

## Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron

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### PANEL EVENT AT THE ONE WORLD CENTRE - GERMANY FROM 14 - 20 MAY 2010

TITLE: PEACE BRIDGERS - WHIP SWEINGERS  
SUBTITLE: THE ROLE OF CHURCHES IN CONFLICTS

### REFLECTION: PERSONAL WITNESS FROM BISHOP PARIDE TABAN

First Violence in Sudan started with Mutiny of 18<sup>th</sup> August 1955. Where most of the Arab Muslim Business People in the Southern Sudan Towns were slaughtered by the Southern Sudanese Army – Innocent Lives lost.

The Catholic Church protected some Innocent Lives hiding Arab Moslems in Church Apartments. After the suppression of Mutineers, the Government in the North accused the Missionaries to have collaborated with the Mutinies - because of their good act of saving the Arabs and finally in 1964, they were all expelled from Southern Sudan. But the Missionaries did not give up returning to Southern Sudan after the Signing of The Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972.

In 1965, the Northern Regime tried to kill all the Christian Intellectual in the Southern Sudan. Those who had to escape the Country left and some Priests were killed, in the Whole Equatoria, only three Priests were left and I was One of them. When things were getting a bit better I and my two Colleagues, Msgr. Silvestro Laharanya and Fr. Augustino Obama wrote Letters to some Priests who were in Refuge to return to assist in the Southern Sudan.

One of the Italian Missionary Priest asked us: "Have you settled the Case of the Christians and Priests who were killed?" We replied him saying why is the Church. The Pope in Rome? Have you settled the Case of Jesus and all the Martyrs killed in Rome?" We can only solve such Cases through Loving Our Enemies and giving Services both for the Friends and Enemies.

In the Twenty One Years of War in Southern Sudan - from 1983 to 2004, 2.5 Million Lives were lost - between Fundamentalist Moslems Regime, Christians, Moderate Moslems and Traditionalists.

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*† Colan*



The Church did not go in Refuge. Those in Government Areas remained with the Citizens and those in Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) controlled Areas remained with Citizens though their Lives were under thread and in danger. The Church was lobbying for Reconciliation and Peaceful Solution. At the end the War was stopped through Peaceful Negotiation on 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2005.

**SOME PRACTICAL EXAMPLES WHEN SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (SPLA) TOOK OVER THE TOWN OF TORIT ON 26 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE HANDS OF SUDAN GOVERNMENT**

I and 3 Priests who were with Poor Citizens in Torit Town were taken Prisoners of War in the Bush for 100 Days. We were feeding on Dry Maize and Wild Fruits, bathing with 5 Litre of Water every ten days. But when we were released from the Prison, we brought Relief Food for all People under the control of Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) and we fed their Children and Women. We were like Mothers to them and Mothers to their Children, both Bad and Good alike.

Sometimes, I was told by Friends: "Commander so and so wants to kill you Bishop Taban, be careful". When I heard this, I took my car and drive to Commanders' house and took Cup of Coffee with him, played with his Children. Some People who heard such things told about them, feared and fled the Country. I remained with the People till the Signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

The Church in Sudan is known as Christian Church. They are all Members of Council of Churches. They respect each other and they respect Other Religions even the Tradition Believers. I, Bishop Paride Taban was the Co-Founder of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) during the 21 Years from 1983 to 2004 and was its First President. It was not Separation from Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) but to Save the Lives of People under Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which Sudan Council of Churches whose President was in Khartoum, was not allowed by Sudan Government to Serve them and Sudan Council of Churches and New Sudan Council of Churches met yearly in a Foreign Country and was united with World Council of Churches.

**SUDAN**

All the Conflicts in Sudan ended through Negotiation - of 1955 Munity, War started from 1964 to 1972 and the War from 1983 to 2004. After the Negotiation, People who called themselves Enemies, lived together as Friends.

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This was very queer for some Countries. That was why a British Writer, wrote: "When God created Sudan, God Laughed". God the Father of all and Father of Peace Loves Sudan. The Sudan is a Country of People who Forgive. Sudan is a Biblical Country. We feel that God's Peace is being reborn among Us through the Sudanese People who are forgiving the Hurts and the Wounds of 21 Years of War. Forgiveness is truly a Gospel in Sudan.

Although the Government in Khartoum tries to place numerous Obstacles in the Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) Signed in Nairobi, Kenya on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2005, the People of Southern Sudan do not respond with Violence. I quote The Words of Salva Kiir Mayardit, the President of Southern Sudan: "I am Launching a Special Appeal to Countries in the Region and Countries of the World to Save the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Our Movement has Fought for Freedom and Equality. It remains committed to the Peace Accord and Will Never Return to War".

The Church in Sudan was the First to Issue such Statement after Signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). **"NO MORE RETURNING BACK TO WAR"**.

Such manner of trying to Solve a very serious Situation is Laudable in its seeking to use any means to avoid another Bloody Conflict. Look at the Word of Jesus in Luke Chapter 6. "Love your Enemies, do good to those who hurt you". Hate multiplies hate. Violence multiplies Violence. Love is the only Energy capable of transforming an Enemy into a Friend. We befriend an Enemy by Forgiveness and not by Hate and Revenge. Only Love can drive out Hate.

Martin Luther King Said: "Whoever is devoid of the Power to Forgive is devoid of the Power of Love".

No matter what Our Faults or Sins may be, God's Love is Greater than Our Acts. Therefore, we must pursue Peaceful ends by Peaceful means. This is what Great Leaders like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King teach Us.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring the end Acts done. It means, rather, that the Evil acts no longer means as barrier to Relationship. Forgiveness is a Catalyst creating the Atmosphere necessary for a Fresh starting and a New beginning. This should be the meaning of the **"NEW SUDAN"**.

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**NO. 5: CHURCH AS PEACE BRINGER**

For African Regions and The International Community, I quote this Ancient Tale: **"Two Lions Within Us"**. There is an Ancient Tale about a Grandfather who explains to his Grandson that within every Person there are two Lions - One is the Lion of Anger, Resentment, Jealousy, Competition and Fear. The other Lion, through suffering, has learned to live in Peace and Harmony with other Animals, to show Compassion and Respect for those different from itself.

The Grandson asks his Grandfather which Lion will win within him, and the Grandfather answers: **The one you feed!**. We need to help each other to choose again and again to feed the Lion of Peace within Us, if we are to be among those who are rebuilding Our World with LOVE and PEACE!

**Peace Bringer**, The Church, which rejects no one, accepts everyone, Saints and Sinners. The One who lives with People, uses positive works - avoid hurting Words - who stands between lives with Peace, Mind and Heart amidst Conflict - Takes no side in conflict.

**ROLE OF CHURCH IN CONFLICT IS TO BE A MOTHER WHOSE LOVE IS AVAILABLE FOR ALL HER CHILDREN**

For Example, in Torit how a mother dealt with her two Sons: One was with Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and another was the Sudan Government Army (SGA). She protected the two Sons and when the Sudan People's Liberation Army over run the Sudan Government Army in Torit, the brother in Sudan People's Liberation (SPLA) protected his brother in Sudan Government Army. The Church is like that - Reconcile - Jesus appeared after Resurrection First to Mary Magdalene from whom He cast out of her Seven Devils.

**FURTHER REMARKS:**

**Where can Churches intervene as Peacemakers?** Churches - bring People together to meet and assist them solve their differences. First meet One Community find out their difficulties and then meet the Second Community, listen to them what they feel about their Neighbors. After discovering their problem, bring them sit together and let them talk about it. How does each One hurt One another? How can each assist One another? At end the people discovered that they are the same, they are one body, from Adam and Eve.

Take issue of Abraham and his brother-in-Law, they found that they were One Family and One Flesh.

*F. Akon*



### **HOLY TRINITY PEACE VILLAGE, KURON – AN OASIS OF PEACE**

I retired from the Pastoral Administration of The Diocese of Torit in 2004 because I wanted to build a Reconciliation Center in Sudan, An Oasis of Peace. I want the Sudan to avoid Conflicts, War after having suffered three decades of War, from 1955 to 1956, from 1962 to 1972 and from 1983 to 2004.

The main Cause of these Conflicts was, not recognizing the Rite of other People, Equality, Religious Segregation, Tribalism, Slavery and lack of Equal Development between Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan.

There is Small of Peace Flame of Peace present in Holy Trinity Peace Village-Kuron today. The Neighboring Pastoral People who used to call their Neighbors Enemies, today they call them brothers, sisters and friends. They share the same School and the Hospital. They have regular Meetings and Conferences together to solve their difficulties and they now call themselves Human Beings.

### **THE LATE POPE JOHN PAUL II SAID REFERRING TO THE WAR IN IRAQ:**

“When War threatens the fate of humanity, it is ever more urgent to proclaim, with a strong and decisive Voice, that only Peace is the Road to follow to construct a more Just and United Society. Violence and Arms can never resolve the Problems of Humanity”.

### **SOME QUOTATIONS ON PEACE FROM THE SCRIPTURE:**

1. 1 Cor 7:15 - God Has Called Us To Live In Peace.
2. 1 Cor 4:33 - God Is A God Of Peace, Not Disorder, Not War.
3. 2 Cor 2:11 - Encourage One Another. Live in Harmony and Peace, and The God of Love and Peace will be with You.
4. Gal. 5:22 - The Fruit of The Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Endurance, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.
5. Eph. 2:14 - For Christ is Our Peace, who made both Groups into one and Broke down the barrier of hostility that kept us apart.

With this I close my Presentation.



+ Paride Taban  
Bishop Emeritus Diocese of Torit - Sudan &  
Founder of Holy Trinity Peace Village - Kuron

