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The Prophetic office of Christ in the light of Ngundeng towards the construction of a Nuer Christology

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ABSTRACT

The tradition of believing in Prophets and prophecies is a common culture in Africa and Christianity as evidenced by the books of prophets in the Holy Bible. This article explores the understanding of the prophetic office of Christ in the light of Ngundeng towards the construction of a Nuer Christology. Its aim was to fully expose Christ to the people of Nuer as a means of evangelizing them to have salvation in Christ Jesus. The problem was that majority of the Nuer had abandoned Christ and joined the prophet Ngundeng as their Christ to address their glitches. As a result of that, the researcher critically examined both the prophetic office of Christ and Ngundeng to the fullest using an analogia entis (interconnectedness of mysteries) approach to make the Nuer fully understand Christ. Eventually, a Nuer Christology was constructed after the researcher assessed the resemblances and divergences that made Christ more superior than Ngundeng. In conclusion, Christ was revealed as a prophet, world's universal Ngundeng Par Excellence and a fulfiller of all prophetic offices including that of Ngundeng.

Key words: *Prophet, Ngundeng, Christ, Inculturation, Nuer Christology*



INTRODUCTION

Believing in Prophets and prophesies is a common culture in Africa society. Also, prophecies hold a fundamental place in Christianity for it is being believed that most of our canonized books were prophesied. A prophecy is a message claimed by a prophet to have been communicated to him by a deity. Such messages typically involve inspiration, interpretation, or revelations of the divine's will that concerning social world and events to come. All known ancient cultures had prophets who delivered prophecies to people. When Jesus Christ first came, He gave the revelation of His Father to the people; He explained the Father to humankind as it is well narrated in the book of John 1:18 (Enns, 2014). According to Sharon Evan-Hutchinson (1992), Nuer believes that Ngundeng is the famous prophet among the rest of the Nuer prophets. He is widely known in South Sudan and his pronouncements are preserved in songs. Ngundeng Bong's prophetic songs have remained as a crucial point of reference to the people of South Sudan. In Nuer community, prophecy is a living tradition; For instance, in both past and the current conflicts in South Sudan, prophets are believed to have participated in an important role of both mobilization for conflict and in achieving stability. The people of Nuer believe that Ngundeng helps them in times of wars and other catastrophes. This resonates with what John Kiboi (2017) said that "religion will only remain pure if it addresses the questions of the converts."

Believing in African myths has several setbacks in Christianity. Some African tribes have deviated from the Christian traditions just to worship their own traditional mythological figures which have some similarities to that of Christianity just in the name of relevancy. The Nuer people of South Sudan are among the ethnic communities known of such practice. According to Falk Peter (1979), this problem started when the Christian Missionaries reached Nuer land around 1902. The majority of Nuer responded positively to Christianity and got baptized. Later, they realized the Old Testament which was taught to them was having some parts talking about prophets and their prophecies. This caused doubt among the Nuer. They started to question themselves why Nuer prophets are not taught like the Old Testament prophets. These feelings made some Nuer return to their previous traditional faith or belief. Currently, some sections of the Nuer have taken prophet Ngundeng as their Christ and established a church in the name of Ngundeng. This is a problem that should not be ignored; Christ should be inserted to Nuer beliefs to transform their spiritual life and to let them return to Christ. According to Charles Nyamiti (2007), inculturation is one of the trends in modern ecclesiology; it is a process of inserting the gospel messages and Christians' life into a particular culture so that the gospel should not easily be swept away. It consists of both non-speculative (socio-cultural) and the speculative systematic trend. The non-speculative is based on practical issues, it is regarded as functional. The Speculative trend on the other hand deals with philosophical reflections; it explores the African socio-cultural data, biblical, and Christians' teachings.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To fully expose Christ to the people of Nuer as a means of evangelizing them so that they can be spiritually transformed

METHODOLOGY

Analogia entis is a conviction that between God and his creations, there is correspondence in such a way that one can gain a deeper understanding of the revealed mysteries by examining them in the light of natural knowledge gained from



human experiences in the world. It is the principle of the interconnectedness of mysteries (Nexus Mysteriorum) that Christian mysteries are organically connected and examined from the perspective of the other mystery. The mystery being dealt with must have commonalities or themes parallel to that of the Christian element. An Analogia entis approach is applied in this article to help in determining relevancies and divergences on the prophetic office of Christ in the light of Ngundeng towards a Nuer Christology and ease the understanding of Christ by the Nuer.

Apostle Paul applied this kind of approach in Athens when addressing the Greek people (Acts 17:22-23).

“Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So, you are ignorant of the very thing you worship-and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.”

Jesus as head of the Church used inculturation as seen in the parables of the Kingdom. “The Sower and the Seeds; The Wheat and the Tares; The Mustard Seed; The Leaven; The Treasure in the Field; The Pearl of Great Pride; and The Dragnet” (Mathew 13:3-50). Jesus used these analogies as a comparison between the heavenly Kingdom’s mysteries with earthly mysteries for an easy understanding of the gospel.

PROPHET NGUNDENG

The Africans’ prophetic office is one of the areas ignored by the church. This issue commenced when the missionaries arrived in Africa. They (missionaries) taught the Jewish prophets to the Africans instead of the Africans’ prophets for no genuine reason because the floor of embracing all the prophets in the Church was open as stated by Jesus Himself in the book of Mathew 5:17 that “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” The Nuer people of South Sudan have realized this suppression and started the church in the name of prophet Ngundeng as a way of Africanizing the gospel. The section explores prophet Ngundeng in details right from his birth, divine spirit, and his functions to find out the similarities and differences that exist between Ngundeng and Christ through comparison.

According to Mathew Kustenbauder (2008), the earliest prophetic movements in Africa were those led by the prophets of the Nuer and Dinka peoples of southern Sudan. Of these, the most famous was the Nuer prophet Ngundeng Bong (d. 1906), who in the 1870s built an immense earthen pyramidal mound where divine power became manifest to and in him. He claimed the ability to predict the future and to purify his people, who saw in his person the presence of Divinity. He and the many other prophets were the central ritual experts and peacemakers of the Nuer and Dinka peoples, concerned mostly with finding adequate land and pasturage in the ever-changing riverine environment of the southern Nile region and protecting their peoples from drought, plague, and famine. Nonetheless, the British colonial administration saw them as hostile and tried for many decades to weaken the prophets and to destroy their pyramids.

According to Puk John-Tong (2001), Ngundeng was the first prophet to rise to fame from Nuer. Ngundeng Bong belongs to the Lou clan, from Gaat liaah, which was known as the Earth-master's clan. He viewed himself as being an earthly representative of Deng, the sky god of the Nuer religion. His prophecies are now part of the politics of modern South Sudan. According to Puk John-Tong (2001), Ngundeng was the first prophet to rise to fame from Nuer. Ngundeng Bong belongs to the Lou clan, from Gaat liaah, which was known as the earth-master's clan. He viewed himself as being an earthly representative of Deng, the sky god of the Nuer religion. His prophecies are now part of the politics of modern



The birth of Ngundeng

According to Douglas Johnson (1994), Ngundeng is a Nuer word which can be translated as “God-given” because of all that surrounds his birth. He was born at the peak of the 1830s. His mother was an old woman who conceived after the age of giving birth, she is from central Nuer of Nyirol that is known today as Uror County. Bong Chan and Nyayiel Malual wanted to spend the rest of their lives being optimistic; they shall have the joy of their youth. Indeed God did not let them down; the famous Ngundeng was born in their old ages and will later change Nuer and their land for the next generations that will follow centuries later. Ngundeng was born in eastern Jikany Nuer where his father came from a sub-section of eastern Jikany Nuer of Ciecany who occupies the Gambella region of Ethiopia today.

Bong Chan the direct descendent of Keir Kaak Keer, the founding father of Jikany of Latjoor married Nyayiel when she was only 10 years as a Nuer tradition to wait for young girls until they reach adulthood by putting something on their (finger or wrist). Ngundeng's birth was a miracle kind of birth, he was born with both his lower and upper teeth, and he was also left-handed and most importantly he was born by his mother who wasn't having her monthly period.

Ngundeng's Divine Spirit

According to Puk John-Tong (2001), Ngundeng Bong was covered with a powerful divine spirit while young. When the power of Deng's Divine spirit possessed him, he would go to the forest and wandered alone and also fasted, he drank only water and ate human feces. He refrained from talking or arguing with people. He built a small mound in Jikany but left it alone when he was heading for Lou. After he declared himself, he starts eating normal food. He taught both Nuer and Dinka to pray through his songs which portrayed an imaginary religious practice. He stated that his divinity was for all not just Nuer. He wanted to establish a positive image as a peacemaker, which he later showed at Pading when he refused to go to war against Dinka.

Ngundeng was later praised by his Dayoms or disciples as Deng-taath. The Deng-taath means (divine spirit), was seen in his powerful prophetic powers and abilities that would later remain active in him for the rest of his life. According to Evans Pritchard (1956) Ngundeng Bong had three shrines or Bei, and the most gigantic one of three is in Keij later renamed Wei Deng the place of Deng near Waat in Nyirol County Lou-Nuer. That is where he buried all of the diseases and bad things are known as puom, Aiweel, or bie, which means Deng's place (Luak Deng) was the only one in Wei Deng. A large fence surrounded the base, and this base was high and also had six dozen elephant tusks, two facing Gun and four facing Mor, Jikany, Anuak, and Murle. The spear was decorated with ostrich eggs and feathers. The ones that participated in building the Mound came from different areas of Nuer and also few came from Dinka, Shilluk, Murle, and Anuak with sacrifices. The Design of the mound was inspired by Dinka, which Deng himself may have seen in eastern Nuer. Pritchard further elaborated that the mound was destroyed by the British Government around 1928.

Ngundeng's Functions

Douglas Johnson (1994), prophet Ngundeng played a big role in establishing the primacy of Deng over all Divinities. His first divinity was the gift of life, the creator, protectors, and the ones that controlled life, all prophets viewed themselves as men of divinity. They used their gifts to help cure the sick, the women that had fertility issues, and also the growth of crops. As much as they were able to cure everything they were also capable of destroying life because they were cursed



to also have the power to destroy and can also develop the sacrifices they made during times of war can result as a destruction of their enemies. Life and death can be controlled by divinity and men that practice magic are both known to manipulate life and death through the help of a divinity or a lower power.

According to Johnson (1994) prophet Ngundeng passed away in January 1906, he was laid to rest next to his byre and was buried by his two sons Reath and Bor. A century later because of his great influence through his words and prophecies, most of the Nuer tribesmen would refer as their true prophet and would call him as Naath by Deng-taath, and according to Nuer, Deng-taath means heavenly creator. Johnson (1994) stated that, Ngundeng Bong was a man of many great characters and qualities. He worked hard cultivating and slogging his big farm and was simultaneously ready to assist the poor, needy, and all kinds of visitor's referring to them as Jaal Kuoth or God's visitors. He embraced peaceful coexistent, rejects senseless wars, raids, and destructions. He used to treat the lame, deaf and blind peoples calling them "gaat-Deng" meaning-children of God Deng. Prophet Ngundeng Bong had grown to the position of fame with double abilities of both curse and blessing to resolve blood feuds: and to mediate the societal dispute, resist colonialism, and to prevent cattle raiding and ills treatment of the poor. Prophet Ngundeng revealed himself as a peacemaker by refusing to wage wars with the Dinka, for he uses to say to his people that it is not good for one's divine sons to fight. Consequently, in cases of enemies captured during the battle, Ngundeng used to treat them and send them back to their respective communities.

Johnson (1994) Ngundeng used to curse people that disobeyed his orders. According to Johnson, He caused a child's and his maternal cousin to death when they denied him. Also, it was believed that Ngundeng raised some dead people during the Pading battle. Not only that, but he was also the first owner of divinity among the Nuer, he introduced the idea of spiritual belief. Furthermore, he created the new role of the vessel of divinity (Gok Kuoth). According to Johnson (1992), prophet Ngundeng had foretold and prophesized future events with great accuracy which many generations would later witness and reinterpret to fit within their political, social, and economic challenges' of the day. His prophecies came to him in the form of hymns. The Nuer community believes that some of Ngundeng's prophecies have already been fulfilled and others are still on the process of being fulfilled. Among the recently fulfilled prophecies include the current instability in South Sudan and the return of "Dang" his rod or baton which was taken by Britain when Guek the son of Ngundeng was killed early in 1929 in the battle by the British. "*Mi cia thuok ka ruac nooge dang, en mac thok eni nyuura*" which can be translated as-If you have finished with the talks (debate) bring my Dang (Rod); I, the language grabber still seated. Eighty years (1929-2009) later, this baton was brought back from Britain to South Sudan.

CHRISTOLOGY IN PROPHETIC VIEW

The prophetic office of Christ has many controversies surrounding it. Among these controversies is the Africans' prophetic office because of some relevancies that match Christ's prophetic office. For instance, the Nuer in South Sudan has embraced prophet Ngundeng as their Christ because of some similarities existing between Christ and Ngundeng. This misconception should not be taken lightly. It needs a quick solution from theologians because the communities may leave the church and go back to their ancestral shrines for worship. For that matter, this section deals with Christology from its prophetic viewpoints so that the two offices can fully be reconnoitered and compared to enhance Nuer understanding about Christ. Christ is the Son of God whose birth was pronounced by the Angel that He will be borne by a Virgin Mary. "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.



You will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus” (Luke 1:30-33). “A boy will be borne by a virgin and he will be called Immanuel, means God with us” (Isaiah 7:14).

Christ as Prophet

According to Max Botner (2019), a prophet is a person who speaks for God. There are several words that distinguish the prophets apart. Among the words is “nabhi” which is a Hebrew word, it means a spokesman or a speaker who has been called or appointed to proclaim as a herald the message of God. The other Hebrew word used to describe a prophet is “Roeh” which means to see. It is the older word for prophet which is more similar to nabhi. The last term used to describe a prophet is “seer” which means to see behold. “Christ is a prophet who came to fulfill the prophecies of the former prophets who came before Him Just like Jeremiah or Elijah, the mission of Jesus as a prophet was to proclaim the message from the covenant and living it out through his actions and speeches” (Gabriel, 1956).

“In the broader sense of prophet, simply meaning one who reveals God to the human race and speaks to people the word of God, Christ is of course truly and fully a prophet. He is the one whom all the Old Testament prophets prefigured in their speech and their actions” (Grudem, 1994).

According to Paul Enns (2014), the Prophetic office of Christ was established in the book of Deuteronomy eighteen and also see forward the utmost fulfillment of Christ in the book of Acts (3: 1ff) that no single prophet completely revealed the will of the Father except Jesus Christ. When Christ came, He revealed the Father to the people. John Macquarie (1988) stated that the Prophetic office is one of the three offices of Christ: Prophetic office of Christ focuses on revealing of God’s messages to people in the form of instruction, admonition, and exhortation, glorious promises, or stern rebukes. The Priestly Office of Christ deals with the representation of man to God through work while His Kingly office gave Jesus the right to take over Israel and the entire universe. They are not three separate offices, but rather three different aspects or functions of the one office.

How Christ fulfills the Old Testament prophecies

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mathew 5:17). According to Higgings (1946) “the certainty that Jesus thought and spoke of the Kingdom as already presented in His Person and Ministry must not be taken to imply that He did not also look forward to its future and cataclysmic coming.” As a prophet, Jesus foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem. “Prophetic vision of God’s future meant to speak to the present day” (Powers, 2015). The distinctive characteristics of the Old Testament prophets are also applied to the Ministry of Jesus as a prophet (Gabriel, 1956). Thus, through Jesus’ ministry, we see the element of predicting the future, ecstatic vision, symbolism in his teachings. The teachings and actions of Jesus Christ which can appear eccentric and mysterious are often oracles and symbolic actions like those of Israel’s prophets. In Hosea 9:7, the Jews considered prophets as spirit-bearing people. The first Christians rejected this all the prophets are dead as the dinosaur’s view. They, like many first-century Jews, recalled God’s promise to send Elijah before the restoration of Israel (Malachi 4:5) and longed for a Spirit-bearing person to return to their land. In the line of this view, Christ’s nature as a prophet was evidenced in his closeness to the disciples to discover the deeper truth that apart from being a messenger of God, he was also a Messiah. Theologians spoke of the three-fold nature of Christ.



According to Annette Schellenberg (2015), he said that, like prophets who came before Him, Christ was concerned with confronting the people with the folly of their lives, calling them to a different way and expecting them to take the consequences of their choices. In his public ministry, Jesus used the prophet's call, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1). In many ways, Jesus' ministry was a reflection of the work of Elijah and Elisha. For example, when he raised the dead man, the crowd was seized with holy fear leading them to proclaim "a great prophet has risen among us" (Luke 7:16). Exercising his prophetic ministry, is in line with the symbolic act in Malachi 3:1-2, Jesus drove the merchants from the temple using the message in Jeremiah 7:11 and Isaiah 56:7 who reproached the merchants for disrupting the witness of the temple to the Gentiles. Jesus's challenge to religious leaders is aimed at making sure that their lives match their devotion to the Lord and also his hyperbolic language. He calls them "a brood of snakes" and "whitewashed tombs" about Israel's prophetic tradition.

Christ as an Eternal Prophet

The eternity of Christ. Enns (2004) states that the eternity of Christ and His deity is inseparable; you cannot deny the eternity and then accept Christ's deity, the two go together. John 1:1 says "In the beginning was the 'word.' The "word" is the Greek *hen*, the imperfect tense that stresses continual existence in the past time. It goes back to the origin of the universe that since then the word of Christ existed. Micah 5:2 stated that "His goings forth are from long ago, from the day of eternity." Isaiah 9:6 called Christ as "Eternal Father." All these affirm the eternity and preexistence of Christ right from the beginning of the universe. The divinity of Christ. Wayne Grudem (1994) put it that Jesus is both God and human. Through the incarnation, He was God in human flesh. According to Enns (2014) "If Jesus were only a man, He could not have died to save the world, but because of His deity, His death had infinite value whereby He could die for the entire world."

The sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. Christ died as the propitiation of people's sins. He died a substitutionary death to provide salvation for lost humanity. Wayne Grudem (1999) states that Christ was crucified, died, buried, and resurrected again from the grave on the third day (Mathew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1ff). The resurrection of Christ assures Christians of regeneration, justification, and the perfect resurrection of our bodies. The ascension of Christ. The ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven is one of the essential events in Christianity as it is recorded in the New Testament. It assures Christians of partaking in Christ's authority over the universe (Grudem; 1999). "When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-52). As resurrection has profound implications in Christians' lives, so does the ascension because it gives Christians assurance of their final home. The second coming of Christ. "If there is beginning, there is also an end; not in the absolute sense in which the universe was non-existent before creation, but in the sense of an exchange of that which is temporal for that which is eternal" (Thiessen; 1951). "When Jesus returned from heaven, He will resurrect the dead, judge the believers and He will constitute eternal state for souls of all human kinds. This return will be personal, visible, and glorious" (Enns, 2004).



COMPARISON BETWEEN NGUNDENG AND JESUS CHRIST

Jesus and Ngundeng have both physical and spiritual parents; Jesus is the son of Mary and Joseph and on top, He is the Son of the Most-high God (Mathew 1:16-18; 1John 5:20). Ngundeng, on the other hand is the son of Nyayiel Malual and Bong Chan. His divine father is Deng-taath the Creator or the divine spirit (Johnson; 1994). Jesus and Ngundeng are believed as gifts from God; the scripture in the book of John 3:16 clearly stated it, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Ngundeng, on the other side means "God-given" due to his peculiar proceedings that surround his birth. He is being believed to be brought by "Deng" who invoked into Ngundeng the powerful prophetic powers and abilities of his functions. Douglas Johnson (1994) demonstrated that prophet Ngundeng helped in established Deng's primacy over all other divinities.

Christ and Ngundeng were both seized by the divine spirit; in the book of Mathew 4:1ff, Christ was Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted and fast. In the same way, When Ngundeng was possessed by Deng's divine spirit. He used to go to the forest and wander there alone, fasting for a long period (Douglas Johnson; 1995). Jesus and Ngundeng both had disciples: "He appointed twelve of them so that they would be with him, He would also send them out to preach and he gave them authority to drive out demons" (Mark 3:14-15). Ngundeng on the other hands had 'Dayoms' or disciples. He used to send them as his messengers in spreading the word of "Deng-Taath" or creator (Puk; 2001).

Both Jesus and Ngundeng have places of worship. Jesus founded the church "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Mathew 16:18). Ngundeng on the other side built his famous Mound in which he buried all the diseases and bad things, it was known as Puom, Aiweel, or bie, which means Deng's place "Luak Deng" where people used to worship (Evans-Pritchard; 1956). Both Ngundeng and Jesus did wonder; they performed miracles. Jesus performed quite many miracles; He raised people from the dead, restoring sight to the blind, casting out demons, healing the sick, and walking on water (Mathew 12:22; Mark 9:19-29; Luke 7:11, Mark 6:48-51). All these miracles provided dramatic and clear evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. Ngundeng, as well healed people from various diseases from 1888-1889. Also, it is being claimed that Ngundeng raised dead people at Pading (Johnson; 1994).

Jesus, the blessed child of the Father was a peacemaker. His peace doesn't mean only the absence of war; it is not simply harmony or equilibrium. His peace is the fullness of well-being, gratuitously given by God. He pleaded to His Father during the time of His crucifixion that "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In Mathew 5:9, Jesus clearly said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." He also rebuked one of his disciples that "Put your sword back in its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Mathew 26:52). Also, prophet Ngundeng on the other side revealed himself as a peacemaker by refused to wage wars with the Dinka. He used to tell Nuer that, it is not good for one's divine sons to fight. Ngundeng used to protect people of war (POW) from being killed (Johnson, 1995).

Another resemblance is that, Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, experienced opposition far worse than anyone else. His



confrontations were not with the people of his race and culture and religion, but with the thinking and behavior of some Jewish religious and secular leaders and their followers (Mark 2:7; 3:22; 11:27-28; 14:53-64; 15:29-32, 39; Luke 9:22). Ngundeng as well had opposition during his time; he experienced rivalry from some prophets in Nuer lands such as Deng Laka and his son, Dual Diu, and Nuaar Mer from Gaawar, Lam Tuthiang, Bul Kan, Guet Thie, Car Koryoam and Nyakong Bar (Johnson; 1994). Both Jesus and Ngundeng prophecies came true; Christ lived a life of prophecies. Before his death, the First Coming Jesus foretold that he had to be killed and be resurrected. And He said, “the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (Luke 9:22). According to Douglas Johnson (1992), Prophet Ngundeng had foretold and prophesized future events with great accuracy which many generations would later witness and reinterpret to fit within their political, social and economic challenges of the day.

Divergences

Despite the foregoing similarities between Jesus and Ngundeng, there are also existing differences between the two mysteries. Several passages in the Bible affirm the eternity of Christ. John 1:1 says “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” The ‘word’ is the Greek *hen*, the imperfect tense that stresses continual existence in the past time. Prophet Micah 5:2 further stated that “His going forth is from long ago, from the day of eternity.” Although Jesus was born in Jerusalem, that was not the beginning; He has existed “from the days of eternity.” Isaiah 9:6 called Christ as “Eternal Father.” All these affirm the eternity and deity of Christ and his preexistence. Contrary,

Ngundeng is not eternal with God. He is God’s creature. Consequently, Jesus’ birth was prophesied by many OT prophets over seven hundred years before his birth. His birth was also pronounced by the Angel that He will be borne by a Virgin Mary. “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most-high. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:30-33). Mary asked the angel “How would this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most-high will overshadow you” (Luke 1:34-35). The Gospel of Mathew and Luke agreed that Mary's husband was named Joseph, that he was of the Davidic line and that he played no role in Jesus's divine conception. On the contrary Ngundeng’s birth was not prophesied and he was not born by a virgin woman. He was born by an old woman who conceived beyond the age of giving birth. Also, there was human participation in Ngundeng (sexual intercourse took place between the spouses). Ngundeng’s mother was Nyayiel Malual and his father was Bong Chan who was the direct descendent of Keir Kaak Keer.

Furthermore, Christ was both God and human; He was God in human flesh, through the incarnation. The dual nature of Christ was resolved in the four main Ecumenical Councils: Nicene 325, Constantinople 381, Ephesus 431 and Chalcedon 451. Wayne Grudem, recaps Church fathers who argued that, “If Jesus was only a man He could not have died to save the world, but because of His divinity, His death had infinite value whereby He could die for the entire world” (Grudem; 1994). “He is the “Word” who was God and was with God and was made flesh” (John 1:1, 14). Ngundeng on the other side was typically human with some elements of a magician.



Nevertheless, Christ came to give His life as a ransom for sinners. “He is the propitiation for our sins: and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). He was crucified, died, buried, and rose again from the dead after three days later. Ngundeng never offered his life for the community he led. When Ngundeng died, he did not resurrect; this presents a difference between Jesus as divine and Ngundeng as human. Grudem notes, “After Jesus’ resurrection from the grave, He was on the earth for forty days and then ascended to heaven and sits on the right-hand side of His Father” (Grudem; 1994). This is also affirmed in the book of Luke (24:50-52) that “When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” Ngundeng did not ascend to heaven after his death; he remains in his grave like any other human being on earth.

Jesus will come again “when He has returned from heaven, He will resurrect the dead, judge the believers and He will constitute eternal state for souls of all human kinds. This return will be personal, visible, and glorious” (Enns; 2004). “For the Lord, Himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever” (1Thessalonians 4:16-17). Ngundeng belongs to only one community the “Nuer.” He was from the Lou section of Gaat liaah, which was known as the Earth-master's clan. He was the first prophet who had achieved fame among the Nuer. Jesus on the other side has no tribe, “whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:49). Jesus is universally accepted as a Savior of the whole world as being claimed by the Christians.

CHRIST AS THE UNIVERSAL NGUNDENG

Jesus has qualifications of being the world’s Ngundeng, His prophetic office was not only meant for Israelites nor Nuer alone but the whole humanity in the universe. If God had manifested Himself to Israelites through their sons as prophets in the Old Testament; then similarly, He (God) had also revealed Himself to Nuer through Ngundeng prophet who was also a Nuer son. The resemblances of Jesus and Ngundeng proofed these claims because Christ lived a life of prophecies. Therefore, Christ is the world’s Ngundeng; His prophetic office of Ngundeng is in accord with the Nuer prophetic office of Ngundeng. What Jesus Christ was doing to Nuer was just to fulfill the prophetic office of the Nuer in its fullest which Jesus Himself confessed that “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mathew 5:17). It is in this regard that Jesus Christ can be deemed as the Nuer Ngundeng par excellence.

CONCLUSION

The fact that this research explores the understanding of the prophetic office of Christ revealed who Christ is. The study exposed and examined the essential values of Ngundeng similar to those of Christ and their divergences. Despite the similarities, Jesus proofed Himself as the universal Ngundeng through His eternal existence, divinity, sacrificial death and resurrection, ascension and His second coming. Jesus was a prophet; He was the one whom the Old Testament prophets prefigured in their speeches and actions. As defined earlier, a prophet is a person who speaks for God or a deity or by divine inspiration while a prophecy is a message being claimed by a prophet to have been communicated to him by a deity. All known ancient cultures had prophets who delivered prophecies to their communities which was the role played by Ngundeng among the Nuer. Therefore, Christ is the world’s Ngundeng par excellence; His prophetic office of



Ngundeng is in accord with the Nuer prophetic office. What Christ did to the Nuer was just a fulfillment of the prophetic office of the Ngundeng to its fullest. Consequently, Christ fit to be the universal Ngundeng because He has no borders in regard to people's races, ages and gender.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author did not record any conflict of interest.

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