



Melurimes

2 August 2009

New Adventures and Challenges

I certainly couldn't have had a warmer welcome at Gideon Theological College (GTC) in Melut. Pastor Philip (the principal), his wife and Joyce, the administrator, made up the welcoming committee. The last two weeks were spent on getting to know the town and its' people and setting up



The Women at GTC

home in my little *tukul* (Sudanese mud hut), which I am very thankful for. It never ceases to amaze me how diverse places in Sudan are – different tribes, different languages, different looking people and different climates. Since Melut is a lot further north than Torit, I spent the first days and nights sweating as I still have to get used to the heat and humidity here – we are right on the Nile. I also feel a little bit like a beginner in Arabic again as the Arabic here is northern

Arabic from Khartoum, which is very difficult for me to understand. On a work related note, I have dedicated many hours to lecture notes preparation and still have to prepare some more. We've had some difficulties here with the electricity as town power was added to our solar power. However, they have made a mistake and cut off the solar and because the town power isn't very reliable yet, we've had no power for the last few days. This meant that all the offices were shut down and I was not able to prepare anymore for classes to come. I'd be grateful for your prayers for that – we do take a lot of things for granted until we realise what it means to be without them! The students arrived a couple of days ago and the first day of lectures will be the 3rd of August. Please pray for my teaching and for good interaction with the students.

Pastor Philip



Culture Snippet: Sudanese Tribal Markings

I have now been in Melut for two weeks and am once again amazed at the diversity of cultures in Sudan. While the main tribe in Torit was Lotuko, who are usually small and do not have very obvious tribal markings, the main tribes in Melut are Nuer and Dinka, who are both incredibly tall and have very distinct markings. In the picture you can see Pastor John, a fourth year BA student at GTC, who received his facial markings when he was 16 years old as a rite of passage into adulthood and of identification with his tribe. Although the Sudanese government

is trying hard to phase out these markings as they are considered to enhance tribalism, they still play an important part in many Sudanese cultures. Pastor John once told me that you are not allowed to get married without them (or it is very difficult) and that people will not mourn for you properly at your funeral – without them you are considered a 'boy' not a man, since you have not proven yet that you can endure pain like a man. Interestingly enough, many of these markings only apply to men and not to women.

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Box 38, Cheltenham, GL50
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Prayer:

- good start into teaching
- good fellowship with the students and development of relationships
- please keep praying for my Arabic
- that I won't feel lonely here

Praise:

- for safe travel here and good accommodation
- for a warm welcome and good relations at the college