

# Relates 'Security' for Women Found in America's Nation of Islam and Sudan

By Sister Christine

I received respect in the Sudan in so many ways, that it is difficult for me to convey its abundance.

**THE MEN** always stood upon the appearance of females in a room. At university functions, the female students would be served first. At the university library, there were young boys who assisted the females in locating and securing books.

Whenever we entered the administration building or had business to take care of, we were shown the utmost courtesy and consideration. We did not have to wait in long lines. We would be taken care of as quickly as possible.

One little story I'd like to relate concerns our campus cobbler. He had a small shop of about 5 feet by 9 feet. It was dusty, partly because it was constructed of sun-baked mud bricks. In it was one wooden case of shelves. Shoes were stacked in the corners and on a small bench bordering one wall.

**THE COBBLER** had a young male helper, who sat at a table behind the wooden case. Newspapers covered his walls, and were scattered on the floor. The cobbler was a man about 70 years old. He had a kind face and a little soft goatee.

One day my sandle strap broke while I was at the campus. A colleague took me to the cobbler's shop. She asked him to fix it and he did while I waited. When I asked him the price, he said something to the effect of hoping that Allah blessed me.

I asked my friend to ask him the cost for me, think-

ing that perhaps he did not understand my Arabic. She told me that it was customary for him to repair the shoes of the girls without charging them. He seemed such a poor man and one in much need of money.

**I FELT** I were cheating him not to pay something for his labor and time. But he refused the money. This is so unlike people in the Western society. Here one never—or hardly ever—finds one who will turn down money. This society believes that money buys anything and everything.

I offered this man money for his work, and he paid me by wishing me the blessings of Allah. He more than paid me for bringing work to him. One cannot compare the peaceful, generous people comprising the Sudanese society to the greed and selfishness of the people of this American society.

After this occasion, I often went to him when my shoes needed repairs. Not that I wanted to take advantage of him, but just that I felt that I could trust him not to cheat me.

Often I left money with his helper to pay for his work. He was such a kind man. He, as with many of the older men there, took us (the female students) to be his granddaughters. I later learned that he was the caller to prayer at the university.

**A FEMALE** has such a strong sense of security in

the Sudan. The protection we received made us feel stable in this security. I must say that in Europe, except for my short visits with Sudanese families there, this feeling was completely absent. I went to Europe alone and there realized how great the security is for women in the Sudan.

I have found security here among my Muslim brothers and sisters within the Nation of Islam in America. This security I feel now even more than I did while in the Sudan—for here I am able to understand and respect it. While in the Sudan, I, at first, felt imprisoned in a cage. It took time, but gradually I learned to appreciate the respect and security women receive in the Islamic society.

## Get Acting Black School Superintendent

WASHINGTON — An effective capper of 36 years as a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent of schools was registered when Benjamin J. Henley, Jr., 55, was appointed acting superintendent of schools. The first Negro to serve as the top public school administrator in the nation's capital, he fills the void left by the resignation of controversial Dr. Carl F. Henson, because the local school board refused to appeal the sweeping desegregation decree handed down last month by U.S. District Judge J. Skelly Wright.

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