



The Chronicles of SIM Missions' in Nigeria between 1893-1950

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1. PREAMBLE

According to Panya Baba “Christian missions were born out of the heart of God as demonstrated throughout the entire Bible. This divine mandate and challenge have been manifested in the Church of God through evangelism, church planting, church growth, and church education and administration” (2009: ix). Agreeing with Panya, Yusufu Turaki shows that “the Society International Ministries (SIM) formally known as Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and the Sudan United Mission (SUM) are such organizations whose pioneering missionaries had the burden to reach the interior of Africa, especially the geographical area known before colonial rule as Central Sudan. They arrived in the land known as Northern Nigeria in the year 1893,” (1999:62).

In 1893, Thomas Kent, Walter Gowans, and Rowland V. Bingham started the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). In 1900, Rowland made the second attempt to enter Africa with Albert Taylor and A.J. Moline, but a deadly sickness forced him to return home. The third attempt took place in 1901 and involved E. Anthony, Charles Robinson, Albert Taylor, and Alex W. Banfield, who was joined later in 1902 by Dr. Andrew P. Stirrett (1999:62). The death of the earlier two missionaries (Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent) sowed the seed of the Gospel which was going to germinate in later years. The determined Bingham kept up the vision and the burden, (1993:99). The pioneering missionaries never gave up until they experienced a breakthrough. In its two-decade sojourn (1911-1920), the mission witnessed remarkable progress in the increase of missionaries, fundraising, the opening of more mission stations and outstations and expansion of the field work.

2. DEFINING OF TERMS

2.1. SIM

Gary R. Corwin explained, the work that had begun informally with Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent, and Rowland Bingham, known as the ‘Soudan Interior Mission,’ was now officially established as the ‘Africa Industrial Mission (AIM).’ The name was modified to ‘Africa Evangelistic Mission’ in 1905. The name then changed to ‘Sudan United Mission’ when it merged in 1906, but this amalgamation only lasted a year. The mission finally took ‘Sudan Interior Mission,’ the name its co-founders had chosen the previous decade. The Sudan Interior Mission changed its official name to ‘SIM International’ in 1980, with ‘Society for International Ministry’ as its byline. The mission revised its name to SIM in 1990, using the byline ‘Society for International Ministries’ for English-speaking countries, and changed its slogan to ‘Serving in Mission’ in 2000, (2018:44).

2.2. ECWA

In *the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the Evangelical Church Wining All (ECWA)* The acronym stands for Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA). The name was adjusted from Evangelical Church of West Africa to reflect the current spread of the church. ECWA is already operating beyond West Africa and now has a global presence. The name Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) was adopted by the General Church Council (GCC) in 2010, (2001:1).

2.3. Evangelism

According to R Peace in an article titled "Evangelism" in the Dictionary of Mission Theology, the word evangelism means "to proclaim the good news that the kingdom (reign) of God has come near in the person and work of Jesus, the response to which is repentance and faith (Mark 1:15)," (2007:115). Graham Cheesman agrees with R Peace, that "evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, to persuade people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God," (1997:161).

2.4. The Formation of SIM

Ruth A Tucker argues that the story of SIM does not begin with Rowland Bingham. It was Walter Gowans, a young Canadian of Scottish descent, who first dreamed the dreams that led to the founding of SIM. This was the reason he gave. After studying the needs of the world's mission fields, he became convinced that Sudan, with its more than sixty million people without one Christian missionary, was where God wanted him. But from the beginning, Gowans confronted obstacles, especially in obtaining sponsorship and support. No mission society in North America was prepared to risk sending personnel into the disease-infected Sudan. But Gowans would not be deterred. Margret Gowans was described as an ardent missionary enthusiast, a persuasive woman and the whole board who stood by her son and his friends, (1985:295).

Gary R Corwin states:

The three pioneering missionaries had very little money with which to journey from Lagos into the great interior of Central Sudan. They realized their resources were altogether inadequate for the long journey through the unknown. They then decided to spend a week in prayer and proposed to dispose of any keepsakes or nonessential articles. The next mail that reached them brought \$500, (2018:31).

According to Tim Geysbeek, in "From Sasstown to Zaria: Tom Coffee and the Kru Origins of the Soudan Interior Mission, 1893-1895," Studies in World Christianity 47, the three SIM pioneer missionaries were burdened to come to the Sudan with the gospel of Christ. Tim stressed, "The three men landed in Lagos in 1893 with the goal of establishing a base in Kano, set deep in the Sokoto Caliphate in what is now northern Nigeria. Their goal was to preach to those living in the Caliphate and in the wider Central Soudan, where they believed no Christians lived." "Their vision was to evangelize the sixty or more million unreached people of the African Soudan (primarily sub-Saharan Sahel region). Malaria overtook all three, (2018:46-65).

Gary R. Corwin revealed from a document what was titled "Bingham started to write 'Sudan' rather than 'Soudan,'" (22), that, Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent respectively died of dysentery and fever in 1894, and Rowland Bingham returned to Canada one year later. On his second attempt in 1900, he again came down with malaria and was forced to go back home. Unable to return to Africa, Bingham sent out a third team one year later. They successfully established a base about three hundred miles (483 km) inland at Patigi in 1902."

Ruth A Tucker states "failure, death, and despair marked the beginnings of the Sudan Interior Mission," (1985:295). David Jowitt, emphasizes, "missionary efforts were hampered by a high death toll due to disease, and by the lure of the slave trade," (2010:161). Also, Ruth A Tucker believes the idealistic dreams of a few inexperienced men to penetrate what was then known as Sudan appeared to be nothing short of a hopeless cause. It was a vast, forbidding region south of the Sahara that has since been divided into a number of separate nations. Yet, through the undying persistence of one man, Rowland Bingham, SIM became one of the most dynamic mission ventures in Africa in the history of the Christian church, and today it is one of the largest mission societies in the world, with a missionary force that has at times exceeded thirteen hundred, (1985:295).

Barje S Maigadi disagrees with Ruth A Tucker. He states that the challenges of disease and death were immediate and inevitable. Prior to their arrival in Nigeria, the pioneers were fully aware of the risk they were taking. This was acknowledged in a farewell message to his church, the St. James Square Presbyterian Church in Canada, Gowans predicted:

Our success in this enterprise means nothing less than the opening of the country for the Gospel; our failure, at the most, nothing more than the death of two or three deluded fanatics. But if we fail, it will be our own fault from lack of faith. God is faithful, He fails not. Still, even death is not a failure. His purposes are accomplished. He uses death, as well as lives, to the furtherance of His cause. After all, is it not worth a venture? Sixty million are at stake. Is it not worth even risking our lives for so many? There are sixty million (people) in the Soudan (Sudan) capable of glory, (2006:76-77).

Barje S Maigadi further states that upon arriving on the field, "the pioneers encountered what they had expected, the threat of disease and death." On January 1, 1894, while in Lagos, Nigeria, Walter wrote:

"With God," I enter this New Year confident that whatever it may bring, of joy or sorrow, pain or peace, deprivation or plenty, hardship or comfort or even death itself, whatever that death may be, He will be with me and will be my sufficiency. What a fitting time this is for a retrospect of all the way He has led me to where He by His grace has now brought me in spirit as well as in time or place, (2006:77).

Ian Fleck makes their point by stressing the fact that in Lagos "SIM pioneers met the missionaries of the societies laboring there. The Superintendent of the Methodist Mission predicted failure and said they were undertaking the impossible. Again, he said, 'Young men, you will never see Sudan; your children will never see Sudan; your grandchildren may,'" (2013:207). Yusufu Turaki stresses it is natural for anybody to conclude that human tragedy could be termed as fruitless efforts and a failure, but when it is looked upon spiritually, the death of those two missionaries was the sowing of the seed of the Gospel by means of 'martyrdom' which was going to germinate in later years. The two early pioneers became 'martyrs' for a good cause, 'The Burden of Sudan.' The activity which took place between 1893 and 1900 revealed to us what persons, events, circumstances, religious and social factors and movements which led to the founding of the SIM, the year Bingham returned. There was a significant achievement. First, the Mission was being formed. Second, in 1898 a Missionary Council was formed under the name Africa Industrial Mission (AIM). Amongst many factors that contributed to the lack of immediate penetration into Sudan were ill-health and discouragement, (1993:99). Barje S Maigadi stress upon these: foundations of prayer, faith, and vision, a third expedition was launched in 1901, (2006:77).

Gary R Corwin added, "the education ministry of SIM in Nigeria was the means by which thousands started to read and write. In cooperation with the government, SIM schools did tremendous work and the quality of education in primary, secondary, and teacher training was of a high standard," (2018:54). The approach to mission work through education gave break through to communities that were resistance to the gospel. The education brought enlightenment and freedom to people.

According to Gary R Corwin,

In the late nineteenth-century faith mission movement, SIM was part of the four primary mission streams that make up SIM today. The four mission streams were Sudan Interior Mission, the Andes Evangelical Mission, International Christian Fellowship, and Africa Evangelical Fellowship. They shared the common roots and basic characteristics that have defined faith mission since Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission set a model for the movement in 1865. Here are the characteristics. First, they shared a common burden for the least reached-those peoples with the least access to the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, they shared a common fountainhead. They were interdenominational in their approach and drew members from across the spectrum of denominations and as well as non-denominational churches who shared their evangelical commitments. It was this interdenominational emphasis, rather than any claim to superior faith, that most clearly defined the faith mission, (2018:21-22).

There were many factors that gave the SIM pioneer missionaries and other mission agencies success in the Central Sudan. The missionaries shared same faith, burden, passion, and goal in reaching the unreached people of Sudan with the gospel of Christ. The missionaries saw themselves as partners in progress and not as enemies.

Gary R Corwin added the following:

Third, they shared a common approach in their principles and practices of operation. This became the most enduring characteristic of faith missions in the minds of many-their approach to finance. One of the most distinctive features of faith missions is their financial philosophy, which, operating in faith that God will provide, (2018:23). Fourth, from the beginning they shared a commitment to a clear evangelical statement of faith, (2018:23).Fifth, they shared several sources of influence that were very important in shaping what they would become. These included the influence of missionary statesmen and evangelistic entrepreneurs like Grattan and Fanny Guinness, A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, A. B. Simpson, and D. L. Moody; as well as the premillennial missiology, missionary training endeavors, and the Keswick brand of 'deeper life' or 'full surrender' teaching which they embodied/embraced, (2018:24).

Barje S Maigadi agree that “the SIM pioneers considered themselves people sent by God not only to people in need but to people who needed them most. They were undoubtedly sure of their call and mission, which was solely the evangelization of Sudan. However, they encountered very difficult challenges that led to the death of Gowans and Kent, leaving Bingham alone,” (2006:76). The SIM pioneer missionaries were not discouraged with the difficulties each one of them encountered. They were determined to penetrate the Central Sudan with the gospel. They were not threatened by sickness, diseases or death, yet, they pursued their dreams.

In his article "From Sasstown to Zaria: Tom Coffee and the Kru Origins of the Soudan Interior Mission, 1893-1895," Tim reveals “the key role that Tom Coffee, an ethnic Kru migrant from Sasstown, Liberia, played in founding the Soudan Interior Mission (SIM). Coffee journeyed with Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent up into what is now northern Nigeria in 1894 to help establish SIM. Gowans and Kent died before they reached their destination, the walled city of Kano. SIM's other co-founder, Rowland Bingham, did not travel with his friends and thus lived to tell his version of their story. By using materials written in the 1890s and secondary sources published more recently, this work provides new insights into SIM's first trip to Africa,” (2018:46-65). “One Kru whose story has essentially been buried in the archives of SIM International for decades is Tom Coffee. Coffee was from Sasstown, Liberia, situated 75 km northwest of Cape Palmas along the coast. He was instrumental in helping Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland Bingham found the Soudan Interior Mission (SIM). Geysbeek concluded by stressing the fact that an African played an integral part in founding what became one of the largest mission organizations in Africa by the mid-twentieth century, the Soudan Interior Mission (SIM). This was a Kru named Tom Coffee from Sasstown, Liberia, who traveled with SIM cofounders Walter Gowans and Tom Kent up into the Sokoto Caliphate in 1894. By using Gowans' diary and publications that are decades older than most of the missionary-centric stories that Rowland Bingham published, more can be learned about this trip and the role Coffee and other Africans played in it. Gowans and Kent would not have taken one step out of Lagos without the help of their African workers. Gowans would not have gone as far as Zaria without Coffee's assistance. We only have Gowans' diary because Coffee protected it after Gowans died. Coffee's willingness to travel with the two missionaries into a part of Africa that neither he nor they knew and his resolve to continue with Gowans after the Emir of Kontagora almost killed him suggests he was willing, like some of his 'sassy' kinfolks from Sasstown, to take grave risks,” (2018:60-61).

Tim Geysbeek asserts that “now 125 years after Bingham, Gowans, and Kent docked in Lagos, SIM is a vibrant organization with over 1,500 missionaries and another 2,500 employees, who work in seventy countries on six continents around the world,” (2018:46-65).

3. THE FORMATION OF ECWA

Barje S Maigadi observed, the SIM pioneer missionaries were determined to establish an indigenous church which later became ECWA (Evangelical Church of West Africa). They established the church by first proclaiming the gospel of Christ and winning the people to Christ. The second step involved getting the people organized into local congregations (churches). This was meant to help the people come together for prayer and the study of God's Word. The third step involved getting the people organized into what were called regional bodies, that is, the District Church Council (DCC). In the fourth step, the believers located in the DCCs were institutionalized into what is called the General Church Council (GCC), that is, the national body of ECWA, (2006:61).Rev. Nathaniel L. Olutimayin, former President of ECWA (1982-1988), explains the purpose of the institutionalization of ECWA:

Both the church and mission leaders sensed the need for some kind of a supervisory control over local churches and the local districts in the interest of preserving purity of doctrine and discipline. They adapted and modified a Presbyterian polity. The primary difference in ECWA as originally conceived and the Presbyterian form of government is that the only real control that another church or group of churches may exercise upon a local church is the privilege of membership in ECWA by conformity in doctrine and discipline. There was no hierarchical authority in view that would legislate, judicate or govern any district or any church, (2006:61-62).

This was the reason Barje S Maigadi asserts that “ECWA started as a nondenominational church because its founder, the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), was not sent out to Nigeria and to Africa in general by any denomination from the West. The pioneers planted local churches and trained nationals to shepherd the churches under the direct supervision of missionaries. The local churches were not linked by district, language, or tribe,” (2006:122). Ian Fleck, stressed “the missionaries established the first mission station near Bida at Patigi, 500 miles up the River Niger and near the confluence of this river and the river Kaduna. This was made possible with the help of the Government boat that provided supplies for them to go to Patigi, an important town among the 300,000 Nupe tribes people,” (2013:211). This assistance given to the SIM pioneers served as an encouragement. Barje S Maigadi added “Each local church was kept as an indigenous unit within each tribe; each tribe developed its own dynamic church leaders. In other words, each local church was autonomous and ethnically distinctive,” (2006:122).

In ‘That Was the Beginning of Great Things at Miango,’ Amos Koggie, Iveh Zamfara and Tim Geysbeek stressed the fact that “regardless of how and why the church was established in 1954, its formation represented an important first step toward autonomy for the African church in Nigeria,” (2015:135). According to Gary R Corwin

ECWA is the denomination associated with SIM in Nigeria and other countries that were established in Nigeria in 1954. In the early 1950s, consideration was given to having the churches registered with the Nigerian government, which took place in 1952. This led to attention being given to drawing up a constitution and registering the churches as an indigenous denomination. Constitutional matters were discussed in January 1954 at Kagoro. The name chosen, the ‘Association of the Evangelical Churches of West Africa,’ came to be known by the acronym ECWA. (ECWA became the Evangelical Church of West Africa in 1989, and Evangelical Church Winning All by 2011). The first General

Church Assembly that met in May 1954 confirmed this name. In 1957 a meeting of the General Church Assembly of ECWA was held in Kwoi, when R. J. Davis, the field director of the SIM work, announced that the Evangelical Churches of West Africa were now a legal entity and recognized as such by the government of Nigeria. It is interesting to add that what became the Evangelical Missional Society, the indigenous mission society of ECWA, actually preceded the formal establishment of the denomination by more than a decade. Passing along a missionary vision for the unreached was clearly an early hallmark of SIM work in both Nigeria (the 1940s) and Ethiopia (1930s), (2018:54).

Yusufu Turaki stated that “after two years of experiment, the constitution was ratified and ECWA was officially registered with the government in 1956,” (1999:629). One of its pastors describes its foundation thus:

We, the members of the organization known as the Association of Evangelical Churches of West Africa, were formerly adherents of the Sudan Interior Mission. By the grace of God, the work has grown. We formed ourselves into a church body, drew up a constitution, and registered with the Government of Nigeria in 1956. Our organization consists of local churches, local councils, eight Districts, a general assembly, and our own missionary arm, the African Missionary Society, (2013:169).

Another pastor describes the main belief of ECWA as, “...to maintain a society for the support of public worship of God the Father through Jesus Christ Our Lord, to minister the word of God and to promote evangelism,” (2013:171). The working relationship between SIM mission leaders and ECWA was cordial, this made the transition easier. Despite the fact that “the efforts almost came to be a failure after Bingham, Kent and Gowans landed at Lagos on December 4, 1893, and the conditions and the situation that existed at that time, the work was eventually established, (2013:226).” Barje S Maigadi stresses that

For ECWA to be true to its story, it must operate on a 'wider foundation,' not on an ethnic, geographical or denominational foundation, because doing the contrary would mean a betrayal of its historical roots. The church is the one family of God, which cuts across denominational, racial, social and ethnic boundaries. Crossing these divisive walls requires a total surrender to the will of God. ECWA must see itself as 'God's Rescue Home' for all ethnic groups in Nigeria and beyond, (2006:81-82).

He concludes by saying "this one resolution became another turning point in the life and work of SIM in Central Sudan, particularly in Nigeria. The success of the work was now to be built on the foundation of prayer, which led to the motto of SIM, 'SIM by Prayer,'" (2006:84). There is more to be learned from SIM pioneer missionaries. Each one of them including their home supporters took prayer seriously and a total dependence of the leadership of the Holy Spirit to teach and guide their activities in the Central Sudan. History has proven that the formation of ECWA has brought good results both spiritually and physically. This result has caused members to rely upon themselves and not on foreign organizations although SIM has continued helping ECWA. We must thank God that He led the mission and church leaders to think ahead in this way so that ECWA had six years' experience in managing its own affairs before Nigeria became independent. Thus, by the time other major changes came about in the nation, ECWA had developed responsible leadership and could play its part spiritually in the nation, (2006:84).

The SIM leaders thought it wise to train and develop spiritual leaders that will take over the leadership from them to continue with the ministry they had begun. The SIM missionaries were aware that time will come when none of them will still be in Nigeria. Therefore, for the ministry to continue after they had left, they saw reason to mentor spiritual leaders to continue with their vision of planting and growing the local churches.

Barje S Maigadi stressed,

The doctrinal factor that led to the institutionalization of ECWA did not involve any distinctive control over the local churches. According to Olutimayin, the only control the national body was to have over local churches was doctrinal conformity. Thus, every local church and district was to remain administratively autonomous. But as time progressed, administrative autonomy was removed from the local churches and centralized at the District Church Councils and General Church Council level respectively. This shift created roles, statuses, prestige and administrative hierarchy that now seem to stimulate divisive ethnicity in ECWA. The main reason divisive ethnicity is heightened by an institutionalized church like ECWA is that divisive ethnicity emerges at the boundaries of interaction between members of ethnic groups. Barje S further stated the institutionalization of ECWA in Nigeria was carried out in four stages. These were licensing and ordination of nationals, the registration of SIM churches, the formulation of a constitution and the establishment of an association, and finally, the consolidation of ECWA ministries. He added that the original purpose of the institutionalization of all the various SIM churches in Nigeria to form ECWA was for fellowship based on a common belief about the centrality of Jesus Christ in salvation history. This common belief was to provide ECWA a unique Christian self-identity in contrast to those who do not have the same belief about the person of Jesus Christ. The second purpose was for ECWA to be a legally recognized religious organization by the government of Nigeria so it could own property. The original intention was that with time, authority and responsibility would come from the local churches. In this way, the organizational structure of ECWA would be an inverted pyramid type, (2006:129, 136-137).

Before SIM mission leaders handed the ministry to the nationals, they made sure the ministry had an administrative structure that was based on the following, faith, Bible, prayer, Constitution and Bye-Laws and financial guidelines. When ECWA leaders took over from SIM leaders, the structure was already developed. ECWA as a church today is using the administrative structure developed by SIM mission.

Barje S Maigadi added

At the third General Church Assembly meeting at Kagoro on January 4-6, 1956, eight ECWA members were unanimously elected as the trustees of ECWA to represent it before the government of Nigeria. These Trustee members were elected from different ECWA districts

representing specific regions and ethnic groups in the country. ECWA still retains this method of electing its trustees. This system of electing the trustees in ECWA seems to work well without any regional or ethnic discrimination. After the election of the Trustees, the Association of Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA) was officially registered with the government of Nigeria as an independent Nigerian church body on June 11, 1956. According to Rev. Raymond J. Davis, the General Church Assembly 'sang praise to God in half a dozen languages' when the registration of the church with the government was announced. The institutionalization of ECWA churches based on the principle of association was now in place. Thus, ECWA was now an association of churches representing different ethnic groups in Nigeria, (2006:142-143).

The SIM mission leaders knew the importance of having ECWA registered with the government of Nigeria. This was one of the reasons they handed over to the nationals. ECWA leaders could operate as a church organization after the church was registered without molestation. Therefore, the registration of ECWA with the Cooperate Affairs of the Federal Government of Nigeria has guaranteed the church to be a church organization.

D M Olusiyi stresses:

The registration of ECWA with the government of Nigeria set the stage for a gradual transfer of SIM ministries, authority, and all its real estate and moveable property in Nigeria to ECWA. By October 1, 1960, the year Nigeria gained its independence, SIM had transferred seventy-five primary schools to ECWA. The transfer reached its climax on November 19, 1976. On this date SIM formally transferred to ECWA all of her holdings and all of her legal responsibilities. The holdings included 1,356 local churches with about 400,000 adherents, and supporting institutions, that is, medical department, rural development, evangelism department, church growth department, media department, finance department, and all the mission stations. Thus, SIM could proudly say, the great impossibility has been achieved. Faith, mighty faith, has conquered once again, (1976:1).

The mantle of responsibility was now in the hands of the second generation of ECWA leaders. In his acceptance speech, Rev. Olusiyi, the president of ECWA (1973-1983), wrote:

We are grateful to God that the baby SIM through the gospel of Jesus Christ has today become matured. This will be a great joy to our parent SIM that her baby has grown to the state of manhood to take up her full responsibilities ... By the grace of God, we shall not deviate from the mighty and living faith in the Lord Jesus as has been passed to us ECWA by you SIM through God's Word. We shall ever continue to keep our pledge to keep flying the banner of our MASTER JESUS CHRIST through the sound proclamation of the Gospel, living the Gospel and by teaching the Word of God. . . . We are treading where the saints have trod; we are not divided; we are all one body. One in hope and doctrine, and one in charity, (1976:1).

4. EARLY HISTORY OF SIM IN THE SUDAN

Gary R Corwin stresses that after the three SIM missionaries (Thomas Kent, Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham) arrived on December 4, 1893, at Badagry, as they went into the Sudan, it was less than a year before Mr. Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent fell ill and died. The most senior who survived among them was Mr. Rowland V. Bingham.

In an article titled "Christian Penetration into Gbagyiland" in *From Shoulder Carriers to Christ Seekers*, Dogara Gwamna reported that Bingham went back to Lagos and subsequently to the United States of America and Canada. He went back to report about the death of his two dear colleagues and to also recruit more missionaries for the second attempt into the Central Sudan. The second attempt was not successful; it ended in disaster. The experience in the first and second attempt to penetrate the Central Sudan with the gospel was not successful, but they missionaries were never discouraged. It was in the third attempt that they succeeded. The third attempt was described as "years of fruitfulness." The missionaries that were recruited and came back with Bingham included E. A. Anthony, Charles Robinson, Albert Taylor, and A. W. Banfield. They succeeded in establishing a mission station at Patigi, (2013:38).

According to Rowland V Bingham, "The heathen who did not know Christ in his hunger bow down to wood and stone, a hunter entreating his idols," (1943:6). This statement described the 50 million

unreached people in the Sudan without the gospel. This was what created the burden and passion in the hearts of the pioneers of the Sudan Interior Mission, Rowland V Bingham, Thomas Kent, and Walter Gowans, (1943:6). Barje S Maigadi stresses that the call the pioneer missionaries had was from God. The purpose was for them to go and preach the gospel of reconciliation so man and woman could be brought back to God in repentance from their sins. Some of the mission agencies that exist today emerged as a result of the call of God upon the lives of the leaders to begin some specific ministries. It was cleared that the pioneers of SIM had a definite call of God to go to the Sudan. It was a demonstration of obedience to God, (2006:73).

For example, Rev. Tommie Titcombe was motivated to come to Sudan as a result of a ministry report that Rev. E. P. Lang gave when he went to Canada on furlough in 1907. First, Lang said in a village called Ogga, "Christian males were denied girls in marriage. Second, he remarked that Ogga women were best in pot making. Third, the selling of pots in markets by Ogga people helped in propagating the gospel," (2015:4). When Rev. E. P. Lang reported that he had a contact with Ogga people, Rev. Tommie Titcombe left Canada and arrived Sudan in 1908 and desired to have a ministry among the Ogga people. The particular people group were called the Odo-Ere people. And in 1912, Rev. Tommie Titcombe personally went to the people of Ogga and taught them the Word of God. Many people embraced the new religion, (2015:4).

5. EARLY INFLUENCES ON THE SIM PIONEER MISSIONARIES

Gary R Corwin writes that there were quite a number of godly people whom God raised and used to encourage the pioneer SIM missionaries to go to the Sudan. The lives of these men served as inspiration to the SIM missionaries:

Influencers of the missionary movement in the Sudan included missionary statesmen and evangelistic entrepreneurs like Grattan and Fanny Guinness, A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, A. B. Simpson, and D. L. Moody. In addition, the premillennial missiology, missionary training endeavors, and the Keswick brand of deeper life or full surrender teaching they imbibed had meaningful effect. The interconnection between these individuals, their beliefs and endeavors, and the faith missions' movement in general connects them to the missions that now constitute SIM, (2018:24).

This is what humans cannot explain: how God gave the same call, burden, and passion for the Sudan in the hearts of many of the pioneer SIM missionaries. This happened in the spring of 1893, (2013:206). Gary R Corwin gives an example of a couple named Fanny and Grattan Guinness, emphasizing that the couple served as instruments in the hands of God who were available for God to use. He added that their story is commonly told by many faith mission agencies, (2018:24-25). According to Hudson Taylor:

The Guinness's founded the East London Training Institute in 1873, the first interdenominational mission training institute, which became the prototype for others. Fanny managed the institute and was the mission writer, while Grattan was the evangelist and teacher. A. B. Simpson, who later founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), was converted under the ministry of Grattan Guinness in Canada in 1858. All three Sudan Interior Mission founders (Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent, and Rowland Bingham) studied at Simpson's New York Missionary Training Institute that was established in 1883. This institute was of great help in laying a theological foundation for the SIM pioneer missionaries. In 1889 Grattan Guinness convinced A. J. Gordon to start the Boston Missionary Training Institute, and assisted Emma Dryer to accept what would become the Moody Bible Institute, the products of which were hundreds of recruits over the years for SIM missions. A. T. Pierson played a key role in launching the Student

Volunteer Movement (SVM) at Moody's Northfield Conference in 1886. It is likely that Pierson coined the SVM watchword, 'The Evangelization of the World in This Generation,' (2018:24).

Rowland V Bingham left Britain in 1890 and met John Salmon, and they worked together as pastors in Canada between 1892-1893. Salmon founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) in Canada. The spiritual birth of Bingham was traced to Salvation Army; this was the church where he was converted. Rowland V Bingham had opportunity to listen to a lecture delivered by A. J. Gordon in Toronto. The title of that lecture was "The Holy Spirit and Missions." This was the message that

compelled him toward world mission. In addition to his motivation to world mission, there were articles which he was privileged to edit written by statesmen such as Grattan Guinness, A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, and A. B. Simpson in 1904. The title of these articles was: *The Faithful Witness* (1904-1905), *The Missionary Witness* (1905-1911), *The Evangelical Christian and Missionary Witness* (1911-1931), and *the Evangelical Christian* (1931-1942). Bingham's heart could not withstand the spiritual challenges contained in those articles. Each of those articles was appealing and captivating and challenging regarding the need to take the gospel to the unreached people in the Sudan, (2018:24-25).

Among people who were passionate and willing to partner with Bingham was an unnamed person who promised to give one hundred and twenty dollars as his support towards Bingham's mission to the Sudan. The response of Bingham to the desire of his friend was encouraging. He never encouraged the friend to borrow in order to support his trip to Sudan. Bingham confessed that he had never received such an amount as a gift. Therefore, Bingham and his friend went to the town together before he boarded the train, and the friend gave him everything he had in his bank account. It was after he received the money promised by the friend that he left for Sudan that morning. That was how the Lord provided for him to encourage his mission to the Sudan, (1943:17). In addition to this, two of the persons whose names were also not mentioned by Bingham assisted him financially as he prepared to go to the Central Sudan. At different times, donations were made by these friends, and when added together, the money was not more than fifty or sixty dollars, but this assistance went a long way to encourage Bingham, (1943:17).

The commitment and dedication of the pioneer SIM missionaries made the mission grow and expand. The mission grew rapidly especially in the northern part of Nigeria. This growth gave birth to the planting of local churches among people groups such as the Igbominas, the Okuns, the Plateau and the western and eastern parts of Nigeria. Among the SIM fields, missionaries whom the Lord raised and used greatly in the earliest years were Tommy Titcombe, Rev. W. Playfair, Rev. Crouch and many others. God used SIM missionaries to establish schools, hospitals, dispensaries, as well as to get involved in printing and publications. The main reason behind these establishments was to evangelize the people of the Sudan with the Word of God, (2014:1). Ajamu Thomas Kayode state that "Bingham had further trained in order to fully prepare him for what he deemed to be his life ministry. He therefore took some medical training in a Cleveland hospital. He also took more theological training in the later part of 1895 at the Bible College where Gowans and Kent had graduated in New York," (2013: Ixvii).

According to Rowland V, we are also reminded that his life was stimulated and influenced by the need in Central Sudan by Mrs. Margret Gowans. She presented the spiritual need of over sixty to ninety million neglected unreached people in Central Sudan who were without the gospel of Christ. This appeal was made possible when she invited Bingham to her home for lunch. Bingham was in Toronto as a guest speaker, and she took advantage of the break time to share with him the need of Central Sudan. Bingham listened to Mrs. Margret Gowans quietly and passionately as she shared with him the need of Sudan. Rowland V Bingham later wrote:

As the immense panorama unrolled before me, she filled in the teeming masses of people to whom her son, Walter Gowans, was called to serve so much that by the time I closed the interview in her house she had placed upon me the burden of the Sudan. And so, on that memorable day, as I listened to that godly mother tell the story of the Sudan, I, that is Rowland V Bingham, felt God's hand on me for the Sudan, (1993:1).

Barje S Maigadi stresses that the urgency, burden and passion of Mrs. Margret Gowans moved her to mobilize a prayer team that would be committed to praying for the salvation of the unreached people in the Sudan, since she could not go by herself. Her concern was also that God would raise people up who will be willing to go to the Central Sudan as missionaries. The obedience to the call of God in the lives of Thomas Kent, Rowland V Bingham, and Walter Gowans served as answered to the prayer of Mrs. Gowans, (2006:73). Barje S Maigadi added that the life and character of Rowland V Bingham was linked to godly men in the Scriptures. Like Joshua, the man who led the children of Israel to the Promised Land, he lived a life of victory. Daniel was another person described as a man with strong

heart who was committed and dedicated to God. Lastly, Paul never took pleasure in preaching where others had preached. He was instead interested in virgin mission fields where churches were not planted so that he could go and start something new. Paul's desire was always to preach salvation messages for the conversion of sinners, (1943:9).

Dogara Gwamna, in his chapter titled, "Darkest Africa in Need of Christ," agrees with Bingham that when the call of God came to Dr. Andrew Stirret to go the Central Sudan, his obedience to the call added integrity to the mission of SIM in Sudan. One of the factors that motivated Dr. Stirret was the tract written by Bingham titled "A Plea for the Central Sudan." The burden of Sudan was shared in that tract. Dr. Stirret, having read it, was motivated and influenced; therefore, he felt Central Sudan was the best mission field suited for him to go and serve as a missionary. His commitment to mission was a challenge to younger missionaries, (2013:14). Dogara added that Dr. Stirret became very popular among the Gbagyi people group, an ethnic tribe whom Stirret served as a missionary. He was nicknamed "Bature Mai Magani" (that is, white man, the medicine one). Dr. Stirret was likened to Luke the physician and to Paul in

Colossians 4:14, (2013:14). Rowland V wrote of Dr. Stirret that:

For many years now he has been beloved physician to the whole of the Nigerian force. He has labored unceasingly, his medical practice extending from one end of our vast field to the other. His unflinching courage, his indomitable spirit in the face of dangers, seen and unseen, have been a constant source of inspiration to our many missionaries, (2013:14).

The northern part of Nigeria was predominately Muslim. But God started changing the narrative in 1936. The missionary couple SIM assigned to go to that region was Mr. and Mrs. Playfair. The couple had a warm relationship with the District Officer of Birnin Kebbi and the Emir of Gwantu. These men became friendly with Mr. and Mrs. Playfair. The Emir asked the missionaries to select any part of the emirate to settle for their mission. Also, the Emir permitted and allowed anyone willing to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior to go ahead and become Christians without any hindrances. Moreover, the Emir arranged with the missionaries to meet his own brother by the name of Yahaya, who was on his own and was struggling to read the Bible, (2013:61). Again, another factor that encouraged and influenced the SIM pioneer missionary's work was:

The demonstration of unity among missionaries from other mission agencies and denominations such as Methodist, Anglican, Baptist and Presbyterian, Qua Iboe Mission, and Sudan United Mission. The missionaries saw themselves as colleagues. They worked together, supporting one another and having times of fellowship with one another, regardless of denomination, (2013:25).

The pioneer SIM missionaries again enjoyed warm relationship with the Nigerian government. The leadership helped in making the travels of these missionaries easier. Before now, they missionaries were expected to go through the Niger and Benue rivers despite their fears of the unknown. But at this time, the government of Nigeria had finished working on the roads and the railway lines. One could then travel from Lagos to Abeokuta by train. This was made possible in 1898. The train went as far as Ibadan the western part of Nigeria in 1901 and Jebba in 1909. Because coal was discovered at Enugu, the eastern part of Nigeria, the railway line was built in 1916. The need to extend the railway line to the northward of Nigeria was continued. It went as far as to Makurdi in 1924, (2013:25). An article in the July 1898 Foreign Mission Journal of the Baptist Mission said:

One of the most interesting facts connected with our mission work in Africa is that a railroad is being built from Lagos to a point on the river Niger, and this will run right close to every city in which we have worked. Good wagon roads are also being constructed, and a telegraph line has been put up, (2013:25).

The ministry of SIM was very much felt in the Central Sudan because of the influence of Keswick. This was made possible because Bingham was involved. Although Bingham became less involved over time, but his influence contributed greatly to the spiritual growth of the mission. The impact of Bingham was felt through the teaching ministry of Keswick on deeper life with its emphasis on the need for people to surrender their lives fully to the Lord and His service. This kind of teaching was brought by people such as A. B. Simpson. The understanding Simpson had on such teaching meant that he should live a life of victory over sin. The implication of this teaching to him was saying that

those people who were truly sanctified by the Holy Spirit did not need to use or apply medicine when sick. The simple reason he gave was that the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf was enough for our healing, (2018:25).

Gary R Corwin stresses that this kind of teaching had great impact on the pioneer SIM missionaries such as Thomas Kent, Rowland Bingham, and Walter Gowans because each one of them had the privilege to attend school under the tutorship of Simpson before coming to Africa. The person who became the spiritual mentor of Bingham in Toronto was John Salmon; he was the person who became the founder of Simpson's CMA in Canada. The implication of this teaching not to take medicine took the lives of Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent because they did not believe or see the reason why they should apply or use quinine for healing, (2018:25-26). They held on to hope for divine healing. This was the negative effect of Simpson's belief. It was after the two missionaries died that Bingham started encouraging missionaries to start using quinine in the early 1900s. This made the SIM missionaries reject and stop the view and belief of Simpson about divine healing, (2018:23). In summary, I see the influence of the statesmen motivating SIM missionaries.

6. THE PREVAILING THEOLOGY AND BELIEF OF SIM PIONEER MISSIONARIES

Rowland V Bingham, the person whom God raised and used to establish the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), in paraphrasing Ephesians 2:20, says that the church did not come out of the blue; it has a solid foundation tracing it through the apostles, prophets, and then to Jesus Christ, who serves as the Chief Cornerstone of the church, (1993:1). Barje S Maigadi stress the pillars upon which the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) was built: it was on prayer, faith, hope, and vision for the lost in Sudan, (2006:84).

According to E P T Crampton, he asserted strongly that the reason why Bingham succeeded as an SIM pioneer leader was simple: the mission was not established on denominational basis. The people employed came from different church backgrounds, but had sound theological and doctrinal beliefs rooted in the Scriptures. As part of the practices of the mission, infant baptism was not allowed; rather, adults were to be baptized by immersion. Nobody could take holy communion if the person was not baptized. It was only the ordained persons that were allowed to perform the functions. The social activities such as dancing, drinking of alcohol, and smoking were not allowed. If anyone was caught in these acts and was reported to the church authorities, he or she was barred from taking communion. Any person coming from a different denomination outside SIM established churches was seriously and carefully investigated before being allowed to take communion, (2013:169). However, SIM was seen by other churches to be stricter and more difficult when it came to the issue of communion than an Anglican church, (2013:169).

According to Luka Turaki Zazzaga, in the earliest years of the SIM missionaries in Sudan, they believed in divine healing without necessarily taking medicine. This was the reason if there were medical outreaches; it prepared the minds of the people before the spiritual healing was presented through the preaching of the gospel of Christ, (2018:174). Ian Fleck report that anytime Dr. Andrew Stirret had opportunity to administer medical treatment, what he did in the instant was to preach the gospel of Christ. He believed that the gospel message can heal the troubled soul. He repeatedly followed this approach when he was in Jos. He would go to an open square, stand on a rock so that he was seen by people holding the picture of Jesus Christ, demonstrating the love of God to the people and telling them why they must accept Him as their personal Lord and Savior, (2013:215). This was the reason why the missionaries felt very strongly about these principles and practices as follows:

They were to seek first the kingdom of God, evangelize everywhere with the Gospel, defend their beliefs against modernist thought, proclaim the gospel, as distinct from Christian service, which was the main concern of liberal mission institute, individual conversion, resulting from genuine repentance and an admission of one's sins, radical behavioral change as evidence of regeneration, the formation of new communities as the inevitable consequence of spiritual regeneration, (1999:27).

The SIM pioneer missionaries were faithful to a clear evangelical statement of faith; their desire was to make sure that people were empowered and that both men and women who were passionate about mission were encouraged, (2018:23-24). D I Olatayo added that the missionaries believed in the divine authority and the inspiration of the canonical Scriptures 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:21, the doctrine of the Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19, the fact that man and woman sinned and the

consequent total moral depravity and the need of repentance for their generation Romans 3:10; 5:12. They also believed in the atonement through the substitutionary death of Christ, His death and resurrection and ascension Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 3:18; Luke 24:6, 51, the doctrine of justification by faith Romans 3:24-26; Acts 13:39, and the fact that human beings can only be regenerated by the Holy Spirit 1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:18; John 1:12, 13; 3:6. They believed in the doctrine of sanctification Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:2; John 17:17, they again believed in the second coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of those who died in the Lord 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Acts 24:15, and they also believed in the eternal blessedness of those people that were saved and the everlasting punishment of the unbelievers in the Lord. They believed they should be separated from the world and the desires of the world 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, and finally, they believed in the doctrine of missions. This was the mandate of the church to the lost. The desire was to bring each unsaved to the full knowledge of the Lord Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9, (1993:36).

The three SIM pioneer missionaries, Gowans, Kent and Bingham, knew that many challenges awaited them in Sudan. Records show that some missionaries from other mission agencies who were in Sudan before SIM pioneers sacrificed their comfort before they could come to Sudan. But each one of them were spiritually ready to face any challenge. One of such challenges was that they were told the Sudan field was closed, but these missionaries did not accept this discouraging information. Ian says "For many years Christians have gazed and then stood still aghast, and said the dangers were too great, this field was closed. But Jesus' power shall break the bars, and burst the gates of brass. The dark Sudan shall hear the name of Jesus," (2013:207-208).

In a chapter titled "Case Studies," written by Geoffrey W. Hahn with Joshua Bogunjoko, they agree with E P T Crampton that everywhere there are Christians, church organizations or mission agencies locally or internationally, and there were things that distinguished their characters. This was why SIM made sure that for them to succeed as a mission, spirituality was a top priority for the mission. There were two areas of importance which SIM focused on: prayer and diversity. First, SIM was established and founded on prayer. God was engaged in prayer on behalf of the lost souls in Sudan. The SIM missionaries were recruited above denominational lines. This helped SIM missionaries to go across borders and barriers to proclaim about Jesus who died, was buried and was resurrected from the dead. Therefore, SIM ministries revolved around prayer among the missionaries and their supporters, (2018:221).

Dogara stresses again in his chapter titled, "Christian penetration into Gbagyiland," that the ministry of SIM built their belief or theology on the fact that each person must learn to depend completely on God through prayer and faith. This was on the ground that, paraphrasing the Scriptures, anyone who saw crying would come back singing songs of joy, and he or she that goes out sad with seed to plant will equally come back with songs of joy carrying sheaves with him (Psalms 126:5-6), (2013:38). Second, diversity is another core component of SIM's spiritual heritage and vitality. The SIM pioneer leaders took seriously missionaries' diverse spiritual gifts, skills, perspectives and the cultures each person came with in the mission. The leadership believed that their backgrounds were going to help in their strategies to plant, grow and multiply local churches among the unreached people in Sudan. Therefore, through their ministries, the hope each missionary had as they depended on God through prayer was to wait for that great harvest of souls from every tribe, people, language, and nation that will stand before the Lord on the last day (Revelation 7:9), (2018:221-222).

D I Olatayo bring out the missionaries' beliefs clearly: they were quite aware that in going to Sudan, their lives were at risk, they could die, but still they were ready to risk their lives in faith, (1999:2). Reuben Turbi Luka assert that these words renewed the zeal of the three young missionaries who like David Livingstone before them who strengthened by the power of prayer cried, "I am willing and ready for God to use me to take the Gospel to the Central Sudan, or I instead die in the process if I do not," (2018:63). The SIM missionaries were not discouraged from going to Sudan: their prayer was focused on God to give them the Sudan field because He is the One who gives the harvest. But if it did not happen as desired by them, they were ready to die in order to see that Sudan was evangelized for the Lord, (2018:63). Gary R Corwin still stresses that the secret of the SIM pioneer missionaries lay in the fact that their approach in their principles and practices in ministry was the same, (2018:23). For example, their approach or stance on finances was similar:

One of the most distinctive features of SIM mission is their financial philosophy, which, operating in faith that God will provide, generally does not guarantee salaries for missionaries. SIM mission will generally refrain from directly soliciting funds, but application of this philosophy ranges from a policy of simply stating a need, to not publicly revealing the needs of missionaries, (2018:23).

As I end this section, I would like to mention a few of the great impacts these SIM missionaries had in Nigeria, particularly in Northern Nigeria. According to Ishaya Gajere, what gave an edge to SIM pioneer missionaries in most of the mission fields they went was the fact that they were committed to the establishment of schools and they also provided medical services, theological and tertiary institutions which were established in order to train Nigerians.

In the Northern part of Nigerian where it was very difficult to penetrate and was mostly dominated by Muslims, the missionaries' approach was different. It was easier to penetrate into the Hausa culture through the establishment of dispensaries, clinics, and hospitals. In these establishments, time was created for morning devotions with the patients before medical care.

This was aimed at helping the people know that only Jesus could heal, (2015:102).

Gary R Corwin stresses, faith, courage and hope were quite demonstrated in the lives of the SIM pioneer missionaries as they stepped into countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa, South America, and Asia. These were places the name of Jesus was not known at that time. It was through faith and prayer the pioneers acknowledged their total reliance on God and sought direction and resources to accomplish God's work. The pioneers believe that the Gospel they came to preach demands both proclamation and action, rooted in an unshakable conviction that the greatest need of every man and woman that exists in life was to know God. Gary R added, "The establishment of local, viable, biblically centered, growing churches that are equipped for mission has always been at the heart of the vision of SIM." (2018:1).

It was evident that in the midst of times of significant theological drift in some churches and mission organizations, SIM remained firm in its commitment to biblical truth to prove its vision and mission. This commitment has drawn men and women into fellowship and service from across denominational lines who share the SIM statement of faith, (2018:2).

The pioneer missionaries shared in their principles and practices of theology of mission a clear commitment to evangelical statement of faith, the empowerment of laity and women in mission, and the primacy of evangelism, (2018:23-24). Therefore, the SIM pioneer missionaries knew that, first, God's mandate for world evangelization was found in God's creation, that is, every man and woman is responsible to fellowship with God, to give God the glory, to do God's will, and to know God, (1 Corinthians 1:9). Second, God's mandate for evangelization was found in His character, that is, God's love, fellowship, authority, truth, holiness, honesty, compassion, mercy, and persistence. God is not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance in Christ, (2 Peter 3: 8-9). Third, God's mandate for mission was found in his promises, that is, Abrahamic Covenant- "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'yes' in Christ. . ." (2 Corinthians 1:20). Fourth, God's mandate for evangelism is in Christ (John 3:16). Fifth, God's mandate for evangelism is in the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). Sixth, God's mandate for evangelism is in the church, His body, the church is under orders to evangelize until Christ returns, (1991:3). Seventh, the missionaries used God's word as the recognized criteria for judging their successes or their shortcomings (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Eighth, the missionaries were united in mind, intent on one purpose, striving together for faith in the gospel (Philippians 2:1-2), (1991:10).

Yusufu stresses that SIM as a mission was guided by theological and biblical principles in all her operations. For example, in 1964 the leadership in the West African Field Council defined SIM's theological position thus: it was historically fundamentalist in nature. In other words, they believed in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, in the preaching and teaching of the gospel, in the holiness and righteousness of every believer, and finally, in every missionary living in a life of prayer and having faith in God. The above were some theological principles that undergirded and helped SIM ministries in Sudan. No missionary was recruited if such a person did not believe in their doctrinal position, (1999:151). The Evangelical Christian and Missionary

Witness, in an article entitled "The Kind of Missionaries Needed," states:

They must be converted men and women, persons who know in their own soul the generating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, otherwise they will be blind leaders of the blind. They must have a divine call, just as truly as Isaiah or Paul or the early missionaries. The consciousness of this will sustain them in many a dark hour. They must recognize the Bible as the Word of God. Christ as the world's only Savior, and His atoning sacrifice as the world's only hope. This will put solid ground beneath their feet and gave them definiteness of mission and message. They must believe that the heathen is perishing and need this gospel. They must be prepared to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. They must be patient, loyal, loving, true. . . The plainest, simplest, most concrete presentation of the gospel is what is needed over there and anything else is useless, (1999:151).

Therefore, the SIM pioneer missionaries had in their minds the people of Sudan to preach the gospel of salvation to them. The Great Commission was key to every SIM missionary. They felt that the Sudan field was neglected, unreached, and the people were lost in sin, (1999:152). SIM missionaries were committed to the Sudan field because to them, the field was the most neglected mission field in the world. They felt that the field was ripe for harvest for Christ. The preaching of the gospel to the lost served as a guard to SIM mission on where to focus her attention. These biblical principles helped SIM mission to plan and think of strategies to apply. But again, the life and character of the field missionary was critical to his services anywhere he went to plant churches. As a missionary, he needed to be careful with his life in the area of morality, ethics, and its practices. The missionary was expected to live a life of prayer, faith and total devotion to the reading of God's Word and a belief in the authority of the Word. The reason was so that he could preach the gospel with conviction, commitment and devotion as the Great Commission of Christ. The above was to be reflected in his daily relationship with both the Christians and non-Christians in the community where he lived and was serving. Finally, he was expected to be humble and to show forth the light of the gospel through his life as a missionary, (1999:152).

7. SUMMARY

In this article, we have seen a brief about the formation of SIM and ECWA, the early history of SIM how they began their ministry in the Sudan. This research also captured individuals who influenced and motivated the lives of these pioneer missionaries. It also gives the brief history of three individuals who had a call to a people, land, and a nation they never knew. The dream of reaching Africa with the gospel became a reality when Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent-American, and Rowland Bingham all sacrificed and left their comfort zones and headed to Sudan with a burden and passion to reach the unreached, neglected, and uncivilized with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sicknesses, diseases, and death were their challenges, but they never gave up. They continued not minding the challenges. The ministry of these pioneers has founded a mission organization called SIM and a church organization called ECWA (Evangelical Church Winning All). Today, ECWA has not less than ten million followers in Nigeria. The pioneers left both spiritual and physical legacies for ECWA: faith, courage, character, humility, fear of God, and the establishment of institutions.

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