

The Sudan Newsletter, Volume 4; No.3 Autumn 1994

THE SUDAN NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 4; No.3 AUTUMN 1994

ACTION: The Sudan Newsletter strongly appeals to the international community to tighten the arms embargo against Sudan, and publicly expose when possible, countries that have military links with Sudan.

Cincinnati Reaches Out to Sudan

Who will speak of the Holocaust?
Who will speak of the African Holocaust?
Who will speak of Sudan's Holocaust by Sudan against its own people?
Who are the Sudanese?
Are they our brothers?
And are we our brothers' keeper?

These touching words were expressed by Dr. Merelyn Bates-Mims of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was moderating a forum discussion on the Sudan, which was sponsored by the Cincinnati Reaches Out, Inc. -- a charitable organization that provides medical supplies to needy people throughout the world.

The Cincinnati Reaches Out, Inc. (CRO), in collaboration with the Comboni Missionaries, invited the exiled Sudanese Bishop Macram M. Gassis of El-Obeid Diocese in Western Sudan, and other Sudanese to come and share with the Cincinnati community the suffering endured by the Sudanese people. Bishop Macram spoke at length, detailing the agonies which the Christians and those who cling to their African traditional religions undergo daily in the Sudan. (See excerpts of his speech below).

Other Sudanese invited were Mr. Bona Malwal, the former Minister of Information and Culture and currently the editor of the London based "Sudan Democratic Gazette"; Mr. Manute Bol, the renowned NBA star; and David Nailo Mayo, editor of the "Sudan Newsletter."

A heart rending and disturbing part of the presentation was a fresh video tape -- a documentary of a British press (which was taped and brought by Bona Malwal). This was shown in the forum before Bishop Macram spoke. The graphic documentation which stunned and deeply disturbed the audience, documented barbaric acts committed by the present regime in Khartoum in the name of Islamic Puritanism.

The CRO, a non-profit organization of interested physicians, lawyers, politicians, pharmacists, educators, and media professionals was founded in the height of the 1985 Ethiopian Crisis. The aim was and still is to provide medical help to those in need. Since its formation, the CRO has sent more than 600 tons of medicines to many places throughout the world -- including Peru, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, India, Romania, Guatemala,

Zimbabwe, Macedonia, and Bolivia. Recently, the plight of the Sudanese people renewed interest to seek more support for this worthy cause.

Dr. Walter T. Bowers, a physician who directs this Organization, spoke appealingly about the need to respond to global humanitarian issues. He stated that there are people who really need our help, and we have a moral obligation to respond. He appealed to the audience to support the cause of the CRO by making donations in kind or money.

Please share this appeal with a friend and respond by donating medicines and medical supplies to:

Dr. Walter T. Bowers

CINCINNATI REACHES OUT, Inc. 8108 Beechmont Avenue Cincinnati, OHIO 45255

Bishop Macram urged Ohions to participate in the search for peace in Sudan: Will the Buckeyes respond?

The Most Reverend Bishop Macram Max Gassis of El-Obeid Diocese in Western Sudan was touring the United States this summer. After spending some days in the New York area, the Bishop was able to visit Cincinnati, Ohio where he spoke at the **University of Cincinnati's African-American Cultural Center**.

He appealed to the audience to participate in the search for peace in Sudan. Below are the excerpts of his one hour long speech.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

It gives me great pleasure to spend a few days among you and share with you the agony and the tragedy of the Sudanese people in general and the African ethnic group, Christians and those of traditional beliefs. I am here in Cincinnati as a part of my global campaign to create awareness about the suffering people and the Church in the Sudan which are at the mercy of a military dictatorship of the Islamic fundamentalists.

You have certainly heard of Somalia, Mozambique, Angola, Bosnia- Herzegovina, and Rwanda. Until recent times, South Africa was almost a daily topic on the media. Sudan, a country of terror, assassinations, genocide, ethnic cleansing, torture, mass-arrests, extrajudicial executions and religious persecution with hundreds of thousands of unknown martyrs is totally and absolutely forgotten and neglected. The violation of primary rights is the fundamental cause of all these sufferings! And because of these sufferings, I must speak in behalf of my people. I do it for the poor people. I do it for the people of the Sudan.

The Sudanese government is a ruthless regime whose system of governance is terror thus violating the basic human rights of the people -- killing some and rendering the rest

desperately poor and displaced within its own nation or unwanted and humiliated as refugees in neighboring countries and in the West.

It is a regime that is starving its own people in order to force the non-Muslims and the non-Arabs to forfeit their Christian faith or their traditional beliefs, to give up their African languages, traditions and customs and become Muslims. I have testified several times about the existence of slavery in the Sudan. In February this year, I testified before the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva -- citing specific cases and names of the children abducted and sold into slavery.

Cases of slavery are frequent and the list is lengthy, but I mention it to you here so that you may be aware that slavery is not a barbaric uncivilized and inhuman practice of past centuries. It is a sad reality practiced in the Sudan and encouraged by the existing Islamic fundamentalist regime.

The Church in the Sudan is persecuted and accused of being the Fifth Column of the colonialists. The Church leaders are regarded as "Salibi'yin" or "infidel crusaders." This term "salibi'yin" is used even by senior people in government. In Kordofan Province in 1989, for instance, the number two man in the regime, speaking in front of the Lt. General Omer Beshir, said that the "infidel crusaders" are enemies of Sudan and of Islam. This is not an isolated incident, on the contrary the Islamic fundamentalists have used the media and public rallies to incite, insult, and debase Christians and Christianity.

This is all a part of the overall oppressive policies against the Church and to terrorize the Christian citizens. In efforts to humiliate and disgrace the Church, the Islamic fundamentalists often bring unfounded charges against the clergy. For instance the Episcopalian Bishop, Rev. Boutros Elberish, who was alleged to have committed adultery with a woman he was counseling, was dragged and flogged publicly without due process of law. An Italian technician (working for the Church) was arrested in Khartoum while drinking Pepsi Cola with two Ethiopian ladies in a cafe. He was charged of attempted adultery and was sentenced to forty lashes.

Furthermore, pastors, catechists and laypersons have been tortured, burned alive and killed in many parts of the Sudan. In the Nuba Mountains, for instance, a film documentary showed that Pastor Kamal Tutu, about 40 years old was caught by the soldiers in the Nuba region and baked in a hot sun for hours before he was thrown in flames of the Church set ablaze by the soldiers. His hands were completely burned off to the elbow as were his feet. Furthermore, Younan Kwa, a catechist, and his father were slain by the paramilitary Popular Defence Forces (PDF), while Pastor Fadul was crucified in a El-Nugra village. His colleague Ibrahim El-Shayib was also crucified and his ears chopped off. Fortunately, he's still alive in Umdulu village. If I go back, I would like to take a picture of this man and bring his picture to you!

The Islamic fundamentalist government, is convince that it has the right to impose Islamic law on the citizens. The Islamic fundamentalists are blind to the reality that the Sudan is neither an Arab country nor a Muslim nation. Sudan is multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-racial country. The truth is that the pure Arab population of the Sudan is a minority. In northern Sudan, the majority who call themselves Arabs are in reality a mixture of Arabs and Africans. The paradox is that the Afro-Arabs, are afraid of their African roots and they believe that Africans have had no role in the history of civilization.

Furthermore, they believe that only Arabian history and Islam could give them a status which is superior to the African ethnicity and the African beliefs and Christianity.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Islamic fundamentalism in the Sudan does not create good Muslims, but to the contrary it creates absolutists who would hardly tolerate pluralism and diversity. The maintenance of the Islamic Sharia laws can only be justified where all the citizens are Muslims but not in a country like the Sudan. Such laws will only widen the gap between the North and the South and between Christians and Muslims. There can be no meaningful dialogue between the Muslims and the Christians unless certain fundamental prerequisites are met.

As Christians, Christ's commandment of love for all, means that we should be in a position to love our brothers and sisters as they are and not as we expect them to be. In order to have constructive dialogue mutual understanding, knowledge, respect and trust are fundamental prerequisites. Therefore dialogue excludes monologue or the imposition of one side's ideas or beliefs on the other. I am convinced that the members of the current Islamic regime in Khartoum are not honest and/or prepared for dialogue. Their policy is coercion, overtly or covertly, terror and force to imposed their will and their policies.

As a shepherd of my people, I appeal to you, brothers and sisters of Cincinnati, to be good Christians and bring justice and peace to Sudan by:

* **Speaking to your legislators** urging them to take effective steps to put an end to ethnic cleansing and genocide that is taking place in Sudan. It is not enough to put the Sudan in the terrorist list. An arms embargo must be imposed and tightened. Sanctions were used on Iraq, Libya, and South Africa and now in Haiti and Cuba. Why can't this be done in the Sudan?

* **Write or telephone the media** when they report what is happening in the Sudan, let them know you appreciate what they reported and should get as much coverage as other world's "hot spots."

* **Urge the U.S. Government and the UN to implement the none-fly zones, safe havens and land corridors for relief supplies** and monitoring mechanisms, and to stop the regime's aerial bombardment of civilians.

* **Urge your bishops in the U.S. to issue statements condemning the violation of human rights** in the Sudan and to approach the U.S. Government to table the Sudan case in the UN Security Council.

+ GOD BLESS YOU
