



## Ngor Gum

November 2016

Ngor Gum looked stately in his blue and white prayer cap and finely groomed mustache and small beard. He was articulate and exhibited gentlemanly ways. Had he not been taken into slavery at age six in 1986, he more than likely would have become a leader among his people.

He remembered it well, perhaps too well that day when the Mujahideen (holy fighters ---devils on horseback is more like it), entered the village early that fateful morning in 1986. "It was a terrible morning, I never forget it. I saw them bind my mother and father with rope, force them inside our tukul, burned the tukul; burned my parents alive. They forced other parents into tukuls as well and burned them. We were forced to walk into slavery. When we looked back all we saw was the smoke of where our homes and our life had been." Ngor's eyes welled up and some tears rolled across the decades and down his cheek. I think it bonded us, certainly there was a soul connection that took place. This connection is inexplicable; it just happens.

We waited in silence, just being aware of each other's presence and the sacred peace that engulfed us. This too just happens; it too, is inexplicable.

“My work was to take care of the cows and to cultivate.” Ngor said. And then shifting gears, he added, “I am happy to be in Dinkaland, nothing bad will happen to me again. I am happy not only me alone, but all of us, that you came to us. I am praying, not only me, but all of us, that God will increase your years so you can return to us again. God bless all the people who helped you reach us.”

There was so much goodness that flowed from Ngor’s heart. I marveled that this man could be so stately and have a heart free of rancor after spending 30 years of his life as a slave; robbed of his childhood and adulthood, robbed of his family, robbed of his people, robbed of his faith, robbed of everything except his goodness, and his hope.

“Ngor,” I said, “God will heal your heart’s sorrow and pain. God will bless your journey to your home village. You’re from Gok Machar, Ngor, I have been to Gok Machar. My friend, Rev. James is in Gok Machar. Please visit him and greet him for me.” Before I could add anything else, he said, “God bless you Mama; I will pray for you and look for Rev. James to give your greeting.”

“God bless you Ngor, I will keep you in my prayers. It is a long journey to Gok Machar from here, at least three days walking.” “I will make it in two days,” Ngor declared; “I am going home.”

*CSI fact-finding visit to South Sudan, November 2016 by Pastor Heidi McGinness and Markus Weber. Luka Garang Kenyang , Translator.*