

THE CHURCH IN CHAD

ITS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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I. GEOGRAPHICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVES

The country of Chad, which derives its name from Lake Chad, is situated in the heart of Africa. It is a crossroads of cultures, religions and ideologies being a link between North Africa and black Africa or the Arab Muslim world and the Christian/ATR¹ world. It shares a land boundary of 5,968 km with Cameroun (1,094 km), Niger (1,175km), Nigeria (87km), Libya (1,055 km), Sudan (1,360 km) and Central African Republic (1,197 km).

The country of Chad with an area of 1,284,000 sq km of which the land is 1,259,200 sq km and water 24,800 sq km. It stretches from the Saharan desert in the North to the Equatorial forest down south. It is geographically divided into three zones. The northern part is a desert area inhabited by nomads. It is a mountainous area the highest point being EmiKoussi (3,145m.) the central Sahel area located around the Lake Chad rises gradually to plateaus of which the Guera mountain (1,500m). The south is a better rain watered area down. It has described as useful Chad.

The known history of Chad goes back as far as the Middle Ages. Europe discovered Chad in the 19th century through the writings of Sheikh Al Tounsi (1851), Barth (1851), and Nachigal (1879). During the Middle Ages many kingdoms rose and fought with one another.

Chad is a landlocked country and one of the poorest countries in the World. Apart from being landlocked Chad suffers also from a poor management, drought, embezzlement of public fund, inadequate supplies of potable water, improper waste disposal in rural areas contributing to soil and water pollution; desertification and a reoccurring insecurity. But Chad is strangely a rich country with the following minerals petroleum (exploitation under way), uranium, natron, kaolin, fish (Lake Chad). Chad export cotton, meat and cattle, Arabic gum and natron. Much food stuff and cattle are directly smuggled into neighboring countries. At the same time Chad imports fuel, machinery, food and other manufactured products from Nigeria, Taiwan, Libya, Cameroun, Saudi Arabia and Europe.

Administratively Chad is made up presently of twenty-three (23) Regions or Provinces, sixty-two (62) Departments, and Two hundred and fifty-three (253) Sous Prefectures.

¹ African Traditional Religions

II. HISTORY OF MISSIONS IN CHAD

THE BEGINNING OF MISSIONS WORK IN CHAD

In 2020 the Chadian Church will be celebrating a century of God's faithfulness and of the gospel in Chad. The gospel entered Chad in 1920 through the work of the Lutheran Brethren Missions from their base in North Cameroun and was based in Lere (in the South West). Later came the Baptist Mid Missions in 1925 through Central Africa Republic to Fort Archambault (Now Sarh) in the South, The Christian Missions in Many Lands through Kano in North Nigeria in 1926 to Fort-Lamy (later to Doba and Moissala in the South), The Sudan United Mission (which became later The Evangelical Alliance Missions- TEAM) as in 1926/7 in Moundou in the South, and The Missions of the Brethren Churches in Bessao in 1928.²

All the Missions were based in the south of Chad apart from the CMML which tried to be established in Abeché but failed and was established in the capital Fort Lamy. The reason for the Missions to be established in the south was:

- 1) All the Missions came through Cameroun (LBM and SUM), Nigeria through Cameroun (CMML), and Central Africa Republic (BMM and GBFM). Many had contact with some Southern Chadians in neighboring Countries like John Olley of the CMML with Chadians in Kano³.
- 2) The French Colonial authorities were not ready to authorize the evangelization on North Chad. Protestant Missionaries who happened to be English speakers were frustrated by things like waiting years for the permit to work, not being allowed to established work among northerners, not being allowed to start French schools.

"The evangelization of Chad was not easy. The first missionaries were denied the permission to start a mission station by the French colonial Government who opposed the evangelization of Southern Chad seen as Muslim territory. Later the South was allowed for Mission was but the North was not until 1945. The pioneers believed God called them and looked up to Him in faith that He will accomplish His purpose."⁴

² A major work from Chad on Protestant Missions was the Thesis by late Rev. Daidanso René, latter published as a book under the title "Les Missions et Eglises Evangeliques au Tchad". The book by Monelmbaye, Obed. Notre itinéraire protestant ambigu: bref aperçu historique sur les missions et églises protestantes au Tchad. 1ère éd. however is confusing in some areas as the author failed to cross check before publishing. Other references include: "The church of the Lutheran Brethren 1900- 1975, by Joseph H. Levang; "Unware of an angel" by TEAM; "John Olley, Pionner missionary to Chad" by J W Clapmam.

³ Clapham, J.W. JOHN OLLEY Pioneer Missionary to the Chad, Page 56.

⁴ "The Challenge of the Unreached in Chad" by Rev. Clément A. HLAMA, Mission Africa 2003.

Revne writes about the opposition of Colonial Officers to grant permit to evangelize South Chad:

“On New year Day, 1921, a letter from the French administrator was received, which in part read as follows (Free Translation): “I have the honor to let you know that the General Governor, through the Lieutenant Governor of the territory of Tchad, has replied negatively to the application for opening an Evangelical Mission at Lere and declare himself opposed to any attempt made to evangelize the population of the Colony of Tchad...”

“Consequently you will not be able to continue your stay at Lere unless you abstain strictly from all attempts at proselyting.”

Two years had elapsed since our first missionaries had arrived in Sudan, and as yet they stood before closed doors!”⁵

3. Being prevented from reaching the North by the Colonial Officers, the CMML started some work among southerners in Abeche and latter saw the Church in the South as God’s army to stop the advance of Islam in the South.

“John opened his house to any of these lads from the South who cared to visit him, never failing to speak faithfully with them concerning God’s way of salvation. A few came more and more freely to the house and it seemed ironical that the majority of them were, as he expressed it himself ‘coming from Caesar’s household’, i.e. the employ of those from whom the prohibition emanated.”⁶

Clapham further observes:

“As the restraints placed on him in Abeché oppressed his spirit greatly, he began to wonder whether or not he ought to leave the Wadai for the South. Still feeling loth to leave his beloved Arab speaking area, he resolved to cross the French border eastward to the then British Sudan to see what the conditions were like there...After what he described in his journal as the hardest trek he had ever done; he arrived safely at his destination only to discover that the Gospel was prohibited in the Darfur also, the policy of the Government there being in line with the counsel of certain military leaders of the past who, for the sake of political expediency, advised that the people of the area be left unevangelised! He had no option but to return and prepare for his long journey south.”⁷

The first protestant mainline denominations were as follows:

1- The Lutheran Brethren Church

⁵ Revne, In the Heart of Africa, page 13.

⁶ Clapham, Page 61.

⁷ Clapham, page 65.

- 2- The Baptist Mid Missions Church
- 3- The Evangelical Church in Chad
- 4- The Christian Assemblies
- 5- The Brethren Evangelical Church

In 1961 Mr Burkhard who was a missionary with the Guera Mission (established in 1946 and had first mission station in the Guera Region in 1948) working with Christian Assemblies of Chad, introduced Pentecostal beliefs. The Church of God was born as result, and later the Apostolic Church of Chad (also formerly known as Apostolic Church of Koumra but different from Christ Apostolic Church, as known as Apostolic Church of Ere) and the Chadian Evangelical Church (Eglise Evangélique Tchadienne) were facilitated the 1st President François Tombalbaye to persecute the Baptist Mid Missions Church which refused to support him in his political ambition.

The Pentecostal Churches were considered cults in Chad for many years. The AD 2000 movement later MANI, Interdev and World Vision tried over the years to reconcile the Pentecostal Churches with the Mainline Churches. In August 2017 at a Tearfund meeting of heads of denominations the historic reconciliation took place between the Baptist Mid Missions Church and Eglise de la Cooperation Evangélique's Presidents. That helped prepare the way for the Campus Crusade Chad Consultation on Missions.⁸

Pentecostal Churches in Chad had two big problems with the first mainline churches. In 1963 a fellowship was formed which became in 1985 the Evangelical Fellowship of Chad made up of the mainline churches.

- 1) The Pentecostals broke away from the first mainline Churches, thus excluding themselves from the fellowship of the former.⁹
- 2) They supported President Tombalbaye's return to cultural roots in terms of Cultural Initiation while the mainline churches said no and paid heavy cost in return in terms of persecution.

In 1965 The Assemblies of God came to south Chad and were established in Amdoum.

Some observations need to be made concerning Chadians in the establishment of Churches in Chad:

1. The Pioneer Missionaries (English speakers) lacked the cooperation of Colonial authorities (French) who favored the Catholic Missionaries. Clapham writes about Olley:

⁸ <https://gacx.io/blog/reconciliation-multiplication> accessed on 06 April 2018 at 12:37.

⁹ In 1963 the mainline Missions in promoting unity among them agreed that whoever breaks from one of their fellowships should not be in fellowship with any of them.

“The Following day¹⁰ he paid a visit to the Governor of the Chad who informed him that his coming as a missionary had displeased him since Christian work was not permitted in the Chad or Wadai!”¹¹

2. Chadians played a great role in the preaching the gospel to their tribesmen. The Pioneer Missionaries used as assistant natives who did a lot to reach their own with the gospel.
3. Chadians were great in organizing themselves into fellowships. IFES has benefitted from that commitment of Chadian students in former USSR and many African countries (like CAR, Cameroun...) by helping to start fellowships of students in Universities.
4. Chadian denominations are not necessary based on theology but tribe and village consideration.
5. The unity of the Church has been a big hindrance to the total evangelization of the nation.
6. Discipleship is weak in many churches.
7. Some churches lack ecclesiological identity as the leader has received no training at all.
8. Most churches grow by split or parasite church planting. Few churches are actively involved in cross-cultural missions.

III. THE VISION OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS

1. An Indigenous Well-organized Church

The Missions were prepared for the rise of nationalism and the crisis of independence. The Lutheran Brethren Missions for example was prepared. Levang writes:

“The crisis was felt in all parts of Chad and Cameroun and in all missionary enterprises, but on the Lutheran Brethren mission field the struggle was far less critical and tense than on most fields. Revne, Kaardal and the missionaries that followed had practiced a kind of indigenous work not found on many fields. The national believers had been encouraged to reach out, to evangelize, even to translate and teach. Congregations were organized everywhere as soon as there was a body of believers. Catechists (or evangelists) were trained and send out to the churches, and the major preaching load on the field was carried by the nationals.”¹²

2. Nationalization of the Work

The Baptist Mid Missions developed their missions work greatly through the medical work. It started as a dispensary run by a nurse back in 1948. Dr. David Seymour who arrived in 1957

¹⁰ The day of the arrival of Olley from Kano to N’Djamena.

¹¹ Clapham, Page 59.

¹² The Church of the Lutheran Brethren, page 358.

revolutionized the medical work enabling it to be multiplied and further the preaching of the gospel. He gave it a new orientation through a fourfold formula for nationalization.¹³

- 1) Make it comprehensible: Instruction in basic techniques included extensive practice on beef intestines to learn how to cut and stitch, to handle spear wounds, strangulated hernias...The nationals can learn if supervised to save life as licensed doctors were not available.
- 2) Make it reproducible. The Foreigners needed to train nationals to help handle the volume of the work and replace one day the expatriate.
- 3) Make it responsible. The Chadian dispensary needs to charge its services to generate revenues and empower the nationals to continue with the work.
- 4) Make it tough.

“In ministry setting as hostile to the Gospel as was Chad in the 1970’s, it was necessary to accompany the training of national workers through preparation for hardship. During the years of Bible and medical schooling, the African families had to fend for themselves, providing food from their gardens and trusting the Lord for everything. They learned spiritual resiliency and developed into “Ranger tough” soldiers for Christ in one of the poorest nations of the world”

“In the first round of intense persecution, in 1973, thirteen of those courageous pastors willingly laid down their lives rather than deny their savior. A decade later, another three also accepted the martyr’s crown. Virtually all the dispensaries in the Koumra network were robbed and pillaged at least once; some several times.”¹⁴

3. Preparing Leaders for tomorrow’s Church

Victor Veary in his book shows that in April 1932 the first EET Church was established in Béladja. The Mother Church in Béladja gave workers for the ministry of the gospel. Jérémie Djélardjé and some young men were sent to help in a medical project in Moundou, then to the Bible school in Bebalem. Djélardjé will become the first National President of the national Church EET in 1962.

4. Raising God’s army to stop the advance of darkness.

Olley writes as the Mbai NT was produced quoted by Tatford:¹⁵

“The beerpot and the drum are in evidence throughout the land. The history of the Sara is sad indeed. For centuries they have suffered under the old Turkish régime, being constantly raided and taken as slaves to the Sudan and North Africa. With white explorers and Europeanization, the situation is worse. The world’s ‘open sore’ of French Equatorial Africa has become a gangrene eating out of the heart and vitality

¹³ But God... The Story of Dr. David and Ruth Seymour, Appendix 2.

¹⁴ But God...

¹⁵ The Muslim World, page 131.

of central Africa. The Saras are a superior and prolific race with noble traits and are the backbone of the colonial army and labour force. Cruelly exploited and ravaged by sleeping sickness, fevers and imported diseases... the Sara has become the vagabond of the Sudan, poor, despised and afflicted. Of no status except the perpetual slave, he bears with calm fortitude the vicissitudes and traits of his lot. From among this people is springing up a militant church, a light to an awful, dark place and a bulwark of Christianity against Islam.”

IV. THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE MISSIONS IN CHAD

1. **The Non-Cooperation of French Colonial Officers**

- a. The Difficulty to obtain the permit to evangelize Chad
- b. Favoring Catholic Missions instead of Protestants
- c. Not permitting English Missionaries to start schools

2. **The Death of Missionaries**

- a. The Harshness of the climate
- b. Diseases

3. **Nationalism**

How Pioneers reacted to these problems?

- a. Looking up to God in prayer
- b. Being resilient
- c. Turning over the Leadership to Nationals

V. THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE YOUNG CHURCH

1. **The Cultural Revolution and Persecution**

a. The Church is assimilated to foreigners

“In 1965, however, the president’s policy was still to encourage the formation of one national church, united in organization...His goal was to unite every professing Christians of every denomination as a model of the unity he wanted his multi tribal society to emulate. In his view, the church was failing to unite the country... Finally,

however, Tombalbaye attacked the church openly as a foreign, divisive element in Chadian society, an institution opposed to good Christian tradition.”¹⁶

Tombalbaye attacking the Church has some historical base:

- 1) By a presidential decree N.2928/PR/INT on the date of December 10th, 1973 the Baptist Mid Missions was closed down while another decree officialized the Eglise Evangélique Tchadienne (the dissident Church supporting Tombalbaye politics and views). The Baptist Mid Missions Church had expelled some Chadian Pastors in 1952 for belonging to the Parti Progressiste Tchadien to which Tombalbaye belonged. These expelled leaders later formed what became Eglise Evangélique Tchadienne. Tombalbaye wanted to reunite the two Churches but the Baptist refused.
- 2) In March 1973 Tombalbaye organized a funeral service for his brother Doumer in Bassada. Although many guests came from abroad and within the country, the Christians (Baptist) refused to participate because sacrifices were involved for the peace of the soul of the deceased.¹⁷
- 3) The church refused to support Yondo (the cultural initiation) because of it involved idolatry. In 1973 Tombalbaye is reported to have had many meetings with Church leaders in Fort Lamy
- 4) Other reasons related to history are:
 - In 1958 Miss Rachel Metzler daughter of the pioneer Rev. Metzler is reported to have violated the sacred camp of initiation by being a woman and a foreigner. During the early 13 years of Tombalbaye’s reign Christians were reported to have denounced the secrets of initiation during Church services, even teaching the language and signs of initiation to their children and women.¹⁸
 - An expatriate Missionary Gordon Winner was accused of taking away “Mian-bo” the idol of the village of Tombalbaye to his private museum.¹⁹

b. The brutal reprisals by the State machinery

- 30 Missionaries were expelled between 1973-75.²⁰
- 13 Pastors were buried alive for being the leaders of the opposition to the President’s Cultural Revolution.²¹

¹⁶ Hughes, Three Loves, page 145.

¹⁷ Miaos These page 22.

¹⁸ Miaos, These page 25.

¹⁹ Miaos, These page 35.

²⁰ 3 Baptist Missionaries expelled by a decree of the 16th November, 18 Baptist Missionaries (all Baptist Missionaries) by a decree of the 23rd November 1973. Later 9 Swedish Missionaries will also be expelled I the same conditions (Miaos, Les Martyrs Chrétiens au Tchad, page 11.

²¹ They are: BERDITA Etienne, HALIDABAYE Josué, NAIDAMADINE Paul, MBALNOUDJI Moïse, NGOMBAYE Jean, SIANGAR François, MONTOLNAN Philippe, BALLE Enoch of Sarh area and NAIBOULO Moïse, NELTIGA Jacob,

- Many martyrs

“The Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar investigated and authenticated at least fifty martyrs. Some Chadians estimated hundreds had perished rather than obey the government order.”²²

- There were many cases of tortures, arrests and humiliations of Christians.
- Many fled to C.A.R, Cameroun, Nigeria and were displaced internally.

The persecution of the Church was to test the maturity of the Church and purify it. The Church had to choose between obeying God or the president, and keeping the gospel pure or play the syncretism game. Today again God is expecting His Church in Chad to avoid the compromise and be ready to suffer for Him.

2. The training of the Leadership

- **Starting Theological Training:**

With growth of the Church there was a need to train the national Leaders. Only the ACT didn't believe then in theological training. All other four Missions started theological training as follows:

- The Lutheran started a joint training center with Cameroun and later started their own Theological School in Gounou Gaya.
- The SUM started the training in Bebalem and later many Bible schools in vernacular languages and the Institut Biblique Evangélique in Moundou.
- The Baptist Mid Missions started the Institut Biblique de Balimba.

- **Sending people abroad for advanced training**

Then arose later needs to send pastors for advanced training in France, C.A.R. and USA with time. Leaders like Rev. Rene Daidanso, Dr. Abel Njerareou, Rev. Agouna Deciat were trained in France whereas many were trained in subsequent years in BEST in CAR.

3. The expansion and conquest

- The EET started a Missions Society in 1962 by sending cross cultural missionaries to people groups around the Lake Chad.

JOBAYE Samuel, TRANDIBAYE Joel and NATABE Victor of Koumra area (Miaos, Les Martyrs Chretiens du Tchad, pages 12-13).

²² By Their Blood Christian Martyrs of the 20th Century, James C. and Marti Hefley, Mott Media, Milford, Michigan, 1978

- The ACT mobilized itself after Lausanne II and is sending today cross-cultural missionaries.
- The Baptist Mid Missions developed a Missions strategy around their medical center in Koumra and today are engaged in cross cultural Missions.
- The Lutheran used the training of its catechists for church planting and later in 1980 started an intentional Missions strategy.

4. **The Unity of the Church**

As the Church was growing there was a need to encourage the unity. The strategy then was Comity through which agreement the five Missions divided the country among themselves to promote unity and enable them to reach the whole land. There were challenges that overcame easily like Mr Walter Ganz a Baptist Mid Missions staff based in Doba who resigned from the Baptist and joined Olley and turning his work over to the ACT. However, Burkhard becoming a Pentecostal while serving with the Mission du Guera in the North (appropriately Centre of the Country) in 1963 wasn't easily swallowed. The problem worsened later when Burkhard consented to become the spiritual father of the dissident Church Eglise Evangélique Tchadienne in the South. Strict rules will be put in place isolating the Pentecostals taking years to heal. This year (2018) took place a combined service between the Baptist Mid Missions church and Eglise de la Cooperation Evangélique (former Eglise Evangélique Tchadienne) celebrating reconciliation since 1952/1973 division. Last year the Presidents of the two churches formally asked each other for forgiveness on the 24th August 2017 in a workshop organized by Tearfund Chad. History was made!

The Missions formed what will become later the Evangelical Fellowship of Chad, initially with the five mainline Missions in 1963 following misunderstandings between ACT and SUM in Tandjile.²³ The first official meeting was on 30th April -01st May 1964 to discuss common problems and share ideas and problems. As it developed the focus became evangelism, literature, Bible translation, the launching of New Life for all as an outreach program and the week for prayer.²⁴

The Baptist will withdraw to remain independent respecting their identity as the Evangelical Fellowship became more structured.

VI. ISLAM IN CHAD

A. Before Independence

Islam first arrived in Chad in the Middle Ages with the conversion of HUME (1085-97), the then-sultan of Kanem, in the 11th century. From the 11th to the 14th century Islam was practised exclusively at the royal court. Idriss Alawma (1570-1602) promoted Islam as the

²³ Daidanso, page 72.

²⁴ Daidanso, page73.

state religion, introduced the sharia as common law, waged holy wars and constructed brick mosques.

In the Ouaddaï Region Islam was introduced a bit later by Abd El Karim (1611?-1635?). The Ouaddaï will become an Islamic stronghold since it is located close to Sudan. The Borkou and Tibesti peoples seemed to remain animists for quite a long time, probably until the 19th century. The French colonization opened the South of the country to Islam. The French colonists considered Islam to be superior to animism and used Muslims as auxiliaries of the colonial administration. Later however, they viewed Islam as a threat instead, when they were confronted with resistance against the colonisation.

Islam offered fierce resistance against the French occupation of Chad: The Sanussiyya, an organisation based in the Ouaddaï Region waged war against the French troops for 12 years.

On November 15th, 1917 French officer Gerard accused Ouaddaï officials of conspiring against France and decapitated – amongst others – 80 teachers of the Quran and put their heads on spears in front of his house.²⁵

After this humiliation, the Muslims opted for a more peaceful resistance:

- They refused to send their children to state schools.
- They exiled to Sudan, where their Islamization was reinforced; one day they will return, bringing with them a more militant form of Islam.
- The hostility against the French was reinforced by a continually repressive French rule.²⁶

The colonization promoted a secular form of government, as Coudray points out:

“...The French administration – contrary to what many Muslims still believe today – did not have a plan to weaken, let alone eliminate Islam. If it is indeed true that officials and missionaries have worked hand in hand, it is a well-established fact that the colonial powers implemented a decidedly secular rule in the demographic centers of the country. Furthermore, the French officials indeed favored the Muslim authorities in many cases, be it to maintain the public order or to make use of the administrative system that were already in place in the sultanates of the north. And if in certain cases Muslims seemed to have been targeted by the colonial authorities, it was to our knowledge only for political and not for religious reasons.’²⁷

The Islamic reformation of Uthman dan Fodio in the 19th century touched the Southeast of the country, where a Fulani hegemony was established (Fulani subsequently became the lingua franca in this region).

²⁵ Coudray 92: 10 ; Debos 2008: 6.

²⁶ Debos 2008: 6.

²⁷ Coudray 1992: 9.

The Islamization of Chad was carried out from four directions:

- From the North by Arabs from Egypt and Libya
- From the East from the Sudan. The Ouaddaï and Biltine regions are very close to Sudan. There are Zaghawas, and even Mabas in both Chad and Sudan.
- From the West by Fulani Marabouts, who followed their nomadic brothers. They left Nigeria in order to reach Sudan. Some Marabouts passed through Chad on their pilgrimage to Mecca, settled in the larger cities, set up koranic schools and serving the kings as clerk.
- From the inside by the rulers and traditional chiefs, and by Chadians who returned from Arab nations. Islam became the pride of many chiefs who were eager to share it with others. This gave them prestige.

B. After Independence

On August 11th, 1960 Chad gained independence, and Tombalbaye, a Southerner, became president. His government had a fair amount of trouble with the Muslims:

- In May 1965 the revolt of Mangalmé the starts of the revolution in the north which will enable Northerners Muslim to take to power.
- In 1966 FROLINAT (the National Liberation Front of Chad) was born in Sudan, with the support of several Arabic nations. Amongst the people FROLINAT is remembered as the north rallying together against the south, however it had the goal to establish an Islamic civilisation in Chad.²⁸
- Under pressure, Tombalbaye makes concessions to the Muslims:
 - As a member of the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) it cut its diplomatic relations with Israel. It is the second African country do to so, after Uganda.
 - Between 1974 and 1978 the building of the biggest mosque in Sub-Saharan Africa in N'Djaména (financed by Saudi Arabia).
 - Chad becomes a member of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Chad is the first country to ratify the OIC charter after Saudi Arabia. Tombalbaye is the only African president who attended the 3rd Conference in Lahore in Pakistan.²⁹
 - Between 1972 and 1973 Gadhafi annexed the Aouzou belt.

Felix Malloum came to power after Tombalbaye, he made compromises with the north. The events (the war) that happened in February 1979 put an end to the regime of Malloum.

In 1982 Hissein Habré took power. The flag under which he rallied the Northerners behind him was "Islam". But this was just a pretext. He established a personality cult and persecuted the Muslims who opposed him. A number of them fled to Sudan.

²⁸ Abdoulaye 2006: 11-12.

²⁹ Le Temps no 180, 29th September 1999, page 8.

In December 1990 a rebellion that originated in Sudan that removed Habré from power. For a long time, the involvement of Sudanese in the transition of power was denounced.³⁰ The introduction of democracy in December 1990 gave Islam in Chad a new, radical face.

“The rise of the new government in 1990 coincided with a trend of radicalization amongst the Chadian Muslims. The prolonged stay of some of the MPS³¹ leaders in Sudan, the practice of a form of Islam infused with a pan-Arabic ideology and the ties with the powers in Khartoum initially seemed to have liberated the actions of the Islamic leaders who chose a “Sudanese” imam for the great mosque in N’Djamena. These leaders also encouraged a more aggressive territorial expansion through the systematic purchase of property for the construction of mosques, also in the South of the country.

They also attempted to impose stricter rules on the social life of Muslims, particularly on the women who were encouraged to wear a veil. These systematic and overtly proselytizing policies clashed with the leaders of the traditional Islamic brotherhoods who are more liberal and tolerant.”³²

For El Tourabi “Chad is a Muslim country only by name”. His strategy for Chad consists in two steps.³³

- a. The re-Islamization of the North
- b. The Islamization of the South (1000 mosques)

Islam will grow in Chad:

- The mosques will shoot up like mushrooms.
- Muslim Associations in the country will flourish.
- The government will favour Islam in certain programmes.
- The dark blue Chadian passport changes and become now green, the colour of Islam.
- The Islamic Supreme Council has grown in importance and become the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.
- The Islamic University of Fayçal of N’Djaména awards the Ph. D while the national University which became “The University of N’Djamena” awards only Masters.
- All key and strategic positions in the government in Chad are occupied by Muslims. The Defence and Security Department are largely under Muslim authority.
- Muslim leaders are nominated as Sultans by presidential decree, whilst non-Muslims can only become Canton Chiefs (which is a Chief of rank inferior to sultans, the latter command the Canton Chiefs).

³⁰ N’Djaména Hebdo, no 44, 20th February 1992.

³¹ MPS= Mouvement Patriotique du Salut (The present ruling Party: The Salvation Patriotic Movement).

³² Chad: A new framework for conflict resolution, Report of the African Crisis Group, no 144, 24th September 2008, page 8.

³³ BDRCM 2005: 17.

- Chad maintains very close relations with Sudan.
- Chad's secularity is constantly questioned by the Muslims.
- Arabic lessons have been made compulsory by decree.
- Arabic has been adopted as the second official language in the country. The promotion of Arabic is unfortunately justified as the bilingualism.

The great prayer organised by Gadhafi on May 1st, 1998 in N'Djamena which included several African heads of state.

- The adoption of the Chadian legal code on individual and family rights was blocked by the Association of Muslim Activists.
- The growing relationship between the Islamic Councils of Chad and Nigeria.
- The problems in Darfur.
- President Deby was declared "Beacon" of the Caliphate of Sokoto in 2008.
- Islamic Universities, Islamic Institutes and Centres.
- The adoption of children in order to give them a Muslim education.

C. Radicalisation

Islam is today the dominant religion in Chad, greatly favored by the government and largely funded by some of our neighboring countries. It's undergoing a serious revival, which is planned somehow to stop the Church in its efforts to reach the unreached people groups that are largely Muslim. The lack of the knowledge of Islam and the lack of sensitivity weaken the Church totally in any attempts to reach Muslim people.

At the synod of African bishops in Rome in 1994 Bishop Mathias NGARTERI remarked that there are three types of Muslims in Chad:

- c. "Traditional" Muslims who generally belong to the brotherhood Tidjane. They are in the majority and tolerant.
- d. Modern Muslims, educated in French and Arabic. They are in the ruling class, are open and tolerant.
- e. Fundamentalist Muslims (mainly in the south), who want to bring about change: They want to introduce sharia law, reject the secular state and want to replace French with Arabic (they refuse to learn French). They promote a true re-Islamization at the grassroots.

Charles VANDAME, former Catholic archbishop of N'Djamena wrote (cited by Abdoulaye):

"For a long time, the relationships between Christians and Muslims in Chad had been characterised by mutual appreciation and respect and a real courtesy. But over the last few years, things changed with the arrival of preachers educated in Sudan and other countries. A few of them arrived with a new vision for society that can be described as the following: replacing French with Arabic, rejecting the secularity of the state and adopting sharia law. They have neither appreciation nor respect for those who don't belong to the same faith as they do. Many people have the impression that they not only want to realize a religious, but also a political project,

within which there is no space for non-Muslims. We pray that the Lord may help us to find a way to meet with them and work together with them to bring about justice and peace, as we strive towards achieving this together with all the sons of Chad.’³⁴

1. The 2008 terrorist attacks in Kouno

Imam Sheikh Ahmad Ismael Bichara, who leads a Madrassa in Kouno, on the way to Sarh, launched together with around 800 Muslims a jihad against Denmark. They burned down 106 houses, 4 churches and a church hospital and forced 200 people to convert to Islam. The government had to use force to put an end to this insurgency.

“On July 5th, a fundamentalist imam, heading up a mob of 400³⁵ people armed with rifles, clubs and knives proclaimed a holy war against the Christians of Kouno (located in the very south of Chad). His crusade only lasted a few hours, but he nevertheless managed to burn down multiple Christian churches and houses. The intervention of Chadian armed forces resulted in a massacre – 80 followers of the imam were killed, whilst he himself was arrested and transferred to N’Djamena.’³⁶

The strategy used that of a Madrassa. Today these Madrassa particularly the Mabrouka are hiding many things. Like the Islamic Centers Manarat Mabrouka of Manda/Sarh hosts 12,607 persons. These centers grow in number and nobody except the Muslims who run them knows the details of what goes on there. That is worrying.

2. Boko Haram

Boko Haram was first established in Maiduguri, around 250km from Chad. Officially, the state of Chad fights Boko Haram, but that can’t be said from the whole population. Multiple attempts to infiltrate the country have been made. Chad in its fights against the Boko Haram in Chad, North Cameroun, Nigeria and Niger have paid a heavy cost. The defence and security forces in Chad are constantly on alert because the Boko Haram threat is real and serious.

The International Crisis Group remarks:

“Boko Haram’s presence in Chad has been most strongly felt around Lake Chad, which lies primarily within Chadian territory. The area combines rich agriculture, pastoralism and fishing and is a magnet for migrants from all over the Sahel, leading to tensions over control of resources. Boko Haram has taken advantage of the geography of the lake seeking refuge on its many islands. The cultural and religious influence of Nigeria’s Borno state facilitated the penetration of the Borno-born jihadist group, which has also taken advantage of longstanding communal tensions in the area.”³⁷

³⁴ Abdoulaye 2006: 38.

³⁵ The conflicting figures are due to reporting. The Chadian media reported 800 while Africa Crisis Group reports 400.

³⁶ Chad: A new framework for conflict resolution Report of the African Crisis Group, no 144, 24th September 2008, page 8.

³⁷ Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures, Crisis Group Africa Report N°246, 8 March 2017 Page i.

The Crisis Group made the following recommendation for Chad:³⁸

The reduction of the Boko Haram threat largely depends on actions taken in neighbouring countries, primarily Nigeria. However, measures can be taken to contain it in Chad and in particular in the lake area:

- Chadian authorities are ill-prepared to deal with suspected Boko Haram members who have surrendered or been captured. A screening process must be initiated to distinguish between real members and those who were either at the periphery or not even associated to the group at all. The latter should be released and integrated in broad community development projects targeting the youth. Following the recent initiative of the interior ministry in neighbouring Niger, Chadian authorities should elaborate a framework document for the treatment of those who surrender and communicate it to its international partners.
- To encourage people to surrender, counter violent radical messages, improve communication by the authorities and allow local people to express their concerns, community radio stations should be supported and expanded. Most of these will necessarily operate at local level, but consideration should be given to developing community radio stations to cover the whole lake area, to reflect the diversity and integration of the populations. Such radio stations, which could be based on existing initiatives in neighbouring countries, should broadcast in a wide and balanced range of local and national languages, and should include messages of peace, calls for surrender directed at Boko Haram members and information on other issues of lakewide interest such as cattle prices.

To balance the heavily militarised response to the Boko Haram threat in the lake area and to avoid its militarisation, and to address the needs of the population suffering from violence and displacement, including through better and more sustainable development strategies:

- Far more civilian capacity must be gradually brought in. This should include a stronger involvement of local authorities in strategic decision-making and a better administrative presence to rebuild social services and ensure civilian needs are taken into account. To encourage civil servants to work in the region, a system of temporary bonuses could be considered. Measures should also include support for community-level initiatives concerning social cohesion.
- Chadian authorities should propose clear political options for the future of the Lake region. They should elaborate a medium- and longer-term plan for the development of the Lake region, together with the development donors and in consultation with the local population. It should be sensitive to the needs of a highly mobile population.
- The risk of concentrating financial resources on the Lake region to the detriment of other regions should not be neglected. Chad is a very poor country with many areas in a precarious situation. It is therefore necessary to rebalance the portfolio of projects so as not to neglect the pressing needs of other regions.

³⁸ Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures, Crisis Group Africa Report N°246, 8 March 2017
Pages ii-iii.

- The welcome efforts of donors to set up projects in the region must take account of risks of injecting large amounts of development funding so to avoid reinforcing some conflict drivers. As a first step, development agencies should finance a socio-anthropological study into the livelihoods and mobility of the population, and consider how to involve local communities in development programs.
- Chadian authorities should review their current policies, which restrict economic activities on the lake, and take measures to support, protect and relaunch the regional economy. A protected trade corridor between Chad and Nigeria would facilitate trade and improve the living conditions of the population.

Nairobi/Brussels, 8 March 2017

D. Sects and Brotherhood

- a) The Tidjianyya is the biggest sect in Chad.
- b) The Qadriyya is the oldest brotherhood, which probably reaches back to the first half of the 19th century. It is fairly insignificant at the moment.
- c) The Sanussiyya was opposed to the French occupation and retreated to Libya. It has virtually disappeared from the scene in Chad.
- d) The Tarbiya is a branch of the Tidjianyya sect that has some desire for reform. They promise their followers an assurance of salvation. They are being persecuted by the Tidjianyya.
- e) The Wahhâbiyya is a brotherhood with Saudi origins. It is puritan and based on the strict implementation of the principles of the Koran and the Sunna. Most of its followers and missionaries in Chad are returnees from Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia.
- f) The Faid Aldjaria is a Sufi brotherhood (banned by the Government) that is characterised by:
 - i) A joint meeting of men and women in the Mosque to call on God.
 - ii) Clapping of hands while they say the Zikr and dancing stomping on the floor.
 - iii) Playing the drums during the meetings.

VII. THE CHALLENGES FACING THE CHADIAN CHURCH

1. THE UNREACHED PEOPLE CHALLENGE

1. PEOPLE GROUPS (cf. Joshua Project)
 - 141 People groups
 - 75 Unreached people groups
2. LANGUAGES (cf. SIL and ATALTRAB)
 - 134 Languages of which 131 are alive, 125 indigenous and 6 foreign.
 - 12 Languages with Bible, 26 with NT and 93 without God's word
 - 10 languages with the Jesus Film

The Chadian population is estimated to be about 14,787,000 people by Joshua Project.³⁹ The census of 1993 divided the Chad population in fourteen ethnic blocks namely: Arabs, Baguirmi, Fitri-Batha, Goran, Hadjarai, Kanembu, Lac-Iro, Mayo-kebbi, Ouaddai, Fulani, Sara, Tandjile, Others and Foreigners. However, this classification is not accepted by Linguists and Christian researchers as it simply fails to distinguish their ethno linguistic identities.

Joseph M. CUOQ sees four clusters:⁴⁰

1. The Sudanic cluster made up of southerners
2. The Nilotic cluster located in the Salamat, Batha, Kanem, and Ouaddai
3. The Arab Cluster
4. The Saharan cluster

That classification is much simpler but is not strategic for our understanding.

Patrick Johnstone⁴¹ came up with the following clusters which are more precise for missionary strategy taking into account the ethnic diversities and the possible affinity blocks. Taking into account his classification we want affirm the following clusters for more strategic reasons:

- The Sudanic Cluster: Sara, Ngambai, Ngama, Goulai, Mundang, Marba, Massa, Mbai, Tupuri, Nancere, Lele, Gabri/Tobanga, Soumrai, Kim, Kado, Daye, Kera, Musey...
- The chari Baguirmi cluster: Buduma, Barma, Kotoko
- The Guera Cluster: Kenga, Mukulu, Dangleat, Migaama, Bidiyo, Mawer, Mubi, Ubi, Kadjakse, Bolgo, Sokoro, Saba, Zan, Fania, Jongor, Medogo, Mawa...
- The Naba Cluster: Bilala, Kouka, Medogo, Berakou
- The Ouaddai Fur Cluster: Maba, Massalit, Tama, Dadju dar Sila, Mimi, Abou Sharib, Masmaje, Assungori, Runga...
- The Kanuri-Saharan cluster: Kanembou, Kanuri, Goran/Daza, Teda, Bideyat-Zaghawa
- The Arab cluster
- The Hausa- Fulani cluster: Hausa, Fulani

Today we would take the Kanuri- Kanembou as separate cluster for geo strategic reasons.

2. THE LACK OF UNITY

- Tribalism and Regionalism
- Parasite Church planting

3. THE DISCIPLESHIP WEAKNESS

³⁹ The Joshua Project site accessed 16 November 2017. The Government of Chad however says Chad population is estimated at about 13 million people (2015), with an annual growth rate of 3,6 % per year. ("Plan National de Développement" PND 2017-2021, June 2017).

⁴⁰ Les Musulmans en Afrique ,1975 pages 275-277.

⁴¹ CHAD Report, Dec 1997; Revised June 1998.

- Worrying Nominalism
- Syncretism
- 2nd Generation Syndrome

4. DEPENDENCY

5. A STRONG ISLAMIZATION

- Muslims are about 54% of the population and all the UPGs
- A strong growing Arabic-Islamic culture
- 2 Islamic Universities training for Francophone Africa
- Muslims dominate politics, the military, the economy
- A soft appliance of the Islamic Sharia

6. THE REVIVAL OF ATR

- A reaction to the Islamization
- Directed by Intellectual as Cultural Festivals
- Cultural Initiation with persecution of the Church

7. CHAD IN GLOBAL WAR AGAINST TERRORISM⁴²

VIII. THE OPPORTUNITIES

1. THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF CHAD

- At the center of Africa.



⁴² Andrew Korybko Hybrid War wreaking havoc in West Africa: a deep look at Chad's strategic situation <http://www.globalresearch.ca/hybrid-war-wreaking-havoc-across-west-africa/5581658> accessed on the 16 November 2017.

- b. A crossroad of peoples and languages, and of North Arab Africa with Sub Saharan Africa.
- c. A High number of refugees from neighboring countries.⁴³
 - Darfur Refugees
 - Car Refugees
 - Niger's Refugees
 - Nigeria's Refugees
 - Cameroun's Refugees

2. AN ISLAND OF PEACE SURROUNDED BY WARS AND INSECURITIES

3. FREEDOM TO PREACH THE GOSPEL COMPARED TO SOME NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

4. A POSSIBLE BASE TO REACH OUT TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

- a. Libya
- b. Darfur
- c. Niger
- d. North Cameroun

IX. WHICH STRATEGY FOR CHAD?

1. Building a strong prayer movement in churches and families. Campus Crusade and other groups are investing in building a national movement of prayer. Local Churches should be partners in this program of sowing seeds for a biblical revival.
2. Consolidating the Unity of the Church in Chad. The efforts by Tearfund, Campus Crusade, MANI and others to build a united protestant front should be consolidated. The unity of the Church should be an attitude than a slogan. Learning from the Catholic Church, tribalism should be discouraged. There is need for Protestant churches to unite with Catholics to form a Christian Association of Chad learning from Nigeria and Sudan.
3. Preparing the Chad Church to survive and grow under persecution and in the context of terrorism. The Church in Chad is not well prepared at this moment; however, we

⁴³ "(My translation) In 2014 HCR classified Chad in the second rank of African countries with the highest number of refugees. Their number was estimated at 650,000 refugees (more than 359,000 from Sudan, 106,650 from CAR, and thousands from Nigeria, escaping the threat of Boko Haram)" "En 2014, le HCR a classé le Tchad au deuxième rang des pays africains comptant le plus grand nombre de réfugiés. Leur nombre est estimé à 650 000 réfugiés (plus de 359 000 issus du Soudan, 106 650 de la RCA, et des milliers en provenance du Nigeria, fuyant la menace de la secte Boko Haram)." African Development Bank, Document de stratégie pays 2015-2020.

tend to see signs indicating persecution might intensify. Presently other religions are not happy losing their members and being challenged by the Church. The planned growth of the Church will spark an ugly persecution. Besides political analysts predict a more totalitarian government for future Chad. That will affect the Church.

4. Encouraging a strategic, diversified and global discipleship:
 - Target Urban and Rural settings
 - Run Women, Youth and Children
 - Practice DMM
 - Produce and distribute appropriate literature in languages in Chad
 - Using all media
5. Training the Church in applied Islamics and advocacy to defend the freedom of Christians.
6. Build a database of UPGs, languages, the growth of the Church and the pressures it faces. Presently the data about the Missions force and the Missions field is with the expatriate Missions. The national church needs to realize this.
7. Diversify the training of Christians as leaders in the society with emphasis on teachers, lawyers, MPs and political leaders... As of present the Church thinks only of evangelism and church planting leaving all the other sections of society untouched. The consequence is that although we have Christians in the Marketplace they are not prepared to play their role. As Muslims in Chad want to change laws to incorporate softly Islamic Sharia, Christians don't realize that.
8. Encouraging an appropriate follow up of MBBs through homes, discipleship and centers for professional training.
9. Promoting strategic, diversified and wholistic Missions targeting rural and urban centers, Women, Youth and Children, North and Southern regions, using different methods and strategies...
10. Encouraging the financial autonomy of Church.

May the Church in Chad enter fully into God's plans and purpose for Chad!

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