

Operation Nehemiah

HELPING REBUILD THE NEW SUDAN

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Celebrating the Independence of the South Sudan: The history of her Church, 37 AD- 2011 AD. "



And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the Holy One, the True One, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.'"I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name." Revelation 3:7-8



Shalom! On behalf of my family and Operation Nehemiah, I invite you to join us in praise to God Almighty for granting independence to South Sudan from Islamic tyranny on July 9th, 2011. On this day, the world will witness the triumph of the Church and her people as South Sudan rises from the ashes of persecution as a sovereign nation. The Sudan was one of the world's first regions to hear the Gospel, long before Islam arrived. They have withstood the Jihadists, won their freedom, and secured Sub-Saharan Africa from further Sharia conquest.

In honor of this momentous occasion, we recount the history of the Church in the Sudan.

"In the very beginning of human history, according to the Bible, God touched the heart of Africa. Cush, the son of Ham, made his home near the joining of the Blue and the White Nile Rivers sometime after the great deluge. Cush was not the first to settle there. The second chapter of Genesis tells us that this land inhabited by Noah's grandson originally contained the western boundaries of Eden. If that is the case, it is possible that Adam and Eve once walked in Africa. Certainly, in the days before the biblical flood, people had settled near the fertile river valleys of the Nile system. The Bible says that the River Pishon encompassed all the lands of "Havilah." Havilah is the name of one of the sons of Cush, who probably settled near his family of origin. Plentiful gold, bdellium, and onyx—minerals that have been found along the banks of the river that the Romans later called the White Nile—enriched this land. The River Gihon "compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia," and most likely refers to the Blue Nile. Although the names Pishon and Gihon have been lost in antiquity, the biblical references strongly suggest that these Edenic rivers were indeed the same rivers that flow through present-day Sudan.

Fertile ground and abundant resources in the Nile River valleys





would have encouraged antediluvian society to flourish ; and Cush's progeny filled the region after the flood. The land was, in a very real sense, a cradle of ancient civilization. ... Although this was a time of great wealth and culture, the Hamites and Cushites had all but forgotten the Creator of God of their ancestor Noah. The pharaohs were revered as gods during their lives, and their days were spent preparing for the journey to an afterlife of their own creation. ... The "apiru," or Hebrew peoples, were Semitic tribes of "foreigners" who settled in northern Africa sometimes around 1,500 B.C. to escape famine. At first, the nomadic tribesmen were welcomed by the Egyptians, but as the Hebrews flourished, they became a threat to the rule of the pharaohs. The Egyptian rulers responded to this threat with oppression and slavery. But God intended all of this for good. The Hebrew peoples were eventually delivered from bondage, and the laws and practice of the worship of Yahweh were finally formalized and recorded. The stage was being set for the coming of the Messiah who would be for all peoples. Africa figured prominently in the history of Israel and in the life of Christ.

The "Ethiopia" of Bible times extended from Aswan and the Nubian Desert in the north to the region of modern-day Khartoum, Sudan in the south; and of course, it extended eastward into the horn of Africa. Although the name of Cush is commonly associated with what is now modern-day Sudan, sometimes the term "Ethiopia" was used to refer to the entire area south of Egypt.

This cosmopolitan region was also home to Jews of the Diaspora and proselytes who embraced monotheism. The Hebrews gained their name in Africa and have been a continuous presence in that continent ever since. Waves of new Hebrew immigration occurred after the Assyrian conquest of Israel in the eighth century B.C. and again after the fall of Jerusalem some two hundred years later. There is evidence that Judean priests migrated to the Aswan region of the Nile around the time of the destruction of Solomon's temple. ...

The Bible indicates that Christianity was originally received in the Land of Cush in the first century, AD. By this time, the Roman Empire exerted considerable control in the region. The Book of Acts describes a meeting between the apostle Philip and a royal eunuch who was returning home to Africa after a pilgrimage to the city of Jerusalem. The eunuch was reading a messianic prophecy from the book of Isaiah when Philip explained its meaning—and its fulfillment in the life of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Immediately, the eunuch stopped his chariot and asked to be baptized in a nearby body of water.

"And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39 RSV).

It isn't clear whether the Ethiopian eunuch was a Jew by birth or a proselyte, but the Holy Spirit certainly chose him for a very unique encounter with God. He was an important man—in charge of the treasury of Queen Candace. The title of "Candace" was given to all the Queens of Ethiopia in those days. This eunuch would have been headed to the capitol city of the kingdom of Meroe, located on the Nile River just north of the confluence of the Blue and the White Niles, in the heart of present-day Sudan. No doubt this influential man brought the good news of the Messiah back to the courts of Queen Candace and to the synagogues of the region. Originally, the message of the Messiah was taken only to Jewish groups, and they were the first Christians. The first church, which is also referred to as the "Old Church," or "Kanisa Ajuza," in Arabic, was born in Dunqulah, the capitol city of ancient Meroe. Tradition holds that many of these very early believers were converted based on the testimony of the Ethiopian eunuch. It is certain that they helped form the kernel that developed many years later into the Nubian Christian Kingdom.

The new faith called Christianity spread quickly throughout northern Africa in the first century AD. It was an African, Simon of Cyrene (modern-day Libya), who carried the cross of Christ. There is some speculation that he was an important early convert to Christianity. He may be the "Simon the Black" (Acts 13:1) who later laid hands on Paul and Barnabas to commission them to bring the gospel to the world. By the end of the second century A.D, the majority of northern Africa was Christian, producing such early church fathers as Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine. It was Tertullian who was



credited with the famous quotation: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." He was well acquainted with martyrdom, because the Romans at the time were killing African Christians at an alarming rate. Despite persecution, the Church grew steadily over the next three hundred years.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Arab invasions hammered away at Christian resistance, great numbers of Nubians were killed or sold into slavery, and the remaining Christians hid in remote areas without any communication with other Christians or the world at large. African Hebrews were also increasingly isolated; some had retreated during Nubian Christian rule and more sought remote haven as the Muslims advanced. As the Nubians fled, Arab settlers claimed the land and converted church buildings into mosques. The remaining Nubians were absorbed into the new culture through intermarriage and conversion. ...

The Arabs changed the name of the land of Cush to "Sudan," meaning "the land of the Blacks." Christians and Jews who refused to convert to Islam scattered into the African interior. They ended up in Southern Sudan and parts of the modern Ethiopia, Libya, and the horn of Africa, where they maintained their faith and their African heritage within tribal groups. Finally, in approximately AD 1500, all traces of the Nubian Christian kingdom vanished. ...

In 1869, a British explorer, Sir Samuel Baker, made the first attempt via Egypt, Sudan, and Uganda to explore the sources of the Nile. He reported to the British authorities about his findings, which led to British interest in colonizing the Nile Valley and in ending slavery there as well. ...

A coalition of Egyptian and British forces took control of the Sudan in the 1800s. Great Britain was mainly concerned with the preservation of its interest in the Suez Canal, which linked the English to their most valued colony, India. The British immediately saw the problem of religious and ethnic conflict between the North and the South, and they set about to stop it. During colonial rule, the North and South were strictly separated, and Arabs were not allowed into the southern territories. Slave raiding was ended. It was then that missionaries were sent into the South to establish schools, churches, and medical clinics.

When European missionaries finally arrived in what they had in ignorance called "the Dark Continent," they found the fragile remnants of ancient African Christians and tribal Jewry alive and well in the Sudan.

As the Europeans worked among previously isolated tribal groups, they found very pious people—even though the influence of orthodoxy had been gone for centuries. Literacy had faded, but oral tradition remained. Many of these people, descended from Christian or Hebrew families, were very receptive to the Gospel. After all, both Christianity and Judaism had flourished in Africa hundreds of years before the message of the Church had ever reached the remote peoples of places like Great Britain. The "new" message of the missionaries was already understood at some level by many of the Sudanese. **Excerpt taken from: The Bible or the Axe** by William O.

Levi Founder and president Operation Nehemiah, pp. 27-37. Here is a link to the Sudan's historical timelines!

leading to the South Sudan's Independence. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/01/07/f-sudan-timeline.html>



The faces of the Sudan's Christian Church from 19th -21st century.

In 1846 a Vicariate Apostolic of Central Africa was created, and RC missionaries (including D. [Comboni](#)) worked to establish the Church in Khartoum and up the Nile valley into the South Sudan. Missionary work came to an end in the Mahdist rising of 1881, but began again when an Anglo-Egyptian condominium over Sudan was established in 1899. No direct evangelization was allowed in the mainly Muslim North, but in the South the [Verona Fathers](#) returned and were joined by the [CMS](#) and American [Presbyterian Mission](#). All education in the South was in the hands of missionaries. In 1946 government policy changed: the South was to be integrated with the Muslim North in preparation for independence, which came in 1956. In 1957 Church schools were turned into Koranic schools, and the remaining missionaries expelled in 1964. Although the churches were deprived of clergy outside the main towns, Church membership increased as Southerners found a Christian identity in the midst of Islamic

Persecution. The [World Council of Churches](#) largely brokered the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement between the Sudanese government and the South Sudan Liberation Movement. It was, however, steadily abandoned by the government. Hostilities were resumed in 1985, and in the 1990s civil war and famine rendered the position of the Christians desperate. Over two million lost their lives, and four million were driven into exile.

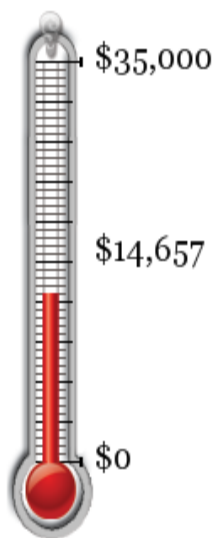
Today, the majority of Christians in Sudan are members of either the [Roman Catholic](#) or [Anglican](#) churches (represented by the [Episcopal Church of the Sudan](#)) but there are also many Evangelical Churches represented there, including the Presbyterian Church of the Sudan, Africa Inland Church, Sudan Church of Christ, and The Nile Beth Israel Messianic Congregations.

Operation Nehemiah Missions exists to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ, bringing people to repentance and eternal salvation. Everything else is secondary, and all the success of our social & developmental projects hinge on this Biblical foundation. Although many secular, humanitarian organizations effectively alleviate physical suffering, we understand that "Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4). We will continue to help the people and proclaim the Gospel to every soul entrusted to our care.

Certainly, freedom from Islamic tyranny will remove significant challenges to the preaching of the Gospel, but we understand that true oppression is in the heart of man and cannot be alleviated by political change. Only Jesus Christ has the power to set men free.

Listen to national Anthem of the new Republic of the South Sudan

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NY8qIAKn5Y>



I would like to give you progress update in our fund raising campaign to raise \$35,000 taking place from June 15- July 31, 2011. Thus far, we have raised \$14, 657 towards our goal for June 15- July 31. We want to thank God for our Leadership team on the Ground in the South Sudan for raising single handily \$6,000 toward this fund campaign. They have used the sustainability projects already established by Operation Nehemiah in the land to raise this much money under the church direction. Our project Coordinator, Timothy Levi says, they in the field don't want to leave Operation Nehemiah's financial obligation to implement vision and goal to the main office in the USA alone. They want to be a part of fulfilling the ministry's vision. Still outstanding are the following. We need your help to continue the work. Please prayerfully consider contributing today towards:

Total Goal – \$35,000

Total balance: \$20,343.00



In His service, William Levi, Founder and President, www.operationsnehemiah.org