

Introduction

The expansion of Islam all over the Sudan Belt in Africa south of Sahara and the wish to win the Africans for Christ before they were won for Islam were the background for establishing the international and the Danish Sudan Mission (SUM) in 1911. Today, 90 years later, there are in the Sudan Belt large and steadily growing, independent African churches. At the same time as the churches have been growing, however, Islam has also expanded.

During recent years the Danish Sudan Mission and the churches with whom we cooperate have gradually started committing themselves to the meeting with Islam, since 1959 through the Islam in Africa Project (now Project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa – PROCMURA) and since 1979 through the international cooperation on Fulani mission (JCMWA). Lately also through radio and TV broadcasts to Arab areas via e.g. Sawtu Linjiila and SAT-7. In the years to come the biggest challenge for SUM and her partner churches will be to bring the Gospel to the Muslims in Africa.

When the Danish Sudan Mission was established, it was to a certain degree possible to distinguish between the Christian world (the West) and the non-Christian world (i.a. Africa and Asia) as the majority of the world's Christian populations were living in Europe and North America. Today, the centre of Christianity has shifted. The churches in the West are declining whereas the churches in e.g. Africa are growing rapidly so that today a majority of Christians are living in the 3rd World including Africa.

Also when it comes to mission engagement, the centre has shifted so that most mission work today is not carried out by western mission societies and missionaries, but by churches, mission societies and missionaries in the 3rd World. Therefore, terms such as reciprocity, equality and fellowship in mission between on one hand SUM and the church in Denmark and on the other hand the churches and organizations with whom SUM works together should be stressed encouraging exchange of experience and resources and also cooperation on solving tasks in Africa and Denmark.

For many decades SUM's most important model of cooperation has been the bilateral cooperation, e.g. between SUM and the Lutheran Church in Nigeria. The close connection between SUM (and the church in Denmark) and the partner churches in Africa is still very important, but due to the development of the partner churches, SUM's (and other mission societies) limited resources and the size and complexity of the mission tasks, the most important model of future cooperation will be the network model where several churches and mission organizations work together in many different ways and where each partner contributes in his own special way to the cooperation and the fellowship and is in return helped and inspired from the other partners.

It has for many years been a goal in mission work to establish churches that were self-governing, self-supporting and self-spreading. These goals are still valid as

bearing marks for the work carried out by SUM and her cooperation with churches in Africa. Today, however, we have to add a fourth bearing mark for the development of the independence of the churches, and that is the development of the independent theological identity of the churches (self-theologising). Therefore, the Danish Sudan Mission will also in future work together with churches that are not Lutheran. To be a church implies, however, not only freedom and equality (independence), but also unity and fellowship. Therefore, the above principles must be supplemented with corresponding guidelines that involve cooperation and fellowship among the individual churches and mission societies on management, economy, mission and theological development as bearing marks for the mission work.

Mission expresses itself differently at different times and in different connections, but fundamentally all mission emerges from God's mission, i.e. God sending Jesus Christ into the world. To be church is to be involved in God's mission in the world by being sent into the world to bear witness to the Gospel about salvation in Jesus Christ. The mission of the church is thus to be sent into the world, both the local and the global, to present and represent the Gospel through what the church is, does and says.

- **Mission is what the church is sent to be.** Just as God's incarnation in the man Jesus Christ was a presence in the society in a very specific, historical and cultural connection, the church has to be part of the social and cultural fellowship in which it exists. It is a very essential element of this presence that the church listens to the people whom it has been sent to serve and when serving makes use of what is true and good in the surrounding culture.
- **Mission is what the church is sent to do.** The church should in its diaconal work reflect that Jesus Christ is serving and caring of all the human life and all the people. This holistic service emerges from God's unconditional love of all people and, therefore, it cannot be reduced to an instrument of the preaching or anything else, but neither it can be separated from the preaching.
- **Mission is what the church is sent to say in the world.** The church has to tell the good news that the Kingdom of God has approached through Jesus Christ. The responsibility of the church and each individual Christian is to bear witness to what they have seen and heard whereas it is the task of the Holy Spirit to convince, convert and create faith. The goal of the preaching and teaching is to establish and develop congregations that through what they are say and do can be reliable witnesses to Jesus Christ.

The Danish Sudan Mission considers it her task to be one of the organs of the Danish National Church for mission in Africa and Denmark and to further the understanding of and engagement in mission in the congregations in Denmark. Based on SUM's understanding of mission and the evaluation of need and possibilities in Africa and Denmark as well as her own resources, SUM gives priority to the following four dimensions of mission in her work:

- **Evangelisation.** Evangelisation is to be understood as preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not yet heard it and received it. Evangelisation comprises communication of the Gospel with a view to conversion of people, incorporation of people in congregations or planting of new congregations and development of these congregations.
- **Diaconia.** Diaconia is to be understood as the Christian congregation's practical way of action towards people who need help and support. Diaconia comprises both remedy of actual human need, development of individuals, families, fellowships and communities to help them look after themselves, influence of the social conscience of the local and the international society.
- **Education.** Education is to be understood as both Christian education and general education. Education thus comprises both religious education and secular education, all with the purpose of building up people's potentials to enable them to attend to the tasks in family, congregation, community and nation.
- **Exchange.** By exchange is understood that Christian groups and individuals in Africa and Denmark get together in Denmark and Africa in order to get to know each other, inspire each other and share experiences and resources with the purpose of strengthening church and society in both Africa and Denmark. Exchange comprises a number of activities expressing fellowship and the reciprocity in mission saying that all need help and all have something to contribute to the Body of Christ.

Cooperation Partners

The main goal is to serve the purpose of the Danish Sudan Mission by means of the above four dimensions of mission in cooperation with a number of different partners in many countries. In this cooperation high priority is given everywhere to capacity building through training of leaders, and scholarships are granted for training of leaders, especially at institutions in Africa. The work being carried out today is shortly described below and afterwards is described as a strategy for the future what is intended to be continued and what to be changed.

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN)

The Danish Sudan Mission started working in Africa in Nigeria in 1913 and since 1972 this work has been carried out in cooperation with the independent church LCCN. Through all the years the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been part of this cooperation.

LCCN is supported directly partly through a yearly block grant and partly through earmarked grants for work among the Fulanis, running expenses of the Vocational Training School, leprosy work, education of pastors and support to African missionaries in the reach-out areas of the church.

Also individual projects within the church such as bible schools, church primary schools etc. are currently supported.

Further, LCCN is supported by missionaries being sent to help with: church administration, Vocational Training School, reach-out work, leprosy work, Fulani work, drinking water project, guest house in Jos and Hillcrest school which is a mission school for many churches and missions.

Another side of the work is exchange, at the moment especially exchange of young people in cooperation with Afrika InTouch.

Strategy for the Future

In the autumn of 2003 a partnership conference will be held with the participation of LCCN and ELCA where the future cooperation is on the agenda. The following objectives for the work are the SUM proposals for this conference:

- In order to encourage a true cooperation in mission we wish to set up a special steering committee in Nigeria with participation of the above three partners. This committee should prepare the annual plans for the cooperation.
- The cooperation is to support, in particular, LCCN's own mission efforts and therefore the support will be granted to mission in reach-out areas also including support to increase the number of African missionaries and to improve the education of and care for these missionaries and their families.
- At the moment the Fulani work of the church is being restructured. When this restructure is carried through, we want to support this evangelising and diaconal work, both directly and with missionaries.

- We also want to support a preventive diaconal work started by the church against the increasing AIDS problem.
- The support of the church administration is to be reduced, among other things by continuing the reduction of the block grant as agreed upon until this grant is totally phased out. To facilitate the cooperation on the common mission initiatives and thereby relieve the church administration of some of its work the intention is to have a missionary acting as a local representative of the SUM.
- The support of the vocational training school is to be reduced. To begin with by having African leadership of the school and on a long view by ceasing the support for investments and running expenses.
- Other areas such as support of individual projects, leprosy work, pastors' education, drinking water project and exchange projects should be continued.
- The total effect will be a reduction of the number of Danish missionaries while the number of African missionaries can be substantially increased and their conditions improved

This is as mentioned the SUM proposals for the conference. It will be then be the business of the conference to determine the final strategy for the future cooperation.

Other Engagements in Nigeria

The Danish Sudan Mission is responsible for running a guesthouse in Jos. The aim is to transfer the day-to-day running to African staff and after some years transfer the total responsibility for the guesthouse to LCCN.

Further, the Danish Sudan Mission has for years sent missionaries to the joint mission school Hillcrest where children of both Nigerians and expatriates, including missionary kids, are being taught. SUM has given notice to terminate this cooperation with effect from the summer of 2005.

It may come up to support evangelising and diaconal work carried out by other organizations than LCCN. At the moment this is done by participating in a work among street children in Jos, and other possibilities may arise if they are within the superior aims of SUM.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in RCA (EEL/RCA)

In 1983 the Danish Sudan Mission started working in EEL/RCA in cooperation with three other mission societies.

The missionaries sent out have especially been working with evangelisation, medical work from the clinic in Bohong, administration and building work. Further, we have supported the women's work of EEL/RCA and the evangelisation department directly and paid a pro rata share of other expenses of the church budget.

Future Strategy

The SMI-Centre in Bohong has experienced robbery in connection with political disturbances. As soon as circumstances permit, it will be re-established, but at a more simple level allowing it to be run by African staff. SUM will continue to support the running of the centre, but does not plan a permanent stationing of Danish missionaries in the church. Support will also in future be given to the evangelisation

department and the work among Fulanis while support to the church budget in other areas will be discontinued.

The Lutheran Brethren Church in Cameroon (EFLC)

In 1998 a cooperation was initiated with EFLC. The American Lutheran Brethren Church who had been working in the church till then, was about to withdraw from the cooperation. The Danish Sudan Mission has supported individual, time-limited projects upon application, especially the pioneer work of the church with evangelists in unreached areas and mission among the Fulanis. Further, the building up of the church administration has been supported among other things through a part-time missionary. In 2000 a Danish missionary couple was sent to teach at the Theological College of the church.

Future Strategy

The present work will be continued with a view to aiming support for future projects towards the own mission work of the church, if possible with an increased contribution to work among the Fulanis.

The Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Mali (MELM)

The Danish Sudan Mission has been working in Mali since 1997 together with two Norwegian mission societies who started the mission there in 1985.

The work in Mali is a pioneer mission. There are only 1 – 2% Christians in the country. The target group of MELM is the Fulanis who amount to approx. 1.5 mill. of the total population of 10 mill. people.

The work is divided into development work and evangelising work.

The evangelisation work is carried out by missionaries from Norway and Denmark as well as African missionaries (south-south missionaries) from Benin and Nigeria. The activities are many, but it is a work that demands patience. Today there are approx. 20 baptized Christians and 3 small congregations. This work is combined with diaconal work and educational work.

In 2003 the Danish Sudan Mission decided to refer future missionaries to being sent out through one of the Norwegian societies in order to facilitate the administration. Further, a block grant for the work was fixed. The Danish Sudan Mission is represented in the board of MELM.

Future Strategy

To maintain the work as it is now and at its present level, if possible with Danish missionaries sent out through one of the Norwegian societies. The aim is to call more African missionaries for this pioneer work.

The Anglican Church in Sierra Leone, the Diocese of Bo

The work in Sierra Leone was initiated in 1977 with the Islam in Africa Project (IAP, today called PROCMURA) as the main area of work. It was later extended to include health work from Kangahun. In 1995 the Danish missionaries were called back to Denmark due to the civil war in the country. Since 1996 SUM has for periods been represented in the country and worked together with the church in matters relating to refugees and renovation of schools. From 2002 greatest importance has been attached to peace and reconciliation work. Recently, a preliminary work in connection with the Confirmand's Action in Denmark has been started to run for a three-year period.

Future Strategy

Resumption of support of the medical work as carried out from the health clinic in Kangahun aiming at a simpler standard than the original. Sending out of a nurse/administrator and maybe a skilled builder. Continuation of the peace and reconciliation work as long as it is judged to be necessary (frame approx. 4 years). Launching of the exchange project.

It is to be examined whether there is a basis for resumption of the support of the PROCMURA work through seminars, equipment etc.

It may also come up to support projects concerning the reestablishment of the school work within the church.

International Organizations

Project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)

The Danish Sudan Mission has been supporting this project since its beginning in 1987, for periods also by sending out missionaries and employing a south-south missionary. The purpose is to help and inspire African Christians to meet Muslims with the Gospel, especially through education of Christian leaders.

Future Strategy

The support will in future be given as a block grant to the organization and scholarships for training of leaders.

Joint Christian Ministry in West Africa (JCMWA)

The Danish Sudan Mission has been a member since the organization was established in 1980. The purpose is to promote coordination, planning and exchange of resources and further encourage mission work of the churches among the Fulanis. JCMWA has been supported through block grants and for periods with staff sent out.

Future Strategy

Continued support with block grant and scholarships while direct support of employments will not be prolonged after the expiry of this period.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

During recent years support has been given to the studio Sawtu Linjiila in Cameroon transmitting on short wave to the Fulanis in West Africa, especially for payment of transmission time. Further, we have a cooperation with LWF on consultative service to the radio work of the churches.

Future Strategy

The aim is to have the transmissions sent on local FM transmitters so that payment of time on short wave will no longer be necessary. It will be possible to arrange consultative services also in future.

SAT-7

Since 1999 the Danish Sudan Mission has been a member of and supported this organization, established in 1995. The purpose is through Christian TV broadcastings in Arabic (and other Middle East languages) to help and encourage the scattered Christian groups of people in the Middle East and North Africa. In 2003 a missionary couple was sent out to serve with SAT-7.

Future Strategy

The support of SAT-7 to be continued at the present level and maybe increased.

Mission among Muslims in Denmark

Throughout the years the Danish Sudan Mission has worked together with other organizations with the purpose of promoting understanding of and commitment to mission among Muslims in Denmark. In 1996 a missionary was sent to the parish of Gellerup to assist in Islam-work there.

At the moment the work is supported financially through the newly established organization "Christian Centre of Knowledge and Information of Islam and Christianity" (KIVIK).

Future Strategy

The board of KIVIK where SUM is represented is endeavouring to make the organization self-financing. The Danish Sudan Mission guarantees KIVIK's economy at the present level until the end of 2004 after which date the support will be gradually reduced over three years.

We want to continue encouraging missionaries who return to Denmark to use their experience in the work among foreigners in Denmark.

Conclusion

The strategies above for the future are not a radical change of the work, but a natural renewal following the work and the development in the churches that we have seen the last few years.

Much ongoing work will be continued along the lines already laid down. Funds will be released by not refilling missionary positions in Nigeria and the Central African Republic, by gradually reducing the block grant to LCCN and by making KIVIK in Denmark self-financing.

These funds and, which we hope, new funds will be used to increase the support of LCCN's own mission work in Nigeria, renewed efforts in Sierra Leone and maybe increased support of SAT-7.

The cooperation with large, dynamic self-financing churches in Africa gives a quite new approach to mission. Our vision is to think in new ways so that we may gradually be part of the mission work carried out by our partner churches. The rapidly growing African mission societies will in future show us where to go in mission. It is our prayer that the Danish Sudan Mission may together with the young churches be leading the way to mission and send personnel and resources to the network to be developed.

If we take a long view it is the vision of SUM that the work is turned more to the north towards a work among Muslims north of the present partner churches, to North Africa too, so that Christianity may return to this originally Christian area.

Despite all planning we know that the most important is to be willing to go where God wants to send us in His mission and we believe that God continues to have an important task for the Danish Sudan Mission in Africa.

May the Lord of the mission, Jesus Christ, help us to listen carefully when we shall be charting the course in mission in the years to come.