



## MINUTE FOR MISSION

November 15, 2004

### Anuak Hymns of Faith

The Mekane Yesus Church among the Anuak ethnic group in western Ethiopia began from the work of Presbyterian missionaries in two mission stations in the area. From small beginnings in the early 1950s, the church has grown to several thousand believers in congregations scattered throughout their area. There are now twelve ordained pastors, including one woman.

One very large factor in the growth and strength of the church among the Anuak people is, I believe, the fact that they have the New Testament in their own language. It was translated very early on by some of the first missionaries that worked among them in southern Sudan. It is also a source of inspiration for new hymns, which are being written constantly, and many hymns are now taken straight from scripture.

Hymns are a way for the church to express people's deepest feelings, and many of the hymns nowadays express the Anuak people's trust and confidence in God to watch over and protect them in this time of sorrow and uncertainty. They do not yet know the final outcome of the events of these last months but are assured that our great God does not doze off nor sleep, but is present with them to care for them, whether in good circumstances or bad. I have translated the two hymns below, which illustrate their trust.



Anuak children will grow up able to read the Bible in their own language.

### **Hymn 1**

The ground of my life is you,  
The ground of my life is you, O Lord,  
The ground of my life is you,  
For what I eat is still given to me by you  
Even the clothes I wear are given by the Lord.  
Therefore, my heart will not be anxious any more,  
My heart will not be anxious any more,  
Because the One who is helping me, everything comes from him.  
When I sit down and think,  
Who will help me in this poverty/distress that I am in?  
Who will help me in this tiredness that I am in?  
The Lord shows himself to me and says,  
“My child, calm yourself, I am here beside you,  
I will help you with this.”

### **Hymn 2**

O God, El Shaddai, O Lord, Master,  
Father, nothing is impossible for you,  
Even the barren woman, Amen, has got a child.  
For the people who are in oppression all the time,  
The Lord doesn't doze off, Amen, he does not sleep, Amen.  
Truly, his eyes do not close,  
The Lord is not silent, he is not silent, he is not silent,  
He knows all things from his throne.  
The devil does not win, he does not beat the Christian;  
What does he know about winning? He is always beaten,  
And he goes away ashamed, and stands far away.  
And says, “What happened?”  
The Lord from his throne,  
He is a true helper for those who are widows,  
He is a true helper for those who have no relatives,  
He is a true helper for those who have no one to look after them.

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