh Allah* (if *Allah* wills). If you need something from a Muslim, he would say come tomorrow, *insh Allah* you will find it ready. When you come tomorrow, it is not ready and the same *insh Allah* would continue. Unfortunately, this spirit has entered many of the public service offices and some non-Muslims do the same. In some cases it means one needs to pay a bribe or nothing would be done. The informants did not clearly state that honesty rated low because of that, but the researcher wonders whether that is the case. However, given the scope of the study, honesty is of significance. Therefore, it should be taken seriously by Christians and especially as honesty is one of the Christian virtues.

Research Question 2: In what ways do *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact communal life of the Muslims in Malakia?

While interviewing the participants on this question, the researcher focuses on three main areas of social life, economic life and political life as indicated below. Table 5 below demonstrates the opinions of the informants on question 2.

Table 5. Presenting the Informants' opinions on communal impacts.

Communal Impacts	Number	Percentage
Social life		
Behaviour (life style)	11	55%
views	9	45%
Total	20	100%
Economic life		
Inter-dependency	14	70%
Economic empowerment	6	30%
Total	20	100%
Political life		
Same political persuasion	13	65%

Or Different political persuasion	7	35%
Total	20	100%

a) The impact on the social life of the Muslims in Malakia

Behaviour and views

Findings established that *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact socially in a variety of ways. However, according to the interviewees, it is vital to note that there are categories of friendship depending on a common interest. In some friendships the common interest is drinking. If you are a person who drinks, you may have a friend (or friends) who also drink. This means, whenever you want to drink, you contact this friend (or friends) so that you meet to drink. As long as you continue to drink, you remain friends. However, once you leave drinking the friendship is likely to end.

There are many other social challenges. For instance, on one hand, some male informants alleged that, some wives are unfaithful when you are away; they would tempt your friend. In this case, if your friend is not genuine, he would give in to this temptation. If this happens and you are aware, you are likely to fight (or kill) your friend, end up in jail or be executed. If you see this as temptation, and you don't want break your relationship with your friend, you could blame your wife, divorce her and continue in a good relationship with your friend. However, in their view, this depends on the genuineness of your friendship with the person who is your friend (Ibid.). But on the other hand, the female informants also alleged that, some men take their friends and introduce them to new girl friends causing havoc in the families (Sebit, 27th Jan. 2007; Babikir 28th Jan. 2007). Hence, the female informants agreed that once such a husband leaves drinking the friendship stops. This is the bad side of behaviour but there are also good side of behaviour. Likewise, some people with limited exposure could get exposed through friends and have broad views to understand the world

around them. Hence there is both positive and negative impact on friendship socially (Ramdan, 14th August 2006; Kambaya, 8th Oct. 2006).

It is important to note that the interviewees say that, at times one can disagree with his/her friend and this is part of human life. But according to ustaz Ibrahim, ustaza Ramdan, ustaza Mariam and ustaza Osman, when this happens one is supposed to return to his/her friend the same day to sort out the difference. If not the same day, it should be within three days. But if it goes beyond that, then that is unacceptable in Islamic faith (Interviewed on 14th August 2006). The Bible says, “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph. 4: 26-27, NIV). While Islam recommends that you reconcile in a day, or within three days, the Bible recommends that you do so within twelve hours or before sun set.

b) The impact on the economic life of the Muslims in Malakia.

Inter-dependency and economic empowerment

According to Ustaz Hassen Ibrahim, “*Sedik el aziz wa sedika el aziza be wagif maak be shida*” (*Sedik el aziz* or *sedika el aziza* stands with you firmly in all your plights). The informants’ response is that, in this relationship, whether one has a problem or hardship, need or no need, the friend stands with him/her. It means, if he/she should stand with you physically, socio-economically and so on he will do so. *Sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship impacts socio-economically. Most of the friends have the same socio-economic status in society. Nevertheless, at times certain friends are of different economic status, but they still get on well.

Sheikh Mena says, if someone is stable financially and sees his *sedik el aziz / sedik el aziza* is struggling financially, he gives some money to his friend to start some business. The giver would then ask his friend to refund the profit from that

business two or three times as a trial. When he sees that his friend is doing well in the business, then he won't allow him to refund any more. However, if he discovers that his friend is not doing well, he would withdraw and suggest that this friend works with him for a certain period to enable him to learn some skills in business, until the friend is capable of managing his/her own business. Sheikh Mena further says it is *haram* for a Muslim to see a fellow Muslim struggling and turn a blind eye to him. However, he adds that business depends on one's mind and it is important for a friend to develop creativity for his business to flourish.

Furthermore, sometimes a friend may be on a journey and he could entrust his family to his *sedik el aziz* in the hope that the friend would protect and take care of them in his absence. In this case, if this friend finds the family is in need, he would assist them, even financially. Whatever he gives to the family is not refundable, because he does not consider that as a loan (ustaz Ibrahim; ustaza Ramdan; ustaza Omer; ustaza Osman; Apaya, 14th August 2006).

The challenge is that, if you are a financially stable person, some people would like to become your friends, so that they could benefit from you. As long as you are able to assist them financially, they will remain your friends. However, when you run out of available money, they are likely to end their friendship with you (Sheikh Mena and Suliman, August 13th 2006). This sounds like dependency syndrome which is not always healthy for both friends. David Konstan states:

But the idea of friendship in the classical period of the democratic city-state, and particular at Athens, from which the bulk of the evidences derives, was further determined by the ideology of equality and freedom from dependency that was central to the Athens civic ideal. Friends were to be relied upon for assistance in times of crisis, but the assumption was that friends were more or less of equal station, and the obligation that friends might impose were in principle mutual and symmetrical... (Fitzgerald 1996, 8-9).

The informants said, other friendships are business-oriented. It is genuine, but only for business purposes and they do that for making business connections. Still other people become your friend because they want to gain experience through a friendship with you. For instance, one's classmates in school or colleagues at work. Sometimes after gaining the experience, they forget you. If so, it was not a genuine friendship and this is a challenge. But when it happens it is necessary to ask oneself why this was so? Was it because the person is bad or was it you? Perhaps before you start blaming such a friend, try to find out what went wrong? It could be your fault (Sheikh Mena, 13th August 2006; Lado, 8th February 2007).

The above table shows inter-dependency fourteen (70%) which is the highest under the impact on economics. However, the female informants also state that this is where *sedik el aziz / sedik el aziza* often impacts negatively, though at times it is positive. For example, some husbands used not to drink, but friends, who drink, lured them into drinking and they became irresponsible in the families. Others they use all their money for buying alcohol for others forgetting their family needs. This makes their friends to take advantage of them, though they are not smart enough to realise that they are taken advantage of. In most cases, their families break (Abbas, 27th Jan. 2007; Sebit, Jan. 2007; Juma 25th March 2007 and Babikir, 28th Jan. 2007). On one hand, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord ..." (Ps. 1: 1-2, NIV). But on the other hand, the Bible also says, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" (Ps. 133: 1f). However, is the togetherness and unity for evil or for righteousness?

Six (30%) of the informants state that, when you have genuine friends, they may empower you to gain life skills in areas like carpentry, mechanic, and others.

Also they state that, *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship often impact negatively on blood relationships socially. Nevertheless, true friendship is beyond blood relationships. For example, one could count often, on his *sedik* (friend) more than his own blood relatives. This is because of trust and confidence. But sometimes your relatives may accuse you of not being loving, because of your friend. Hence, even in friendship (they suggested), one should not cut off his relations with his blood relatives. There are times certain things could only be done by your own relatives for example, marriage. In marriage, your friend can stand with you, but when it comes to certain customs of your culture, he could not answer on behalf of your family. Therefore, it is important to keep your family ties even when you relate to other people in friendship genuinely (Sheikh Mena and Suliman August 13th, 2006).

c) The impact on political life of the Muslims in Malakia

Same political persuasion or different political persuasion

During the interviews, it was apparent that most people in Malakia were members of the same political association either NCP, or SPLM, or others, although, some friends belong to different political parties. Sometimes when your party takes over in government, however unqualified you may be, you could get a big position in the government. This is positive and you benefit in a variety of ways. But if your party is removed, it might impact negatively at times enemies could use your own friends to destroy you. During the war, many people who were supposed to be ‘friends’ betrayed their supposed ‘friends’ to their enemies and the friends were killed in cold blood. It was unfortunate and one could not understand the circumstances which led to these deaths, but it is strongly believed (by non-Muslims) that NCP was behind the killings. This has made some people extra careful when they are picking new friends and especially friendships with members of other religious sects. In this

regard, the informants state that often one has to ask himself when making new friends, what kind of friend is this?

Research Question 3: How does *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact your religious decision making?

Table 6 presents the opinions of the informants on research question 3.

Table 6. Informants' views about the impact on religious decision making.

Impact on religious decisions	Number	Percentage
Interest	9	45%
Life of <i>iman</i> (faith) or example	6	30%
Association	5	25%
Total	20	100%

Moucarry observes that:

The Gospel calls Christians –and the Qur'an calls Muslims –to be witnesses for God. In each community this means renouncing both ignorance and confrontation. It means making the effort to listen, to explain and to understand.

For God's message to be understood and accepted, the messenger must relate it to the situation of the people. Not only this, but the very nature of the message, which is about a merciful God calling for a free response, determines the way it should be communicated. In other words, if mission (Christian or Islamic) is in God's *name*, it must be carried out in God's way. This means dialogue, fairness, respect, and the opportunity to respond freely (2001, 290).

According to Shekh Khamis Morjan Mena, *ilakat sedik el aziz aw sedika el aziza, hiya ilakati marat katira bena moaminin. Lakin ma daimani* (true friendship is a relationship mostly between believers, but not always). If it is between believers, it is best because it is based on the truth of the Scripture and enriches their spiritual lives. In addition to that, Ajal says, religious belief can *cement* the relationship of true friends, if they come from members of the same religious group (Interviewed on

September 11th 2006). However, sometimes you could be a believer and your *sedik el aziz aw sedika el aziza* is not a believer. The question is how do you impact his decisions to become a believer into Islam? In such a situation, Sheikh Mena, Suliman and the others suggest that you need to know what your friend (who is not a believer in Islam) likes or loves most. You must begin from there. For instance, if he loves to drink alcohol, then you need to buy for him some alcohol and he is likely to say, *sawarata keif* (how did you know that I like this)? In this connection, try to share with him your views on both the advantages and the disadvantages of alcohol. Even if he says it is too late for him, you could encourage him to believe that there is second chance for him. If he leaves drinking he is still capable of being a responsible person in the community. The researcher wondered, if this is the case, how come such people are often flogged and jailed in Khartoum under the Shariah Law?

Interest, life of *iman*, and association

Out of the twenty (100%) informants, nine (45%) indicated what your friend is interested in as key. What is it that he likes and loves most in life? If you know what he likes and loves most that could help you to persuade him to come out of it. Six (30%) say your own life of *iman* will influence him. When he sees, you are always sober, you take *salat* seriously, you do not drink, you take care of your family, your business is doing well and the like. He will begin to admire your life of *iman* and this will make him to think of faith. And five (25%) informants indicate your association with him will also persuade him for you to love him as a person. What the informants said seem to be helpful if it might be used appropriately, though depending on the context.

In this regard, if someone is a drunkard, you associate with him and begin from his interest of drinking, by sharing your opinion on the advantages and

disadvantages of drinking as the informants suggest. In most cases those who drink say it helps them to forget their problems for a while. However, they often found that they had increased their problem. For others, drinking leads to smoking, adultery, stealing, murder and they would finally end in prison. However, in the case we are dealing with, in the relationship to the Muslims, what is the person's interest? If one knows, he shouldn't be judgmental; instead, he should be pastorally redemptive. The researcher wonders whether the Muslim informants got the idea from the Bible, because this is Jesus' principle. Jesus, in His encounters with the woman at the well, first says, "Give me a drink" (John 4). To get her attention, Jesus began the conversation with the woman's concern (Coleman 1997, 48). It is necessary to ask, what is this person's interest? One will not necessarily buy alcohol, if the person is a drunkard and as suggested by the informants. But one needs to turn any simple, ordinary life experience into spiritual object lessons to unveil theological truths for the comprehension and redemption of the Muslim friend (Ibid.).

Two informant said, sometimes you were good friends until your friend becomes a member of another religious sect. When this happens, and if your friendship is not that genuine, it would bring some friction in your relationship. For instance, when your friend tries to draw you into their sect, and if you refuse, the relationship would break. But with some friends, he continues, *wa bizat ma sedik el indu shodoro waseh, maada sedik el shodoro deig* (and especially with a friend who has an open heart, except that who is not). Such a friend accepts debates and differences, even if he doesn't agree with the debates but remains your genuine friend. Certainly, for non-Christians, the Christian is the Bible and they read the Christian which could either attract them to Christ, or repel them. Mallouhi rightly observes that:

As we share our faith with others it is important to understand that our religious traditions are not the Gospel and may actually have little relationship to the message and even be obscuring it. Following Christ does not mean joining the *Christian* culture that has grown up over the centuries ... leaving one's family and people ... to take a new *Christian* name... wear a different style of clothing. Nor does it require using the symbol of cross, nor worshipping on a certain day, nor a certain style of worship ... None of these cultural expressions are essential to following Christ. The only reason we may need to change any of these practices –in any culture of the world –is if there is a direct link with sin or Satan. Then there is need to beware of confusing culture and religion... the one thing following Christ requires is to believe his words about himself –that he is the word of God, bringing us back ... His own path led to self-sacrifice for us all ... to be his disciples involves first and foremost self-denial on daily basis. It is easy to perform religious duties and still be ourselves ... We have to die to self in order to walk in holiness... It means enter into a relationship with the living Christ, to learn from him and obey his command for living a life pleasing to God. It means acceptance of his other followers as family members. This following is voluntary. Christ does not force anyone to come after him, but calls men and women and leaves them to decide (2000, 324-325).

This requires the Christian to present Jesus and His word to a given Muslim friend in whatever way. In this question, the researcher also expected the informants to hint on the contentious issue of why Muslims are difficult, and often could not allow any member to be won with the gospel or exclude them? However, the informants were too careful to be drawn into these areas of concern. So the challenge is, how do you get a friend especially a Muslim friend, who could stand with you all the time? Alternatively, would you be such a friend for a Muslim? Someone says, “It is not a miracle to have a million friends, but it is a miracle to have a friend who will stand with you in a million ways” (anonymous, KTN Quote of the day, April 28th 2007).

CHAPTER 5 MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ultimate purpose of this study is to describe the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* among the Sudanese Muslims at Malakia in Juba and its missiological implications for Christian witness. Critical discussions and interpretations were done according to the informants' perspectives. Three main research questions were used to understand the meaning and impacts of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* among the Sudanese Muslims in Malakia. The following are the questions that guided the interview.

1. How do the Muslims in *Malakia* understand the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*?
2. In what ways do *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact communal life of the Muslims in *Malakia*?
 - a. The impact on social life.
 - b. The impact on economic life.
 - c. The impact on political life.
3. In what ways does *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* impact the religious decision making of the Muslim in *Malakia*?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher designed the following questions to guide the interview:

1. What do you understand about *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship as a Muslim in *Malakia*?

2. In what ways do you think *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship impacts communal life:
- Social life
 - Economical life
 - Political life.
3. And in what ways does *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship impacts religious decision making of a Muslim?

Missiological Implications

The findings have revealed that the way people relate and act is fundamental for the establishing, promoting and maintaining of intimate or genuine friendships. Thus in summary, and based on the understanding given by the informants, *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is a relationship based on true love, actions of kindness, trust, confidence and honesty. One could not talk of such relationships when there is no true love and kindness. By implication, animosity, hatred, historical differences and lack of peace are the evidence of lack of true love and kindness. By contrast, God's call and command for mankind is to remain in love and unity, "I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have love me" (John 17: 23, NIV). The general impression is that true love and kindness are significant and vital to our fellowship with one another regardless of our socio-economical, racial, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. For the Sudanese Christians in Malakia to develop deep roots of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationships with the Muslims, they need to incorporate some of the most useful and positive sociological, economical, political and religious emic views as expressed by the Muslims in Malakia. The positive Southern Sudanese Muslim moral practices also need to be reconsidered, though their positive roles have been partly distorted by the negative relationship between Northerners and

Southerners. Therefore, the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*, being demonstrated in the moral concern for the welfare of others (even the un-known), is significant.

The values of standing firm with a true friend, regardless of circumstantial situations, or the primary ideal of communal solidarity and brotherhood in the *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship, is something to be admired. Helping a friend to start a business, or lift him out of poverty, or be empowered, is certainly something to learn from. However, by the Sudanese standards, Southerners might not be stable financially, to empower their Muslim friends as they wanted, but there could be some areas where they could help. Traditionally, the members of the Muslim community take family ties seriously in all aspects of life, a significant fact. The view that Muslims are one under *Ummah* as opposed to the fragmentation into tribes and national identities, in spite of the contradictions that come from the war in Darfur, one should not dispute but rather acknowledge and respect what *Ummah* should entail. Muslims are community oriented and this relates well to spiritual and theological aspirations of Christianity, though Christians can at times be the opposite. Certainly, the missiological implications in the context of Malakia, poses some challenges and one should not underestimate them. Musk states profoundly that:

For Christians especially, the challenge of twenty-first century is to draw back from seeing Muslims or Islam as “the enemy”. Even where some Muslims cast themselves as opponents of (in their view) “unbelieving” Christians and Jews, the words of Christ about attitudes toward “enemies” need to colour our response. The kingdom of God grows in peoples’ hearts, not via the sword but via the cross (2003, 10).

The Sudanese people do anticipate immense challenges ahead, in spite of the CPA. For example, what would happen at the end of the interim period? Will the country remain in unity or will there be cessation? And what would be the impact of

either decision on Muslim and non-Muslim relationships in Malakia? On contrary, whatever the case, the highlighted characteristics above are excellent beginning points for fruitful relationship building and for Christian witness to Muslims. Indeed, they are good as advice for points of interaction with Muslims in Malakia, if they are utilised appropriately. These might not be easy, but the researcher is hopeful that this study will be useful to the ministers to Muslims in Juba in this regard. Moreover, it is hoped that with the help of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one could use these emic views in the light of Biblical views which might do miracles for the glory of God.

Conclusions

In the final analysis, and based on the opinions and views of the informants, the researcher draws and highlights the following findings as significant concepts on *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* among the Sudanese Muslims at Malakia in Juba. Out of the twenty (100%) informants; seven (35%) understood that *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* is a cordial relationship between individuals and based on true love (or agape love); six (30%) consider it to be based on kindness; four (20%) view it as trust and confidence being vital; and three (15%) see honesty as important part in establishing and maintaining of the relationship.

For the impact on communal life, eleven (55%) informants indicate behaviour, or life style impacts *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*; nine (45%) informants indicate impact on the Muslim's views; on economic life, fourteen (70%) informants indicated inter-dependency and six (30%) indicated economic empowerment. Politically, thirteen (65%) informants indicated the same political persuasion was ideal and seven (35%) indicated that different persuasions were alright.

Finally on religious decisions making, nine (45%) informants indicated knowing the interest of the friend; six (30%) informants indicated your life of *iman*; and five (25%) informants indicated your association with the unbeliever Muslim friend is vital. Given these findings, the researcher arrives at the following conclusions:

In the light of these, therefore, firstly, *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* means a cordial relationship between two individuals or more, men and women with a common interest. This relationship is primarily based on true love and kindness. Those who are involved always strive to maintain the friendship without allowing anything to spoil it. There must be trustworthiness, confidence and credibility of confidentiality.

Secondly, it is characterised by honesty and close relationships of openness. These relationships impact the communal life of the Muslim: socially it impacts the behaviour and views of the friend either positively or negatively. Economically, it either impacts inter-dependency or economic empowerment. It can either be positive or negative. Politically, some friends come from the same political persuasion and others come from different persuasions and it impacts accordingly either positively or negatively depending on the personalities and the context. However, it is important to respect each other as a person in his/ her own right.

Regarding, the religious decision making of the Muslim, the impacts depend on whether you know the interest of the unbelieving friend or not. Are you living the life of *iman* that is exemplary or not? And do you associate with the person to attract him/ her to *iman* or not?

Recommendations

In the light of these conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims in Sudan or in Malakia are often contentious or controversial. It seems better to avoid allowing them to get out of hand, even though sometimes controversies make people think scripturally for answers.
2. Have a fair knowledge of the socio-economical, historical, political and religious experience of the people you are dealing with, in addition to the knowledge of the word of God.
3. There are no racial, cultural or gender boundaries to the good news of salvation. Christ is the Saviour of all, and we need to present Him as such to all.
4. There are correct behaviours which need to be observed in dealing with opposite sex in ministry to the male and female Muslims. Even between one lady and another, there are often some limits (Adeney 2002, 121).
5. To get the attention of a Muslim friend, begin with his concern or interest. Live an exemplary life and associate with him/her.
6. Try to turn simple, ordinary life experience into spiritual object lessons to unveil theological truths for comprehension.
7. Acknowledge the good qualities in the Muslim like love, kindness, trust, honesty and the like. These build up his respect for you and for your beliefs and for what you want to offer him.
8. Instead of decrying the historically negative relationships that have been separating Northerners and Southerners and even Southern ethnic groups

further, it is better to cry out and emphasise the things that unite the Sudanese more.

9. Seek to be a community at Malakia in which all the Sudanese: Christians, Muslims, non-Christians and non-Muslims, male and female are involved, culturally and appropriately, cared for, supported and encouraged to have genuine friendship; being mindful of others. This does not mean assimilation.
10. If the gospel is to impact the lives of Muslims, then it seems appropriate for their Christian friends to understand their underlying worldview in relation to what they do and its significance; and to establish true relationship of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* with them.
11. The Sudanese Christians in Malakia (and Juba in general) need to reconsider and rethink ways of building bridges with Muslims in their locality through relationships of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*. And try to ensure that Muslims get connected to Jesus Christ, Who alone can fully meet their felt needs and grow in Him.
12. Give preference to the values and respect of human friendship with the people you encounter, regardless of their ethnic, race, gender, socio-economical, political and religious status or background.
13. Discuss and interact in the communities on the concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* and its implications for communal lives.
14. Teach all ages in the family and in the church about the significance of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*.
15. Explore honestly the advantages and disadvantages of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*.

16. Think missiologically, pastorally and redemptively using emic perspectives on *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* and in the light of the biblical models on genuine friendship which is expressed, exalted and celebrated by all.

17. And aim (like Jesus and the Samaritan woman) at winning the Muslim *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza*, who will in turn win others for Christ.

The researcher would like to close this section with Reza F. Safa's (who is a Christian from Muslim background) counsel who gives us another emic perspective on the work we commend:

I feel it is essential for Christians to understand some of the religious teaching that Muslims receive ... Because the church has failed to understand Islam, the Islamic people have not been stirred or touched by the gospel of Jesus Christ. They remain in the darkness of a fanatical religion which forces them to have faith in a god who is unreachable, untouchable and unknowable (1996, 10).

Recommendation for Further Studies

This study aims at understanding the Sudanese Muslims' concept of *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* in *Malakia* and its missiological implications for Christian witness. The results have revealed that certain characteristics are significant in the said relationship. However, the researcher suspects that there could be other characteristics of significance, which might have not been uncovered through this research. For this reason, the researcher recommends a similar research for further studies, but with a case of another context, for instance, among the Muslims at *haya Jalaba* in Juba.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE (For selected Muslims in Malakia)

A. BUILDING RAPPORT

- a) Introduction
Researcher (Avokaya)
Informant
- b) Explanation of the purpose of the research and the interview (Avokaya)

B. THE INTERVIEW

1. What do you understand about relationships with a *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* as a Muslim in Malakia?
2. What impact do you think *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationships has on communal life of the Muslim in terms of:
 - Social life
 - Economical life
 - Political life.
3. In what way does *sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza* relationship impacts religious decision making of a Muslim –conversion?

C. **CONCLUSION:** An expression of appreciation for giving time to be interviewed.

MULHAK A

MURSID EL MUGABALLA (le adad Muktar min Muslimin fi Malakia)

A. BINA SIGHA

- a) Muggedima
El bahiz (Avokaya)
Mugedim el Maluma
- b) Tuwdihi agrad el bahaz wa el mugaballa (Avokaya)

B. EL MUGABALLA

1. Maza tarrif an el ilaka bain sedik el aziz/ sedika el aziza ka Muslim fi el Malakia?
2. Ma hiya tasir ilaka sedik el aziz / sedika el aziza fi a haya el ama lel Muslim fi aljawanib el a tia:
 - Haya el itimaihia
 - Haya el iktisadia
 - Haya el siyasia
3. Ma hiya tashir ilaka sedik el aziz/ sedika el aziza fi itakaz el karar fi el juwanib al dinia?

- C. **AL KITAM:** Al tabir an el shukur wa el takdir le attaha el furssa lel mugaballa.

VITA

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Educational Background

2007 Master of Arts in Missions (Islam), NEGST
2001 Bachelor of Arts in Bible and Theology, Pan Africa
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1994-1995: Certificate for Ministry, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, UK.
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1988 Certificate in Christian Theology, Bishop Gwynne
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Professional Experience

2006 – Present Bishop, Diocese of Mundri, Episcopal Church of the Sudan
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2003-2004 Scripture Distribution Officer (SDO) and
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2001 Administrator, Dioceses of Mundri and Lui, Liaison, Office,
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1993-1996 Curate, All Saints Cathedral, Juba. Bishop's Chaplain and
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1993-1994 Ordination into the offices of a Deacon and a Priest
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1991-1996 Microscopist, Sleeping Sickness Control, Juba Teaching
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