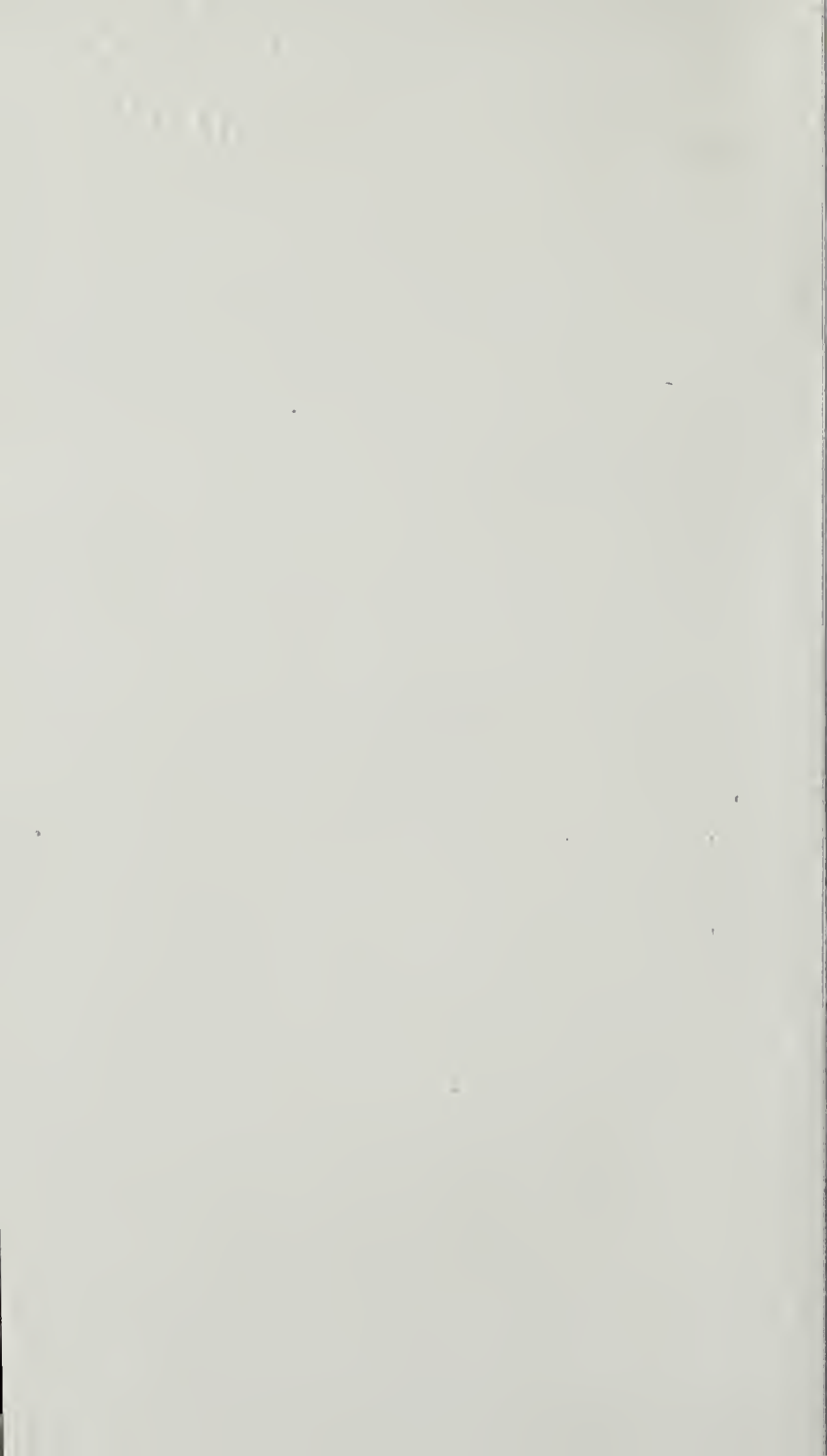


Pam. McCreery 161
Africa - North
Sudan

Missions in the Sudan



Women's General Missionary Society
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Missions in the Sudan

REV. ELBERT L. MCCREERY

Come with me, and let us make a visit to our newest mission field—The Sudan—the land of the blacks.

We will want to make the trip as quickly as possible, for at best, the journey to the Sudan is a long one. The most direct route will be to take a boat from New York to one of the Mediterranean ports, such as Naples, and from there re-ship to one of the Egyptian ports, either Alexandria or Port Suez. It will ordinarily take from eleven to twelve days to make the journey to Naples, and another four or five days on the Mediterranean, to Alexandria. If we can make close connection we may reach Alexandria about the seventeenth day from New York. If, however, we fail in this connection, it may take several days to make this part of the journey. On reaching Egypt two lines of approach are open to the Sudan. Either the route up the Nile, or the Red Sea route from Suez to Port Sudan, and from thence by rail to Khartum. About five days is required for the journey, under ordinary circumstances, if a slight allowance is made for time necessary to make connections in Egypt. Thus, about three and a half weeks would be required to reach Khartum, the capital of the Sudan, which is the center of mission work, in what is designated as the Northern Sudan. With a population of nearly 20,000, it has but one missionary. One missionary is in charge of the work in Omdurman which has a population of over 40,000. At Khartum North, with a popula-

tion of 35,000 a Girls' Boarding School is established, with three young lady missionaries in charge.

From Khartum to Doleib Hill (560 miles) the journey by river steamer will require seven or eight days. Three steamers a month, which regularly carry mail and passengers, furnish the only method of transport. Passengers on the river boats from Khartum to the South must provide their own bedding and provisions, except on tourists' boats, which run for a few months in the winter time, when all tourists enter the Sudan.

To Nasser, on the Upper Sobat, you can make the journey unbroken from Khartum, during five, or at the most, six months of the year. During the remaining part of the year you may take the regular steamer to Doleib Hill, and from there make the trip overland, if you are fortunate enough to secure a few mules or donkeys for transport. Failing in this, the trip can be made by water up the Sobat River if a small light draft boat can be secured, such as would not draw more than a foot of water. The time required to reach Nasser, depending on the time of the year, on the conditions of the river, as well as the means of transport you employ. The shortest time you could count on from Khartum would be about ten days, when the regular boats are running clear through. At other times, you would better be prepared to spend as much as forty or more days on the journey, which would depend upon how unfavorable or favorable the conditions of travel would be. This means—under favorable conditions—getting to Nasser or Doleib Hill from New York, via Alexandria, Egypt (which marks the point about midway) and measured by time, rather than distance. Already you are becoming acquainted somewhat with the magnificent distances Africa has to offer.

THE SUDAN—ITS EXTENT.

The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan extends from a little north of Wadi Halfa, about 24 degrees north latitude, to a southern limit of about five degrees north latitude. Its western boundary is not very clearly defined. Its area is, however, probably nearly one-twelfth of the area of the entire continent. Its length, in a straight line from north to south, is about 1250 miles, and from east to west is over a thousand miles.

ITS POPULATION AND TRIBES.

The last station of our Egyptian mission and the Synod of the Nile is Assuan, about 24 degrees north latitude and a little north of the Tropic of Cancer.

The Nubian section, which lies between Assuan and Wadi Halfa, with a population of about 40,000, is under the Egyptian Government, and the remainder is under the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan Government. They are all Moslems, and a very small proportion of them speak the Arabic language. The people are known as Ba-ra-ba-ra. There is but one Gospel prepared for them in their own language, which is published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the Arabic characters.

No census of the Sudan has ever been accurately made. Even the estimates of the best authorities vary greatly. The best estimate, in the opinion of those who are the officials in the different provinces, gives a population of over 2,700,000. The same authorities estimate the area of the Sudan as a little less than a million square miles. It is difficult to say how many different tribes are inhabiting the Sudan. It is quite evident that there are at least one hundred and fifty. These tribes indicate varying degrees of civilization, and advancement from the Arab in the north, to the primitive Pagan in the south.

ITS LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS

The Arabic is, without doubt, the language which is used by more people of the Sudan than any other one tongue. Territorily its use is confined largely to the Northern Sudan. In other sections, there are literally scores of the various tribes whose languages have never been reduced to writing. How much of a common language they may possess, what the linguistic peculiarities and characteristics are, whether they are dialectic or of entirely different origin, cannot be determined until such time as a very large number of them shall have been reduced to writing. This complicates greatly the problem of missions in the Sudan.

ITS RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS

As to religion, the peoples of the Sudan may be divided into three groups. First, the great Moslem population, whose area is practically co-extensive with the use of the Arabic language. Second, the Pagan tribes, the people lying to the south of the Moslem and Arabic Section, and whose idea of God is very remote and indistinct. We designate the country, inhabited by these people, as the Southern Sudan. Third, there is the small Christian population, having its largest center of influence in the neighborhood of Khartum, where there is the largest center of English population, and where also are gathered several other communities, such as the Egyptian, Syrian and Greek communities, each of which exert an influence. This small Christian population is found scattered in such centers as Port Sudan, Atbara, Wad Medani and among the Dinka and Shulla tribes, who, in these recent years, have for the first time heard the Gospel story.

THE TASK.

When one thinks of the entire continent of Africa, which contains one-fourth of the land surface of the globe, and about one-tenth of the world's population, and then realizes that for this entire continent there are fewer missionaries than there are ordained men in the one state of Iowa, we begin to grasp something of the task before the band of workers in that continent. The difficulty of the task is further made obvious through the multiplicity of languages and dialects, which are spoken by the various tribes. The great problem of the Sudan today, is whether Christ is to be given to those Pagan tribes or whether the Mohammedan is to bring to them only the teachings of the false prophet. The task is certainly one which requires superhuman power.

THE FORCES AT WORK.—NORTHERN SUDAN.

What are the forces at work for the accomplishment of the task? There is first, in Khartum, the only English Cathedral in the Sudan. The Church of England is there because the English are the rulers of the Sudan. The Cathedral was dedicated on the anniversary of the day when Chinese Gordon laid down his life for that land. The efforts of the Church of England are confined almost exclusively to giving an opportunity of church service to the Englishmen who are in the Sudan in government service. Aside from the Bishop of Khartum there are associated with him two or three clergymen, whose time is occupied in working among the English residents and holding English services in a few of the larger centers. So far as reaching the native population is concerned, this is not an active force, altho its influence is a tremendous aid.

THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Second—The Church Missionary Society, and English Missionary organizations are doing educational work among the girls of the Sudan, in two or three of the centers. No evangelistic work is undertaken by them in the Northern Sudan. At Atabra, they have a girls' school, also in Omdurman and Khartum. A fourth school has recently been opened by them at Wad Medani. These schools you might think of as feeders for the evangelistic work of our Mission, and of the native church of Egypt in the Northern Sudan. The only other work done by the Church Missionary Society is the maintaining of medical work in Omdurman, with but one physician.

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF EGYPT.

Third—As the result of our United Presbyterian mission work in Egypt, there has grown up the Evangelical Church of Egypt. When the Sudan was opened up, owing to a number of the native Christians of Egypt going to the Sudan in government service, it was found necessary that the native church of Egypt should send workers there. This has resulted in the establishment of church service in Khartum, Wad Medani, Khartum North, and Atbara, and with various meetings being held in a number of other places. A colporter has reached, with Bibles and other portions of the Scripture, a number of centers where the Arabic language is spoken. This work of the colporter is sustained largely by the American Bible Society, in co-operation with our own mission, which has missionaries located in Khartum, Khartum North, and Omdurman. The work in Omdurman covers both the educational and evangelistic. The prominence is given to the educational work in Khartum North, both through the

boys' school, and through the girls' school, in which three lady missionaries are located, under the support of the Women's Board. In connection with these schools, church services are held which give a great opportunity of getting access to the parents as well as to the boys and the girls. In Khartum, in addition to the evangelistic work and the boys' day school, there is an Industrial Home, which provides a Christian Home for from thirty to forty homeless boys. This gives an unparalleled opportunity for influencing these young lives for Christ.

FORCES AT WORK IN THE SOUTHERN SUDAN.

Among the Pagan tribes of the Southern Sudan, there have been two agencies at work. The first, the Church Missionary Society station at Malek, located among the Dinkas, and from this, their oldest center, they are now pushing out to the southwest of Malek. Two of their missionaries have been exploring in this region. The nature of their work in this section, among the Dinka people, is very similar to our work done in Doleib Hill among the Shulla people. In each instance the missionary, coming on the field, found a tribe of people with no written language, and was confronted with the difficulties incident to reducing such a language to writing, in order that the Gospel might be brought to these people in their own tongue.

The second agency, which has been at work in the Southern Sudan, has been our own mission station at Doleib Hill. Progress has been made in the mastery of the language, and a goodly number have already been instructed in the fundamental truths of the Gospel. The results have been slow in coming, but are very encouraging now. This has been the history of all African missions.

Within the past few months there has come into this field, in the region between Khartum and Doleib Hill, what may eventually prove to be a third active agency through the establishment of an independent mission among the Dinka people at Melut.

In the opening up of the work at Nasser among the Nuer tribe our own mission is reaching out as the first agency to touch, in any way, what is probably the most powerful of any of the pagan tribes. They seem much more responsive than some of the other tribes, and we trust that it will not be long before they will be responding largely to the claims of the Gospel.

PROVINCES.

The Sudan is divided into thirteen provinces, which are as follows: Bahr-el-Ghazal, Berber, Blue Nile, Dongola, Halfa, Kassala, Khartum, Kordofan, Mongalla, Red Sea, Sennar, Upper Nile, and White Nile. In *only two* of these thirteen provinces *do we have missionaries located*. In the Khartum province, all our missionaries in the Northern Sudan, are located in the three cities of Khartum, Omdurman and Khartum North. In four other of the provinces there are a few Egyptians, who are in the government service, and are members of the Evangelical Church. These young men are the only centers of Christian influence in those provinces. A simple service usually held by them in one of their homes, is the only Christian service in any of those provinces.

The province of Kordofan, with an estimated population of over half a million people is absolutely without any mission influence. The Bahr-el-Ghazal province, the most populous, containing probably nearly a million souls, is unreached, except on one border through the mission of the Church Missionary Society from

their center at Malek. The Mongalla province, which lies directly north of Uganda, and whose population is estimated at over 115,000 people, has not a single missionary. The White Nile province, lying a little to the south of Khartum, with a population of over 110,000 people, has no missionary. The Kassala province with a population of over 75,000, and the Dongola province with nearly 150,000 are likewise destitute of a single ambassador of Jesus Christ.

If we were to assign one missionary to a population of 25,000 people as his field of evangelistic effort, it would mean that we should have not less than one hundred missionaries for the Sudan. At present our mission has seven men and their wives, and four young lady missionaries, (counting those on the field and those at home) as the total force of workers for that land. The Church Missionary Society reports a total of 12 foreign missionaries in the entire Sudan, representing their work. How inadequate such a force must appear when we realize that, unless largely increased numbers are sent out, the whole population of entire provinces must pass away without an opportunity of accepting Christ as their Savior.

THE NEEDS.

In considering the great needs of the Sudan mission, that which stands out foremost, is the challenge which is presented for prayer for that land. This is the most difficult to meet, because it is *harder to pray effectively*, than it is simply *to get people to give*. Christ commanded us to "pray the Lord of the harvest, that he will thrust out laborers" into those fields that were already white to the harvest. It is through prayer that He purposes to equip the needs of these fields as to laborers. How vitally important then appears the need for prayer. For

every American missionary on the foreign field today, there are practically 2500 members of Protestant churches in America. Who can estimate the increased efficiency of that little force of workers on the foreign field, if back of every one there was linked up, through prayer, that army of 25000 followers of Jesus Christ in the homeland? How vital it would make the work of each missionary if this could be realized. How earnestly we should pray that the plans that are being formulated by the missionaries, in their various fields, should be only such as He, in His wisdom, has planned. These missionaries are, today, laying the foundation upon which the future church of these lands is to be built. How essential that this foundation work should be laid in prayer.

The second manifest need, is for *an adequate number of workers*, so that these unoccupied provinces may be occupied at once. It is said that in the entire continent of Africa there are no less than eight hundred forty-three languages and dialects spoken. Of these, only a few more than one hundred have, as yet, been reduced to writing. That means, for the entire continent there are *more than seven hundred of the tribes to whom the Gospel has not come*. In the Sudan there are probably about 150 different tribes with nearly as many languages or dialects. no one really knows how many, and yet one could count on the fingers of his hands the different tribes whose languages are available as a vehicle for the spread of the gospel. If we consider our church responsible for only one-half of the population of the Sudan, allowing the other half to be divided among other missionary agencies at work there, it would give us as a very conservative estimate one and one-third millions of souls.

If we were to allow to each of our missionaries a field of 25000 people, it would mean that only about one-fourth of them would have any chance of hearing the gospel. It would mean that we ought to send out at once, thirty additional missionaries, in order that these various provinces might be occupied. When one considers that in our homeland there is one ordained minister for every 594 people, is it asking too much that enough missionaries be sent out so that the field of each shall not exceed 25000 souls? Should we require any one of our missionaries to reach a larger population than this indicated?

Third—*The Need of Equipment.* The laborer in any field must have his necessary tools. The missionary equipment does not need to be extensive. However, among the prime requirements for effective mission work, there must be provided suitable quarters where the missionary may live and work. This means that a missionary residence is essential and that such buildings as are necessary for the successful carrying on of the educational or medical or evangelistic work must be provided. Owing to the trying climatic conditions in the Sudan, the matter of having as comfortable a residence as possible is certainly to be desired. These buildings should be of substantial material, and so constructed as to make them as cool as possible. In the Northern Sudan, where our school work predominates, the Sudan Government Reports show that in the year 1910-11, December was the only month where sometime during the day the temperature did not reach 100 degrees or above. How essential it is for the maintaining of our school work under such conditions, that we have buildings which give as much protection as possible from such excessive heat.

Among the Pagan tribes of the Southern Sudan less extensive equipment in the line of buildings is needed for the present. There is, however, need of certain buildings to be used for educational, medical and evangelistic purposes; but for the present, smaller and less expensive buildings would serve the purpose than are required by the conditions in the Northern Sudan.

In the Southern Sudan one of the means whereby the efficiency of the missionary might be greatly increased, would be through improved means of communication. Means of transport are exceedingly slow and unsatisfactory at present. The nature of the country is such as to make overland means of travel exceedingly difficult. The line of least resistance seems to be along the water courses. The various peoples in this section are all dependent on the river for their water supply, and, hence, all their villages are accessible from the river. This makes the population, geographically, to extend in a long drawn out line, and puts a large part of them much further from any center where the missionary may be located, than in most fields. For this reason means of transport by river seem to offer the best solution, in order to make these people accessible to the worker.

Today, the paramount need in the Southern Sudan is for a light draft boat of sufficient power and speed so that the mission stations at Doleib Hill and Nasser might be brought into closer communication, and all the intervening territory be made accessible to the missionary worker. If the mission were provided properly along this line, it would mean that from either station the medical man might go out a distance of a hundred miles or more, and be able, by means of the boat, to bring back to his central station, people from those tribes who otherwise would not be able to receive the medical attention which he is there to give, as well as to

minister to the needs of the soul. It would also mean that the evangelistic worker could likewise, from his mission station, make trips up and down the river reaching villages and communities that otherwise would remain inaccessible because of the distance from the station.

IN WHAT WAY CAN WE, INDIVIDUALLY, MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SUDAN MISSION?

To each one of us God has given the opportunity of placing our lives over against the first need, namely, that for intercessors. To many of us God is opening up the way whereby either we ourselves, or our children, may go to labor for the redemption of these people. To all of us again, God gives the privilege of co-operating with Him through what we can do with our money. As we think of the commendation of our Lord, when He saw how men gave, and beheld the poor widow casting in her offering, certainly not one of us will say that he cannot share, even as she did. Shall we not all endeavor to have our lives represent an adequate return as an investment in Christ's great world enterprise?

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