Christ’s Seer Office in the South Sudanese Context:
Exploring the Place of Prophet Ngundeng as a Receptor Lens of Understanding
Christology Among the Nuer

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Abstract
Christ’s Seer Office (CSO) has a hotchpotch of controversies encompassing it. Among these polemical trajectories that obtains in these controversies is the African’s prophetic office. This is certainly due to the close parallelism that CSO matches the prophetic office of Christ. In the South Sudanese context, some African communities view Christ as a magician, medicine practitioner, or a traditional healer. This misconception should not be taken lightly. It needs a deeper introspection from the African Christian theologians, as the concerned communities may abandon the church and revert to their ancestral shrines for worship. The Nuer in South Sudan has embraced prophet Ngundeng as their Christ just because of some similarities that exist between Christ’s Seer Office and Ngundeng. This article fully reconnoitered the two prophetic offices by comparing them by using the principle of Nexus mysteriorum and Analogia entis to enhance the Nuer understanding of Christ. In its findings, this article reveals Christ as a prophet; the whom all the Old Testament prophets prefigured in their speeches and actions. Moreover, the study concluded that Jesus is Nuer’s Ngundeng par excellence.

Key Words: Christ’s Seer office, Ngundeng’s prophetic office, Inculturation, Nuer Christology

1.0 Introduction
The basic cognitive process in prophets and prophesies is a common trend in Christianity and the African Indigenous Religion. However, the African’s prophetic office is one area that remains unheeded, unexplored and/or ignored altogether by the church and her theologians. This trend of ignoring African indigenous resources commenced when the European missionaries arrived in the continent, and began to teach about the Judaic prophets to the Africans without due regard to the local African prophets who were also revered. In turn, the new religiosity that disregarded the existing the religio-cultural realities has caused some doubt within the minds of the African peoples. Clearly, there is no genuine reason for not considering the African prophets in the Church since Jesus also came to fulfil the prophetic offices and not to abolish laws and customs of the Hebrews or for the Africans of South Sudan, or for any other nation under the sun! In Matthew 5: 17, he noted thus: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.”
The Nuer people of South Sudan have realized this suppression and began the church in the name of Ngundeng. They have embraced Ngundeng’s prophecies which are in form of songs. This research study was conducted merely to clear these misapprehensions that surround Christ’s Seer Office by comparing the similarities and divergences of the two mysteries. The article aims to understand Christ in the Nuer context, and use it as a methodology of evangelizing. In turn, this will help in authentic conversion rather than proselytizing, and thus offer a genuine salvation in Christ Jesus.

In the words of Charles Nyamiti (2007:71), “Nowadays the church is inserting Christians’ messages into people’s culture so that the gospel should not easily be swept away.” Construction of a Nuer Christology of inculturation is imperative for theology to be effective for Nuer Christianity, and this has to be the new trend. Such theology has to address the requirements and aspirations of the concerned peoples. Indeed, “Religion can solely stay relevant if it addresses the queries of the converts” (Kibo; 2017: xviii). Throughout the ages, Christology has remained tailored to the context of the individuals, hence it’s imperative for it to adapt to the Nuer peoples follows in the same trajectory. The Nuer believes that prophet Ngundeng helps them in times of war and in different cataclysms.

2.0. Approach

In our modern scholarship, inculturation is given more attention due to the fact that it makes the gospel more relevant to its audiences. This article applies both Nexus mysteriorum and Analogia entis principles. The Nexus Mysteriorum method deals with the interconnectedness of mysteries. An analogia entis on the other hand indicates the moves through which the temporal creature participates in paradox and moves of harmony to open up an expertise of the know-how of God through assessing the variables therein. It is a critical conviction that holds that there is correspondence among God and creation that flows in such a way that creation is able to benefit from a deeper knowledge of the revealed mysteries; and this is seen via examining the mild natural knowledge received from human reports in the universe.

The two approaches are satisfactory in inculturation. They hyperlink and relate to the Christian mystery that is in continuum with its African counterpart. They have been embraced by some African scholars such as Nyamiti (2005) and Kibo (2017), as good methods of sharing the gospel in Africa. Moreover, Jesus applied them in the parables of the Kingdom. He compared the heavenly Kingdom’s mysteries with earthly mysteries for an easy understanding of the gospel. Consequently, Apostle Paul used them in Athens when he remarked thus: “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” (Acts 17:22-23).

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2 Religion can solely stay relevant if it addresses the queries of the converts.
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4 Analogia entis is a principle that indicates the moves through which the temporal creature participates in paradox and moves of harmony to open up an expertise of the know-how of God through assessment.
2.0 The Nuer

Nuer is one of the clans in South Sudan. They are part of the Nilotic clusters, primarily inhabiting the Nile Valley with a small group found in south western Ethiopia at a place called Gambella. The Nuer (Naath) belongs to the Nilo-Saharan family; they speak Nuer language known as Thok Naath meaning the language of people. According to Chuol (2014), Nuer is largely found in Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity state especially at the swamps and open savannah areas surrounding River Nile and its tributaries. The Western Nuer found in Bentiu lives along Lake No which is the source of Naam River in Bahr el Ghazal. Central Nuer is found in Fangak lives along Bahr el Jebel basin and Zerap River basin known as Phow River which passes from Gezira towards Gawaar territory located within the Sudd region of former Upper Nile region. Eastern-central Nuer which consists of Waat and Akobo depend on the Pibor River whose source commences in the Nasir area and flows towards the Lou Nuer. The economy and natural resources of the Nuer are sedentary agro-pastoralists which balancing subsistence agriculture with cattle keeping (Douglas, 1994:5-32).

2.1 Prophet Ngundeng

Puk (2001:16-17) states that Ngundeng was the first prophet to rise to fame from Nuer. He 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. “Ngundeng” is a Nuer word that can be loosely translated as “God-given.” This was because of the instances that surround his birth. Ngundeng's birth was miraculous, 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 was not having her monthly period. He was born at the peak of the 1830s to Nyayiel Malual and Bong Chan. Ngundeng's father came from a sub-section of Eastern Jikany Nuer of Ciecany who occupies the Gambella region of Ethiopia today. Bong Chan married Nyayiel (the mother of Ngundeng) when she was only ten years. This kind of marriage is a common practice among the Nuer and Dinka in South Sudan. A man can put a ring or a bangle on a girl’s finger or wrist to show that he is going to marry her later at her mature age. According to Johnson (1994:3) prophet Ngundeng naturally died in January 1906.

2.2 The deity of Ngundeng

Pritchard (1956:88-89) asserted that Ngundeng was seized by a powerful divine spirit at his young age. He used to refrain from talking or arguing with people. Consequently, he would go to the forest to wander, fast, and eat human faeces. It was after he had declared himself prophet that he started to act normally and eat normal foods. Ngundeng declared that his divinity was not only for Nuer alone. He taught both Nuer and Dinka to pray through his songs which were full of imaginary religious practices. He had three bei (shrines) and the most gigantic one of the three was in Keij which was later renamed as Wei Deng (the place of Deng) near Waat. It was at Wei Deng that Ngundeng used to cast all the diseases and bad things. The place was fenced 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 design of the mound was inspired by Dinka. The mound was destroyed later by the British Government around 1928. Ngundeng is still being praised today by his Dayoms (disciples) as Deng-taath’s (divine spirit) apparatus on earth (Puk, 2001:16-18).

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5 Ngundeng was the first famous prophet among the Nuer. Ngundeng is a Nuer word that can be loosely translated as God-given. He was seized by divine power at a young age.
6 Evan Pritchard. Nuer Religion (Oxford: Clarendon, Press, 1956), pp. 88-89.
2.3. Some of the works by Ngundeng

As per Douglas (1994:84-85), 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, protector, and the ones that controlled life. Ngundeng used to cure the sick, infertility in human, crops and cattle. As much as he was able to cure everything, he was also capable of destroying life and properties.

Johnson (1994:122-125) further states that, prophet Ngundeng was a man of many great characters. He used to work hard cultivating and slogging his big farm to assist the poor, and all kinds of visitors (Jaal Kouth) or God’s visitors. He embraced peaceful coexistent, rejects senseless wars, raids, and destructions. He used to treat lame, deaf and blind peoples calling them “gaat-Deng” meaning-children of God Deng. Prophet Ngundeng had grown to the position of fame with double abilities of both curse and blessing to resolve blood feuds. He used to mediate the societal disputes, resist colonialism, and prevent cattle raiding and ills treatment of the poor. Not only that, prophet Ngundeng used to spare life of enemies captured during the battle by sending them back to their respective communities. He brought back some dead people to life during the Pading battle. However, Ngundeng also used to curse people that disobeyed his orders (Douglas, 1994:86-87).

Douglas (1992: 328-344) says that prophet Ngundeng had foretold and prophesized some future events with great accuracy, which would be witnessed later by many generations and reinterpreted to fit within their political, social, and economic challenges’ of their respective days. 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 troops. “Mi cia thuok ka ruac nooge dang, en mac thok eni nyuura” meaning; when 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. Ngundeng’s prophetic songs have remained as a crucial point of reference to the people of Southern Sudan (Hutchinson, 1992: 338-339).

3. Christ’s fulfilment of the prophetic office

3.2. Proofs of Christ as prophet

The prophetic office of Christ was established in the book of Deuteronomy eighteen (Enns, 2014: 51). “I will raise them a prophet. He would be of Israel, for He would be raised from among their (Israel’s) brethren. He would also be a prophet, like Moses, that is, the fulfillment or antitype of the typical prophet Moses was” (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). Its utmost fulfillment is in the book of Acts chapter three 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 1:18). Jesus as a prophet was the mouthpiece of God; He is greater than all the other prophets. He spoke, taught and interpreted the will of God.

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7 Prophet Ngundeng played a big role in establishing the primacy of Deng over all divinities. He had foretold and prophesized future events with great accuracy which many generations would later witness and reinterprets to fit within their political, social, and economic challenges’ of their days. His prophecies came to him in the form of hymns.

8 Douglas Johnson. The proliferation of earthly and lesser divinity (Journal of Religion in Africa, 1992c), pp. 12-22.

9 I will raise them a prophet. He would be of Israel, for He would be raised from among their (Israel’s) brethren. He would also be a prophet, like Moses, that is, the fulfillment or antitype of the typical prophet Moses was (Deuteronomy 18:15-18).
Botner (2019: 55) defined a prophet as a person who speaks for God. There are numerous words used to distinguish the prophets apart. These include “nabhi” a Hebrew word, meaning a spokesman or a speaker who has been called or appointed to proclaim as a herald the message of God. The other word is “Roeh” it means to see. It is more similar to nabhi. The last term used to describe a prophet is “seer” which means to see behold. It stresses the fact that the prophet is a person who receives revelations from God, particularly in the form of visions. These words are used synonymously (Enns, 2014: 69). Macquarie (1988: 317) 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.

Martinez Gabriel (1956: 263) states that the first nature is that Jesus Christ was not only a prophet but also a king and priest. Jesus regarded his ministry as the continuity with and bringing to a climax, the work of the great prophets of the Old Testament. Jesus Christ fits the description of a prophet on many accounts. He is described as the Word of God in the flesh who called on people to turn from their sin and return to the Father.” “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: 263).

4. Comparisons Between Christ and The Ngundeng

4.2. Relevancies

There are multiple relevancies and divergences that exist between Ngundeng and Christ. Among them is that both Jesus and Ngundeng have biological and spiritual parents; Jesus is the son of Mary and Joseph and on top of that, He is the Son of the Most-high God (Mathew 1:16-18; 1 John 5:20). Ngundeng, on the other hand, is the son of Nyayiel Malual and Bong Chan. It is also believed that his divine father is Deng-taath, the creator or the divine spirit (Douglas, 1994: 82-84).

Also, Jesus and Ngundeng are believed as gifts from God; the scripture in the book of John 3:16 clearly states, “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 the 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 (1994: 84-85) demonstrated that prophet Ngundeng helped in establishing Deng’s primacy over all other divinities.

Also, Christ and Ngundeng were both seized by the divine spirit. In the book of Mathew 4:1ff, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where he encountered temptation from Satan after fasting. In the same way, it is believed that when Ngundeng was possessed by Deng’s divine spirit, he

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10 Max Botner. Jesus Christ as the Son of David in the Gospel of Mark (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
11 “Nabhi” is a Hebrew word that means a spokesman or a speaker who has been called or appointed to proclaim as a herald the message of God.
12 “Roeh” it means to see.
13 “Seer” means to see behold.
14 The prophetic office is one of the three offices of Christ: it focuses on revealing of God’s messages to people in the form of instruction, admonition, and exhortation, glorious promises, or stern rebukes.
15 Martinez Gabriel. Hope Looking Forward the Old Testament Passages Used by the New Testament Writers as Prophetic of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Journal of Interpretation of Bible and Theology, 1956) pp. 261-269.
used to go to the forest and wander there alone fasting for a long period (Douglas, 1995: 78-79). They 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 hand, had ‘Dayom’ or disciples. He used to send them as his messengers to spread the word of “Deng-taath” or creator (Puk, 2001: 16-18).

Jesus and Ngundeng both 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 (Pritchard, 1956: 88-89).

Both Ngundeng and Jesus did wonders; they performed miracles. Jesus 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 on the other hand, healed several people from various diseases at around 1888-1889. Also, it is being claimed that Ngundeng raised dead people at Pading (Douglas, 1994: 86-87).

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 to put his 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 refusing to wage war with the Dinka. He used to tell the Nuer that, it was not good for one's divine sons to fight. Ngundeng used to protect people of war (PoW) from being killed (Douglas, 1995: 197-221).

Jesus experienced opposition from 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 on the other side experienced rivalry from other prophets in Nuer lands such as Deng Laka and his son, Dual (Douglas, 1994: 73-242). Jesus and Ngundeng prophecies became true. Jesus predicted his death “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). Prophet Ngundeng also foretold several future events in accuracy. The Nuer community believes that some of his prophecies have already been fulfilled and others are being fulfilled (Douglas, 1992: 328-344).

4.3. Divergences

In spite of relevancies between the two mysteries, differences are also there especially in the Christ aspects of eternity. The Bible has confirmed these features of Christ. John 1:1 says19 “In the beginning was the ‘word.’ This stresses the continual existence of Jesus in the past time. Prophet Isaiah

16 Dayom was a name given Ngundeng Disciples.
17 Deng-taath is a Nuer word that means creator or the spirit of the creator.
18 John-Tong Puk. The Relationships between old Testament Prophecy and Nuer Prophecy: A Comparative Theological studies (2001).
19 In the beginning was the ‘word.’ This stresses the continual existence of Jesus in the past time (John 1:1).
Garang K. Gabriel, “Christ’s Seer Office in the African Context,” JJEOSHs, 2021, Vol.4, No. 1, pp.1-11

9:6\textsuperscript{20} called Christ the “Eternal Father.” This affirms the eternity and deity of Christ and his preexistence. On the contrary, Ngundeng is not eternal with God. He is God’s creature.

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 the Virgin Mary. “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with your 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)\textsuperscript{21}. 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’ 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.

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: 543). “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. 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 thus: “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, 1994:617). This is also affirmed in the book of Luke (24:50-52)\textsuperscript{22} 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: 203-204). “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

\textsuperscript{20} Prophet Isaiah called Christ as the Eternal Father. This affirms the eternity and deity of Christ and his preexistence.

\textsuperscript{21} 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’ divine conception (Luke 1:30-33).

\textsuperscript{22} When Jesus 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 (24:50-52).
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 hand, has no tribe, “whoever does the will of my Father in heaven
is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:4923). Jesus is universally accepted as a Savior of the
whole world as being claimed by the Christians.

5. Construction of a Nuer Christology of Inculturation

5.2. Christ our Ngundeng Par Excellence

Inculturation24 is the insertion of the gospel message and Christian life into a particular culture.
Inculturation is one of the best methods in sharing of the gospel; the principle was used by Jesus
Himself 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. The focus in this section is to
insert Christ’s seer office into Nuer culture through their familiar cultural prophet known as Ngundeng.

Reflecting on Christology from an ontological point of view, we see the relationship of the Son
in the Godhead as related to the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Son is of the same essence (ousia) as
the other two persons of the Godhead. The Father is God; the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God; yet
the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father. In the same manner, we can speak of the Father not
being the Holy Spirit nor the Holy Spirit being the Father. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is not the Son, nor
the Son the Holy Spirit; yet all the persons are one God.

Now, since the Son (Christ) is God when he comes on earth through the incarnation, it is God
incarnating; it is Missio ad intra25. It is the mission of God through God the Son. Missio ad extra26 is a
prophetic mission of God. Since God has from time to time and from place to place willed to reveal the
Godself, so that He can be known to be offered true worship, we know that God in time has revealed
his attributes through Ngundeng. However, Ngundeng as a mere human being could not carry all of
God’s attributes effectively and as a human, he had all weaknesses which Christ (God incarnate)
transcends.

Therefore, we are right to say, before Christ was introduced to the Nuer, Christ was already at
work among the Nuer people through the prophetic work of Ngundeng, however faulty it may have
been. Christ comes to elucidate that which was veiled in the Nuer prophets. Jesus as God incarnate is
the true revealer of the Father. He comes from the bosom of the Father and therefore, he is true God
from true God, begotten of the Father. Jesus Christ as God does not discriminate against humankind
based on their ethnicity and therefore, as our Ngundeng, he becomes our universal Ngundeng par
excellence. He is our new Ngundeng, as he does not discriminate. This new Ngundeng transcends time
and space; he was Ngundeng before the Nuer Ngundeng, he lives today as our true Ngundeng
representing us before God the Father, interceding for us. He continually takes from the Father what
is of the Father and reveals it to us, thanks to his ascension and being with the Father.

23 Jesus is universally accepted as a man without borders. In Matthew 12:49, Jesus said that whoever does the will of my
Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.
24 Inculturation is all about inserting Christian messages into people culture.
25 “Missio ad intra” the mission of God through God the Son.
26 “Missio ad extra” the prophetic mission of God.
Christ, as our Ngundeng was from the foundation of the earth creating the universe and revealing God’s will to the prophets of old (both the Jewish and the African prophets) and today, continues that prophetic office in his risen and ascended status. Christ our Ngundeng par excellence reveals God’s will to us in our various contexts through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus has the qualifications of being the world’s Ngundeng, His prophetic office was not meant only for the Israelites nor the Nuer alone but the whole humanity in the universe. If God had manifested Himself to the Israelites through their sons as prophets in the Old Testament; then similarly, He (God) had also revealed Himself to the Nuer through Ngundeng, the prophet who was also a Nuer son. The resemblances of Jesus and Ngundeng proved these claims because Christ lived a life of prophecies. Therefore, Christ is the world’s Ngundeng; His prophetic office of Ngundeng is in accordance with the Nuer prophetic office of Ngundeng. What Jesus Christ was doing to the Nuer was just to fulfil 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 fulfil them” (Mathew 5:17)\(^{27}\). It is in this regard that Jesus Christ can be deemed as the Nuer Ngundeng par excellence.

Several instances affirm the eternity and pre-existence of Christ right from the beginning of the universe. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the ‘word.’ The “word” here means Jesus and it stresses His continual existence in the past time. Ngundeng has no pre-existence history that qualifies him to be like Jesus. Prophesied birth - Jesus’ birth was prophesied by many OT prophets and His birth was pronounced by the angel that He will be borne by the Virgin Mary. Ngundeng’s birth, on the other hand, was not prophesied.

Although some of Christ’s human nature matches that of Ngundeng, Christ’s divinity remains as one of the key divergences that differentiate Him from Ngundeng. Jesus is God in human flesh. Ngundeng was regarded by some other Nuer as a magician while Jesus is God. Jesus died as a substitutionary for human souls. He was crucified on the cross, died, buried, and rose again from the grave on the third day while Ngundeng died for good. This shows Jesus has the power of life over the power of death which Ngundeng did not have that. “He was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit; He is Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 1:4).

After Jesus had a resurrection from the grave, He descended to hell and forty days later, He ascended to heaven and sits on the right-hand side of God, the Father almighty” (Grudem, 1994:617). Ngundeng did not ascend to heaven like Jesus, he remained in the grave. At rapture, Jesus’ return will be personal, visible, and glorious. “When Jesus has returned from heaven, He will resurrect the dead including Ngundeng, judge the believers and He will constitute an eternal state for souls of all human kinds. “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).\(^{28}\)

6. Conclusion
Despite the similarities that exist between the two mysteries (Jesus and Ngundeng), Jesus proved Himself as the universal Ngundeng through his eternal existence, divinity, sacrificial death and

\(^{27}\) Jesus came to fulfill the prophetic office. He declared in 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.

\(^{28}\) At rapture, 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 (1Thessalonians 4:16-17).
resurrection, ascension and His second coming. Moreover, Christ fit to be the universal Ngundeng because He has no borders in regard to people’s races, ages and gender. Prophet Ngundeng was sectional, he belongs to only one community the Nuer people in the Republic of South Sudan, while Jesus is universal, He has no tribe “for whoever does the will of His Father in heaven is His brother, sister, and mother” (Mathew 12:50).

On the whole, the article has brought to the fore the broad nature of understanding Christ in our African context. It has also addressed Christ’s Seer Office (CSO) concept with reference to the Nuer’s concept of Ngundeng’s prophecy, and eventually appraised the critical role of inculturation paradigm in understanding Christology in our theological discourses. Certainly, Christ has been understood in diverse way, as the modern inculturation trends demonstrates (Gathogo 2001, Gathogo 2011:71). To this end, Julius Gathogo has noted thus,

William Barclay in his book, Jesus as they saw Him, identifies 42 ways in which Jesus revealed Himself to his contemporaries. Here in Africa, many of our grandparents see Jesus as a doctor who heals them when they are sick. The youth see Jesus as a teacher who provides them with needed development skills to survive in the modern society. Travelers see Jesus as a permanent companion. The hungry see Jesus in the person who gives them daily bread. The sinner sees in Jesus the person who pardons them. Mourners see in Jesus the person who comforts them. Those who are in a situation of war see in Jesus the person who makes peace.

Among the Nuer of South Sudan, Christ’s Seer Office (CSO), follows in the same trajectory, a phenomenon that makes inculturation paradigm the most authentic way of understanding African Christianity. With Christ’s Seer Office (CSO) being characterized by a hotchpotch of controversies, and with African Christians being accused in various forums as being incapable of understanding it, deeper emphasis on inculturation is clearly the way to go.

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