

combination of ideas put together by this young man was considered bizarre by his family. His acceptance as a *n'anga* rather than his rejection as a madman would depend on whether he was able to put together a mixture of ideas which not only had a degree of coherence in his own view, but which also enabled others in the community to make sense of things which troubled them.

For most people in a community, ideas may not seem important until they are troubled. Then any ideas or explanations which seem to meet the situation will do: few people concern themselves with the overall coherence of how they react to different situations.²² A *n'anga*, however, specializes in the realm of ideas and the manipulation of symbols, and must be ready to provide a means of coping. A *n'anga* specializes in personal problems, especially ones which have no obvious customary solution, such as those that might arise through immersion in a national economy or through a major war. Influential ideas, particularly those propounded by educated Christian teachers, cannot be ignored. So we find people like Timothy listening to sermons in church and looking for ways to incorporate what he hears into the symbols which are so important to his healing practice.

Fabian has argued against the usefulness of 'pluralism' as a concept.²³ Part of his argument arises from a story told by a Jamaa store clerk which can be interpreted to mean that life, and religion in particular, is ultimately one: the truth must ultimately be allowed to emerge. Fabian argues that people do not accept the relativistic view of religion that the concept of pluralism applies. One could argue that Timothy's attempt to bring together beliefs from Tavara, Korekore and Judaeo-Christian traditions supports such a view.

Nevertheless, there is a great pool of ideas from which individuals may glean whatever suits their particular circumstances. The range of these ideas may not be as evident to people within the community as they are to an outsider who is not committed to any of them. Individuals may differentially select and adapt the ideas that are circulating in their community to suit their particular circumstances. Each may regard other adaptations as being essentially mistaken, thus denying the legitimacy of religious pluralism. In practice, however, there are often different systems operating within a single community, and it may be difficult or impossible to place a relative value on these systems. Timothy's attempt to draw together the different systems of ideas did not effectively unite different groups within the plural society in which he lived; but they did help individuals cope with problems that the plural society presented.

22. I have argued this with respect to systems of healing in Nigeria in M. F. C. Bourdillon, 'Pluralism and the Problems of Belief', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, Vol. LIV, no. 1 (1982), pp. 21-42.

23. J. Fabian, 'Religious Pluralism: An Ethnographic Approach', in W. van Binsbergen and M. Schoffeleers (eds.), *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion*, London and Boston: KPI 1985.

WENDY JAMES

UDUK FAITH IN A FIVE-NOTE SCALE: MISSION MUSIC AND THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

CONVERSATIONS with the old lady Umpa remain a vivid memory from my first weeks of fieldwork among the Uduk in the 1960s.¹ She decided to keep a kindly eye on me from the start, helped me to housekeep, introduced me to others and explained as well as she could what was going on. I found her company reassuring, though she was sometimes a little over-zealous in her defence of my privacy against visitors from neighbouring hamlets. Loyal and enthusiastic in defending the 'traditional' culture of the Uduk villages, Umpa nevertheless treated me to occasional speeches on the Day of Judgement. Opening her arms wide over the imagined crowd of chosen ones, she would sweep them up as if to Heaven, peering down over her shoulder at those abandoned to the fires below. She loved the drama of the scene, and her anxiety about it was real. But she was in no sense a Christian. The gusto of the portrayal belied a sober caution about the claims of the local evangelical mission and stubborn doubt about its motives. She refused to become a 'person of Jesus' and had only rarely been to the sermons preached at Chali church. But like many others in the outlying villages, she had picked up some elements of Christian dogma from the hymns which had been spread, almost as popular folk-songs, by the younger people who came and went freely between the mission and the countryside. Familiar as so many villagers were with these new tunes, but without the background to make morally intelligible the stark

1. From December 1965, fieldwork, supported by the University of Khartoum, was carried out in various periods until June 1969. A subsequent brief visit was made in 1983. A general account of the Uduk may be found in my book, *Kwanim Pa: The Making of the Uduk People. An Ethnographic Study of Survival in the Sudan-Ethiopian Borderlands*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1979.

messages they often brought, she would snort that *she* didn't wish to be snatched up in the air, nor dumped in the fire either.

Such disturbing ideas easily circulated far beyond the limits of 'mission education' or 'Christian belief' in the conventional sense. Older people were perhaps particularly sensitive to the images of death, destruction and separation prominent in much evangelical teaching. Like Umpa, many of them personally remembered the slave-raiding disturbances and wholesale flight of the late nineteenth century. Images of the Day of Judgement were of a kind to command attention and provoke worry among many who were otherwise not attracted to the mission. This, however, is only one aspect of the more general and very interesting question of the way in which partial and highly selective elements of that supposed entity, 'Christianity', may spread beyond the confines of formal teaching and the controlled transmission of belief and practice. Orthodox instruction, at least of the Protestant variety, requires the authority of biblical exegesis and the discipline of literacy. But there are more infectious ways in which 'religion' can apparently spread, among them the singing of mnemonic lyrics to attractive tunes.

The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), even today recognized as an organization of extreme fundamentalist views and old-style methods, began work among the Uduk in 1938. This was a remote area, close to the Ethiopian border and in a belt of country administered alternately from the north and the south of the Sudan during the present century. As an apparently very 'primitive' group, the Uduk were of little interest to the government but had a special appeal to the evangelical (and mainly American) missionaries of the SIM.² Their work was interrupted during the Second World War because of hostilities on the Ethiopian frontier, but by the mid-1950s they had built up a flourishing mission station and Christian village around it. Political troubles assailed them after the independence of the Sudan in 1956, and by 1964 the foreign missionaries at Chali, in accordance with government policy, had been deported. However, 'Christianity' of a kind continued to flourish among the Uduk after their departure, and by the early 1980s a large proportion of the Uduk were claiming some degree of affiliation to the church. The new expansion of 'faith' was largely in the hands of indigenous personnel; it broke free of the rigid disciplinary codes of the old mission station; and it was carried into the countryside partly on a wave of song, music and practical activity like building chapels and clearing football fields.

I have written in *The Listening Ebony* on the problems of scripture translation into Uduk, which entails grappling with the 'difficult' language of the Revised Standard Version and following its difficulty as far as possible in the new rendering.³ Commentaries abound on the generally knotty matters of such translation, as well as, of course, on the equally problematic 'untranslation' or

2. L. M. P. and N. Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899-1964*, London: Ithaca Press 1981, esp. pp. 240-1.

3. See my book, *The Listening Ebony: Moral Knowledge, Religion, and Power among the Uduk of Sudan*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1988.

unscrambling of the sources which have gone to make up the Bible as we know it in the first place. Variant readings and definitions may claim authority, and ambiguity and many-layered meanings are anticipated as of the essence. It is even accepted in modern scholarship that meanings embedded in the scriptures from their earlier language-contexts can emerge when translation is carried into a vernacular like Uduk, while remaining obscure in modern English. The production of scriptures in a language like Uduk is thus fully recognized to be hazardous, and success to be relative. But problems of this kind, which have surely troubled translators even of fundamentalist faith and a literal approach to the Bible, are happily left behind in the making of a vernacular hymn-book.

In the matter of composing new 'songs of praise' or even making free translations from existing models, those dilemmas of obscurity and ambiguity which make mission teaching so difficult can be set aside. One can present a definitive view of God, Satan, humankind, and their interrelation. Each hymn can have a specific and limited theme, spelled out and repeated without too much interference from the complexities of scripture (or even the competing messages of other hymns). Songs praising the Lord, while vivid and compact, like the lyrics of the tele-ad need not qualify as good poetry or metaphor to be effective. Phrases are brief, in a telegraphic rather than a poetic sense, and (especially in missionary versions) often pedagogic or imperative in tone. The words can be those of advocacy, of the hard sell and the stark choice. After all, hymns are explicitly what human language is offering, at its very best offering to God, and in no sense what the Word of God is handing down to mere mortals. Although older hymns may acquire through long use a hallowed patina, they never become *sacred* texts in the same sense as the scriptures and very rarely in the Protestant context become regarded as *sacred* music. (It is debatable, of course, whether the Uduk, not a 'sacred'-minded people, have properly appreciated the difference between the words of the Bible and the texts of the hymn-book in this respect.) A mission hymnal evokes no expectation of mystery in the meaning of the lyrics, and indeed it seems that an opportunity to acclaim the elements of faith in joyful, concise and direct terms was welcomed by Protestant missionaries as a practical way of getting the Christian message across.

While the love of God may here 'gladden' the heart and the power of Satan 'threaten' and 'destroy', there is little place for the opaque complexities of joy or for the darker ambivalence of faith itself in such a celebration. While disturbingly qualified emotion may permeate the psalms of David, or even *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, it is happily absent from those Baptist hymnals which have been a major source for SIM translations. For reasons of this kind, the rendering of evangelical hymns into a language like Uduk, or the composition of fresh lyrics, is easy for one of optimistic faith. At the same time, the bare and culturally shallow language of the resulting texts is open to all kinds of misunderstandings, and to none.

Hymns are sung by the Uduk today as one of several styles of popular song throughout a belt of countryside where Christianity's hold by any standard is

tenuous. 'Songs of Jesus' are popular not so much because of what they actually say, but *because they are sung*. In the context of evangelism among the Uduk, these songs are virtually the only medium for the non-verbal transmission of Christian ways. Uduk are strongly oriented to musical expression in the various secular and ritual activities of village life, and song, melody and rhythm play a significant part in the most popular ritual and divinatory cults they have adopted from their neighbours. For example, at the festivals and rites of the Order of Ebony Diviners, they happily sing a range of songs in the Jum Jum language (quite unrelated to theirs). Community singing of these songs is a part of the day's activities, as is instrumental playing and dancing. The fact that a good proportion of the singers do not understand the words of the Jum Jum songs does not matter.

Words themselves, I have suggested in *The Listening Ebony*, do not 'do things' for the Uduk; their world does not lend itself to easy verbal interpretation by informant or ethnographer, nor can words as such easily redefine it. In contrast, the project of changing the Uduk world by verbal means, by statements of belief, confessions, acceptance of Jesus and so on, was precisely the task of the SIM as they saw it. Composing the words of the hymns was a part of that project, and those words were intended quite literally to define aspects of the new belief for the Uduk, to reinforce the language of sermons and Bible classes, and indeed to explain in basic terms what the Bible teaches. In some cases the aim has been true, and a striking message has come through in the vernacular; in other cases the vernacular message is clear though not necessarily what was intended; and in yet others, the Uduk words (though individually true coinage) fail to cohere. In most cases those metaphorical overtones assuredly present for the missionary translators have not been transmitted. Godfrey Lienhardt has illuminated his discussion of the missionary enterprise in the Dinka context by introducing the notion of linguistic parallax: that is, a shift in the sense of words resulting from a different external perspective. He has suggested that missionaries have lent new meaning to Dinka religious language not by altering the sense of individual words, but by creating from a fresh perspective new patterns of association between words.⁴ This process is evident also in the Uduk case and is illustrated with the clarity of near-caricature in the corpus of song texts.

Neologisms stand out like beacons in the context of hymn lyrics, as, of course, do arbitrarily imported religious words. Malcolm Forsberg, one of the early Chali missionaries, has written of their first attempt at a hymn in Uduk, before they had arrived at a decision as to what to call God. The result, set to the tune of 'We Praise Thee, O God, for the Son of Thy Love', looked like this (with my translation opposite):

4. R. G. Lienhardt, 'The Dinka and Catholicism', in J. Davis (ed.), *Religious Organization and Religious Experience*, London and New York: Academic Press 1982 (ASA Monographs, no. 21), pp. 81-95.

<i>God diid imis</i>	God is above
<i>God diid imis</i>	God is above
<i>Akim bidi yuka Yesus.</i>	His child is called Jesus.

Forsberg commented, 'We taught the people to sing it, but it did not sound quite right', and his wife observed that the English word 'God' sounded terribly out of place in the Uduk hymn.⁵

Some of the hymns later incorporated in the church hymnal *Mii ma Kaniisa Dhala Awarkaḡ Gway*⁶ nevertheless incorporate foreign terms, such as *halleluya* in the following example, Hymn 4, where the poetry is much reduced by comparison with the original model used for the tune of 'Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty; the King of Creation':

<i>Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, halleluya,</i>	Halleluja...
<i>Taka Arumgimis mo ma.</i>	Praise God.
<i>Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, halleluya,</i>	Halleluja...
<i>Taka Arumgimis mo ma.</i>	Praise God.
<i>Taka Arumgimis ma, halleluya.</i>	Praise God, halleluja.
...	...
<i>Taka Arumgimis mo ma.</i>	Praise God.

Arumgimis, 'the spirit which is in the sky', was the neologism eventually adopted for 'God', a made-up compound reifying into a Being Set Above the very general and diffuse *arum*, or spirit of bodily life on earth. In the new form it was inextricable from the authority claimed by the missionaries for themselves and on behalf of the written texts they produced; outside the Christian community, it had the very specific connotation of the particular *arum* of the mission station, a power not without its own perceived ambiguities. *Tak*, in this hymn and elsewhere used for 'praise', is not, as far as I know, used of any kind of *arum* in the villages, but rather of the respect due to chiefs, important guests and so forth. *Hallelu, halleluya* cannot be rendered into everyday Uduk usage; indeed, it could not be translated into an everyday idiom even in English, as the expression belongs to a distinct genre of religious discourse. Such a genre is itself lacking in the dominantly colloquial discourse of Uduk, and the singing of these syllables, while no doubt conveying a sense of holiness to a listening missionary, cannot as yet (if ever) have that aura for the ordinary Uduk singer. The bald content of this song, the words taken alone, bears no comparison with the original and seems to me to fail as a newly constructed pattern or innovative association. The vernacular does not even pick up the rhythm of the melody and is awkward to sing.

A few hymns were sung in English, such as 'Go, Tell it on the Mountain', quite popular in the mission days and still sung today. The robust rhythm of words and tune together in this case seems to have assured the song's

5. Malcolm Forsberg, *Land Beyond the Nile*, New York: Harper 1958, p. 157.

6. *Mii ma Kaniisa Dhala Awarkaḡ Gway*, Chali: Sudan Interior Mission 1963. Throughout this essay I follow the orthography established by the SIM, which employs an apostrophe to indicate implosion or explosion in the consonant it precedes, underlining to indicate aspiration, and the oblique stroke to represent a glottal stop. Tones are not marked.

popularity. A few Arabic-language hymns were introduced at Chali from other Protestant churches of the Sudan, and some of these are still sung. But on the whole, the body of hymns sung during the heyday of the mission at Chali in the 1950s were drawn from the growing corpus of Uduk-language lyrics, and it is these which have successfully spread into the countryside today. Hymns in the Uduk mission context tended to have a New Testament focus and were called *gway ma Yesus*, songs of Jesus.

The 92 Uduk-language lyrics in the hymnal fall into three categories. The first includes straight translations of texts, set to their existing tunes. Some of these are to be found in, for example, *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, and others are from the American evangelical tradition. Many of the latter may be found in a recent collection, the *Gospel Singer's Wordbook*,⁷ and where I refer to English-language models below, I have taken them from this American source. The second category includes those set to an existing Western tune, but with a fresh lyric bearing little or no reference to any textual model. Finally, in the third category are those hymns with both brand-new words and fresh melody, likely to appeal more directly to the Uduk ear than the standard churchy tunes we know. I might just mention here a certain indigenization of even the most familiar; a visitor's ear cannot at first always recognize a well-known hymn tune when rendered into a five-note scale with harmony in fourths throughout.

1. Translated Hymns

The direct translation method works quite well for those hymns where the content is simple, narrative or descriptive rather than theological or metaphorical in intent. A good example would be 'Away in a Manger' (No. 14 in the hymnal), where I sense no areas of difficulty or ambiguity in the transposition of meaning. The baby asleep in the animal shed, on the dry grass, not crying, the baby who is Jesus, whom I love and whom I ask to stay with me until the dawn, is carried over into Uduk without any difficulty. Other carols seem to work well also, for example 'O Come all Ye Faithful' (No. 15), 'While Shepherds Watched' (No. 17), 'Silent Night' (No. 18), 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' (No. 19).

The method of more or less direct translation sometimes, however, runs into difficulties because of the sensitivities of the social and political context in which the missionaries were working. Here and there a literal translation has been prudently avoided, as in the rendering of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' (No. 76). The 'soldiers' of this example, which could appear provocative in the Sudanese context, make no appearance. Instead, the call is to 'people of the Church', or 'people of Jesus', to advance and to overcome with success, though not actually as if to war. I should note here too that, presumably because of

7. Linda R. Beddoe, *Gospel Singer's Wordbook*, New York: Oak Publications 1984.

political sensitivities, an important element in the Negro spirituals of the United States has not been carried through. The great cry for freedom, for temporal release from bondage as an analogue and even accompaniment of spiritual freedom, has been muted; there are no songs in the Uduk hymnal on the lines of the famous 'Go Down Moses': 'When Israel was in Egypt's land / Let my people go. / Oppressed so hard they could not stand, / Let my people go. / ... O let us all from bondage flee; / And let us all in Christ be free. / ... We need not always weep and mourn; / And wear these slavery chains forlorn.' These cries are too close to underlying truths of historical feeling for appropriate inclusion in the context of the Chali mission, throughout its brief life on a political precipice. But the general sentiment was there, and found other expression.

It is, of course, in the area of theological and philosophical language that close textual translation encounters the thorniest areas of difficulty and is obliged to reconstruct verbal definitions and accounts of the world. Very often, a problem has been evaded by rendering original expressions of an abstract or ethereal kind in tangible, experiential form.

Consider what happens, for example, in this case, the first verse of 'My Faith Looks up to Thee' (No. 69). The verse reads in the original, 'My faith looks up to Thee, / Thou lamb of Calvary, / Savior divine! / Now hear me while I pray; / Take all my guilt away. / O let me from this day be wholly Thine.' The vernacular, with my close translation back, reads as follows:

<i>Em pem hil'kup ki e,</i>	My eyes look up to you,
<i>Ka'bal ma Arungimis,</i>	Sheep of God,
<i>Manwoth aha .</i>	The one who saves me.
<i>Cikaaj mon'tho e e.</i>	Listen to me, the praising of you.
<i>Kali miim pem'peni'ba .</i>	Take my deeds away from me.
<i>Aha mina jim'pini</i>	I shall be yours
<i>Baar mo.</i>	All of me.

The abstractions of *faith* and of *guilt* have gone. The first has become eyesight (which is indeed in the Uduk view involved in understanding, in comprehending) and the second deeds, by implication bad deeds, which transposes an inner state to external and accountable actions. It is true that *tho* is regularly used in mission discourse for pray or prayer, but I do not think that the vernacular term distinguishes between the notion of communicating with a *divine* being and merely *praising* a human being. The 'Savior' is no longer explicitly 'divine', and indeed that notion would be difficult to translate into pre-Christian Uduk discourse, except as one possessed or risen from the dead. That is why I have not carried through in the re-translation the religious implications of 'Thine' as against 'yours'. In other ways the attempt at direct translation produces awkwardnesses: for example, the completeness of 'wholly Thine' has been reduced to the completeness of 'my self, all of me' being yours. Nor do I believe that the lamb of Calvary, rewritten as the sheep of God, carries through the overtones of biblical sacrifice that it should, for although

animals are killed for various rituals by the Uduk, these acts are not part of a theocentric ritual system.⁸

Compare, in the following English original 'Let Jesus Come into Your Heart', the way in which the image of a tempest *inside* a person, presumably signifying internal confusion, doubt and turmoil, has become a storm *outside* in the process of translation into Uduk and back again into English. Quelling an outside storm is indeed a sign of spiritual potency for the Uduk: and this is understood as a physical 'reality' of effect and is not intended as psychological metaphor, as in the case of the model:

If you are tired of the load of your sin
Let Jesus come into your heart
If you desire a new life to begin,
Let Jesus, &c.

Just now, your doubting give o'er;
Just now, reject Him no more.
Just now, throw open the door;
Let Jesus, &c.

If 'tis for purity now that you sigh...
Fountains for cleansing are flowing near by....

If there's a tempest your voice cannot still...
If there's a void this world can never fill....

Corresponding verses of Hymn 49 read as follows (I should explain that the liver is regarded as the seat of the emotions, the stomach that of reason; when using these anatomical terms in this figurative sense, I give them an initial capital letter):

Wakki | *je wukina is gom miinthus,*
Dhalka Yesus yayi'd |eya du.

Wakki | *je nap tel miin this 'pen shwane|,*

Dhalka Yesus yayi'd |eya du.

Shwane| daki gwo shi| 'kup.
Dhalki a'di ki ush mo.
Shwane| yipa campur ki kany.
Dhalka Yesus yayi'd |eya du.

Wakki | *je napana dun dheleli'd...*
Abas ma Yesus kasha'd mmolam |e....

Wakki | *punthar mola |e kar ki shwam...*
Wakki | *mombushuru'd mol ma 'esh*
'tu'd....

If you are weary because of bad-deeds,
Let Jesus come to your Liver.

If you want to begin a new way-of-
doing-things today,
Let Jesus, &c.

Today leave bad talk alone.
Do not reject him.
Today throw the door open.
Let Jesus, &c.

If you wish to have a cleansed Liver...
The blood of Jesus flows to wash you....

If you cannot keep the storm quiet...
If the earth cannot fill the empty
place....

In other cases, the general theme has been appropriated with a given tune but

8. For a study of the pitfalls of using sacrificial terminology in Africa, see Patricia M. Holden, 'Aspects of Sacrifice in the African Ethnographic Literature', University of Oxford: M.Litt. Thesis 1984.

the lyric somewhat adapted. This has often meant a reduction of significance and scale, a stripping of poetry and richness to leave a bare slogan. This has happened, for example, with the American folk hymn 'Were you there?' The original model reads, 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord? / Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh, / Sometimes it causes me to / Tremble, tremble, tremble. / Were you there when they crucified my Lord? / Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?... / Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?' The Uduk hymn composed to this tune, retaining only a tenuous link with the inspiration of the original, begins as follows and continues in much the same vein: 'Jesus died on a wooden cross / Jesus died on a wooden cross / Jesus died just over there / Died in our area / Jesus died on a wooden cross.'

The effect of making allusions more concrete is sometimes to give a more tangible, bodily existence to God, Satan and so forth, than was necessarily intended in the English originals. This can be seen, for example, in the third verse of Hymn 8 (tune: 'A Mighty Fortress') which conjures up the spirits of the earth and the Leader of Darkness. The model reads, 'And though this world with devils filled, / Should threaten to undo us; / We will not fear, for God hath willed / His truth to triumph through us. / The prince of darkness grim, / We tremble not for him / His rage we can endure, / For lo! his doom is sure, / One little word shall fell him.' Here the Uduk conception of the earth as the resting-place of the shades of the dead (*aruma 'esh*) is made to serve for the 'devils' and their prince (an arrangement which follows conveniently from the translators situating God in the sky above). The Uduk, with translation back, goes as follows:

Bahila rum 'esh 'tu'di mo mo
Mmomuri shwaa 'esh ki sho'k mo.
Arungimis tilki is kom bana
Gwon ganam piti ye mi 'ba| mo.
Tapa mondhurumi'd,
Usha ana mmodee
Abumburush piti,
Mina ana 'dim 'kup.
Ari gwon 'de| mish kum a'di mo.

Behold the *aruma 'esh* filling the place
About to spread everywhere.
God is guiding our living
His true words are victorious for ever.
Chief of the Darkness,
We refuse to fear him
His dodging attacks,
We will resist.
One small word will overcome him.⁹

2. New Lyrics to Old Tunes

In the second category of hymns, an existing Western tune has been used, but the message is very freely composed in Uduk. There may be a correspondence of sorts, or merely a general inspiration. But in some cases there is no link between the old and new texts. This is true in the case of the new words to the song 'Old-time Religion': 'Tis the old-time religion / ...And it's good enough

9. Stephen Missa Dhunya helped me with the translation of this and also of Hymns 9, 43 and 67 below.

for me. / It was good for our mothers, / ...It has served our fathers, / It will do when I'm dying.' The old words would obviously convey quite the wrong message, and so a fresh ditty has been set to the tune. The result, Hymn 31 in the Uduk book, is popular and sung with gusto. The rhythm goes down well, and this must be the reason for its popularity; for although the words do seem to swing with the tune, they have become a string of statements and instructions, with the feel not of the heart but of the schoolroom:

<i>Yan moŋ'koki e ki sule ...</i>	This is life everlasting...
<i>Mmomisha Arumgimis.</i>	To understand [=see] God.
<i>A'di ta'da Yesus gana ...</i>	He is the true Jesus...
<i>A'di be, jasi a'di 'de .</i>	He is, just he alone.
<i>Yan moŋ'koki e ki sule ...</i>	This is life everlasting...
<i>Mmomish Yesus si'da .</i>	To know [=see] Jesus too.
<i>A'di wu'd mo iwoth ana...</i>	He died to save us...
<i>Wu'd ki cwany'cihan dhul.</i>	Died on a wooden cross.
<i>Gami guo ma Yesus is mo...</i>	Believe in [the word of] Jesus...
<i>Dhali um minu woth mo be.</i>	And you will all be saved.

In the vernacular hymns patterned only loosely on available models, crucial emphases are easily given. The next example vividly evokes Satan, as a bad *arum*, of course, having formerly 'seized' the believer, with the ideophonic expression *ki nyeg!*—conjuring in the mind a tight grasp. The expression for having been unhappy, and later, being happy in the Stomach with Jesus, are perfectly ordinary everyday expressions; but the notion of the Word entering the Liver is emotionally striking and powerful in the Uduk idiom. The notion of Jesus himself actually being there in the Liver is very potent indeed. An immediately understandable interpretation of hearing a call from Jesus would be that it came in a dream, but I do not know if this meaning is intended here, in Hymn 67:

<i>Seŋaan bu'thki aha ki nyeg,</i>	Satan held me firmly gripped,
<i>Biwam pem shi aa ki shi.</i>	My Stomach was very bad.
<i>Ayuk ma Yesus cikika ,</i>	The call of Jesus I then heard,
<i>Gwo wurki aha adu.</i>	The Word entered my Liver.
<i>Ayuk ma Yesus yukga 'twa ,</i>	The call of Jesus I answered to,
<i>Abas piti wothki aha .</i>	His blood saved me.
<i>Miinthus kalkina a'di 'ba ,</i>	Bad actions [=sin] he has taken as a burden,
<i>'Borkika bwa mo a Yesus.</i>	I am happy now in Jesus.
<i>Miinthus dhalkika ki sule ,</i>	Sin I have left for ever,
<i>Yesus karaa ki 'kus.</i>	Jesus set me free.
<i>Ca'bka ki 'bore e Yesus,</i>	I am sitting very well with Jesus,
<i>A'di di'da dum pem.</i>	He is there in my Liver.
<i>Hil ka Seŋaan ki ŋocaa 'kus,</i>	And if Satan bothers me,
<i>Miga gusa Yesus.</i>	I will run to Jesus.
<i>Anyor caaca gom a'di di'd,</i>	Great anger for him [viz. Satan] there is [in Jesus],
<i>A'di ki la gus mo.</i>	He will soon flee away.

In the next example, Hymn 9, there is an interesting interchange between using the expression *gwo* (word or words) for a story and for the Word, which can 'change the Liver', 'pierce the Liver', a novel image in Uduk and an arresting one. The Word, or the story, the teachings, the instructions, of Jesus (all are possible readings) are quite appropriately to be kept in the Stomach (committed to memory, made permanent knowledge), making one happy there. Nevertheless, although elegant and suggestive in its own way, the making of a *being* out of 'words' stretches the Uduk imagination almost too far:

<i>Gwo ma Yesus ta gwoŋ gana ,</i>	The story of Jesus is the truth,
<i>Ta gwo jin di ki e.</i>	It is the living Word [lit., a story which is alive].
<i>Jamu piyi'd jin waki a'di,</i>	There is no other which is like it,
<i>Ta gwo jin di ki she .</i>	It is a story quite unique.
<i>Gwom 'boro'd, Gwo 'kunyud,</i>	The Word is good, the Word is sweet,
<i>Gwo mom'bi'th, Gwo monyca.</i>	Word of strength, Word of greatness.
<i>Gwo jin midi diki pi mo,</i>	The Word which will never disappear,
<i>Midi di kan ki sule .</i>	It will be for ever.
<i>Gwo ma Yesus to gwo miimer,</i>	The story of Jesus is a story to wonder at,
<i>Ta gwo mmo aka du.</i>	A story to change the Liver.
<i>Jamu piyi'd mokar ki e kan,</i>	There is no other to keep you alive like this,
<i>Ta gwo jin di ki she .</i>	It is a story quite unique.
<i>Gwo ma Yesus ta gwon thoson,</i>	The story of Jesus is a tale of good instruction,
<i>Ta gwo mmotor miinthus.</i>	It is a story which tells us about sin.
<i>Jamu piyi'd mosukaa du kan,</i>	No other can pierce my Liver like this
<i>Ta gwo jin di ki she .</i>	[=to move me emotionally],
<i>Gwo ma Yesus ta gwoŋ gam is,</i>	It is a story quite unique.
<i>Ta gwo mom'bi'th caaca.</i>	The story of Jesus is a story of belief,
<i>Jamu piyi'd jin pi miinthus e,</i>	A story of great strength.
<i>Ta gwo jin di ki she .</i>	There is no other to overcome sin,
<i>Gwo ma Yesus ta gwo malas,</i>	It is a story quite unique.
<i>Ta gwo mmodhu e bwa.</i>	The story of Jesus is one of comfort,
<i>Jamu piyi'd mo'boraa bwa kan,</i>	It is a story to keep in the Stomach
<i>Ta gwo jin di ki she .</i>	[=to remember].
	There is no other to make me so happy
	[lit., good in the Stomach],
	It is a story quite unique.

In the next example, we look directly to the expected bodily resurrection of all believers and to the Second Coming. Those whose Liver is good and clean are bright and shining. This image goes so far from ordinary understanding that it must retain a 'foreign' feel even for the believer. Hymn 43 reads as follows:

*Ki a'di pu'dki'd, ki a'di pu'dki'd,
Mmotul uni is mo,
Kun dheelin mo ki jaro|,
Kun ena a'di mo.*

*Waka cul e mon'thomo
Mmokat mo ki jaro|,
Uni kushi mo ki bany bany
Kun woth ma Yesus.*

*A'di tulki'd, a'di tulki'd
Gom Bampa| e Mis mo
Kun dheelin, kun 'bor ma du,
Kun ena a'di mo.*

*Ushi uci, ushi uci,
Kun en Manwan 'ba|,
Ta kun dheelin mo eya du,
Kun ena a'di mo.*

The theme is continued in several other hymns, and the negative side of the next Coming is not ignored. In Hymn 37 (tune: 'How Firm a Foundation'), which here begins 'Jesus has gone to his home in the sky, / He will come back. / He will descend with a great cry', the last two verses read in translation back:

*Um gun dar ka bas ma Yesus,
Um nonkunu mo mo be.
Jasa nyor ma Arungimis mid
Ca'ba po um 'baar mo be.*

*Kana, ci'ki gwo ma Yesus,
Dhali hayi a'di e,
Haala cim yan mishu yisa,
A'di 'disha'dish mo be.*

The note of schoolroom warning is unmistakable. Perhaps this was what had first struck Umpa and lasted in her memory beyond the contrived linguistic innovations of the new theology.

3. New Songs

The fresh compositions, made for the Uduk context with their own words and tunes, are often simple to the point of sounding like slogans. Hymn 34 plays upon only three lines: 'From the grave, Jesus appeared. / The grave could not keep him. / He overcame death.' This is a minimal and powerful statement of the message of the resurrection and touches a deep chord in the existing Uduk world. Like the following example, Hymn 36, it is not a translation but a new composition:

When he arrives, when he arrives,
To gather them together,
They who are clean and bright,
Those whom he loves.

Like a morning star
To keep the place bright,
They are white and shining
Those saved by Jesus.

He gathers up, he gathers up
For the Land on High
Those clean ones, those of good Liver,
Those whom he loves.

Little children, little children,
Whom the Redeemer loves,
Are those clean in the Liver,
Those whom he loves.

Those of you without the blood of Jesus,
You will be barred.
Just the anger of God
Will remain upon you all.

Listen, hear the word of Jesus,
And obey him,
Because that day is not known,
It is very close.

*Yesus midu yayu|...
Yesus midu yayu| dok|e.
A'di midu yayu|...
A'di midu yayu| bwaa rak.
Yesus midu yayu|...
Yesus midu yayu| yuk kum piti.
Kun iikin mina bwa 'bor...
Kun iikin mina bwa 'bor ki sule|.
Kum bocon mini ko...
Kum bocon mini ko gom a'di.*

Jesus is coming...
Jesus is coming again.
He is coming...
He is coming from out of the clouds.
Jesus is coming...
Jesus is coming to call his people.
Those who go will be happy...
Those who go will be happy for ever.
Those who remain will cry...
Those who remain will cry for him.

This hymn, produced especially for the Uduk congregation at Chali, like several others presses the key theme of the Second Coming, when the faithful will be taken up to Heaven. The plight of the rest is explicit. The notion of a final judgement and authoritative separation of the good and the bad lies behind the disciplinarian tone of a few other hymns in which a severe God demands obedience. The following example, Hymn 45, is particularly threatening, and in so far as it demands to know if the believer's name is 'written in the book' it is almost too strongly suggestive of the powerful authority of government, court and police:

*Gwon dwall ma Arungimis di'd.
Ana 'baar mina dosh a'di bwambor...
Gwo mina a'di dwall gom miim bana...
Uni gun 'kona gwayi bwa ma warka|
Wothkunu mo be...
Uni gun dar ki gwayi bwa ma warka|*

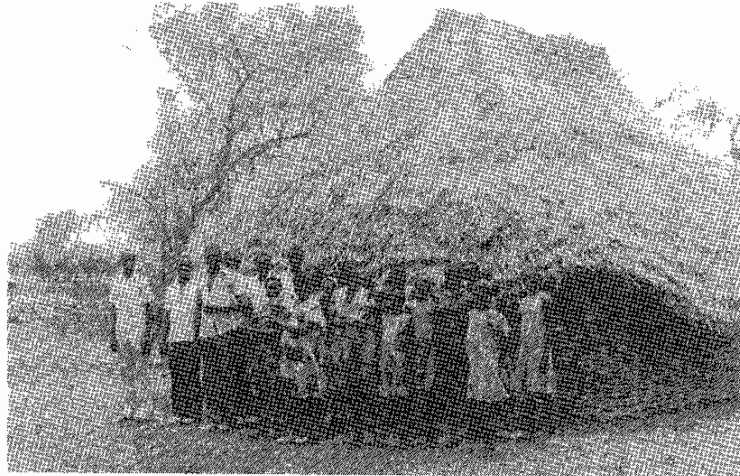
God's judgement exists.
All of us will stand before it...
He will give judgement on our acts...
Those who have their names in the book
Will be saved...
Those who do not have their names in
the book
Will be thrown in the fire...
Where is your name? Where is your
name?
Is it written? Is it written?

*Tagu o'd mo be...
Gway pini mane? Gway pini mane?*

'Kwaru mo 'taa? 'Kwaru mo 'taa?

The reference to the book or paper (*warka*, the Arabic term) was no doubt intended by the missionary teachers to be taken *metaphorically*. However, a metaphorical book is more than the ordinary Uduk could be expected to assume, given the emphasis on *the book* and all it meant in a literal sense in the mission context. Of course, having one's name in the book was also, and is still, unavoidably linked with matters of administration, and hence the threat of not having one's name in the book carries far more worrying overtones for the non-literate villager than can have been really intended by those who introduced the hymn.

And yet, in spite of these grave problems of verbal translation and composition in the making of Uduk hymns, their performance has played a key part in holding together the Christian community and tradition after the departure of foreign missionaries and in the subsequent expansion of Christian activity to the countryside. During the song session I held during a revisit in 1983 to Waka'cesh, an area six miles from Chali where there had been no Christian



Waka'cesh chapel with some of its newly Christian congregation in May 1983. During civil war disturbances this chapel, with at least fifteen others, was burned down by the Sudanese army in 1987.

activities during the heyday of the mission, I was offered mainly 'songs of Jesus'. Most of these were from the collection in the hymnal, though in every case belonging to my categories 2 and 3 above. That is, they were not the literal translations but lyrics composed afresh in the Uduk tongue either to existing tunes or to new ones. A couple more of the hymns were clearly of the same 1950s vintage but were not included in the printed hymnal. In addition, there were a couple of new ones, said to have been recently composed. The words were of impeccable lineage, but the melody was distinctly more lively than many of the original collection. In the new context of Christian revival, the old genre was alive and well, due perhaps to its musical rather than its textual side.

Of course, the awkwardness of the verbal translation of a hymn, or the putting together of words in unfamiliar ways to make one, is highlighted when the text is put down on a page in black and white. It is not the primary purpose of hymns to be read, or even understood as words alone. They are for musical performance, for singing, especially community singing. This side of Christian hymns was thoroughly understood and largely accepted by the Uduk. The significance of verbal discourse as such was limited in pre-Christian Uduk social and formal ritual life, but by contrast the place of music and song, dance and bodily gesture, was very important. Hunting rituals, rites of passage, ceremonies of those cults devoted to healing, all were rich in songs, music and movement, and in addition there was a range of secular styles of music and dance. On this level, we can guess that the practice of hymn-singing

was a key element in the establishment of a Christian community at Chali in the heyday of the mission, as it certainly was later in the spread of Christian ways across the countryside.

The SIM, at least a generation ago, was not disposed to encourage the people to contribute from their own musical and singing tradition to the hymns of the church. Only now are a few brand-new songs of Jesus making an appearance, sung to the lyre in the old style. Jon Arensen reports that he found a very different situation among the Murle, further to the south but also in the Sudan-Ethiopia border region. The American Presbyterian Mission worked among the Murle only from about the mid-1950s to 1963, and they did not produce a formal hymnal. After the first Sudanese civil war (1955-72), when the Summer Institute of Linguistics arrived to carry out language work, some hymns were introduced for the first time. During the next decade the singing of Christian songs spread, and many new ones were being created informally in the Murle musical tradition, often antiphonal in form. Arensen tells me that during his work with the Summer Institute in the early 1980s, he arranged for a girl to make notes of these songs, and within a week she had made a collection of 250. The musical contribution of the Murle seems to indicate a real responsiveness to what the mission there was offering, and it is Arensen's opinion that in general, only hymns which are in an indigenous musical mode will really succeed. On this criterion, those elements of Christian belief which have apparently been dispersed through song among the Uduk villages sit very lightly.

Postscript

Since this essay was completed, I have received news that as a result of the new civil war which broke out in the Sudan in mid-1983, Uduk country has been visited by fresh devastation. During 1987, forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Army pushed northwards along the Ethiopian border into Blue Nile Province, at one point taking and holding the town of Kurmuk. The retaliatory actions and reprisals of the national armed forces in the Kurmuk district included their burning of sixteen small village churches and chapels in the Uduk area (though, I understand, not Chali church itself). Many of the people have fled. The accompanying photograph shows the village chapel of Waka'cesh with some of its congregation in May 1983. This is one of the chapels reported burned by the army in 1987.