

A Remembrance - Carolyn Weaver Mackay

I am Richard Parkins, executive director of the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan or AFRECS - a network of Episcopalians and Episcopal parishes, dioceses and institutions committed to partnering with our sisters and brothers in both Sudan and South Sudan, We were founded a decade ago, and Carolyn Mackay was one of our founders and thus a vital part of our history. I am here to pay tribute to Carolyn - our dear friend, colleague, sister in Christ and guide and mentor who helped give life to an organization that continues to nurture ties between American Episcopalians and those in Sudan and South Sudan.

As a founding member of AFRECS, Carolyn was key in giving life to one of a handful of faith based groups who formed solid partnerships with our Sudanese sisters and brothers. These formations occurred as our Sudanese friends were struggling to assert themselves as a free and independent nation The church with whom Carolyn helped us to connect was in 2005 - emerging from a horrific conflict of more than 50 years. The Church had been vital to sustaining its people during that struggle. Carolyn joined a few others to nurture a friendship between Christians in this country with those in a far off African land at a time when their voice was seeking to be heard.

Carolyn was generous with her talent and treasure, steadfast in her prayers and faithful in her encouragement of those who labored to lift up the Sudanese church as a compassionate and reliable guide to its people. Carolyn's gift to Sudanese in both South Sudan and Sudan was the fostering of friendships which continue to nurture and bless both sides of this network of partnerships. Carolyn's leadership helped to define what AFRECS is all about. What Carolyn helped sponsor a decade ago now serves as a much needed link between two parts of our Communion, especially as once again the safety and well-being of our Sudanese friends is being challenged.

I have been frequently blessed with words of encouragement as I have tried to lead AFRECS especially at times when little attention was given to the over two million Episcopalians whose lives were lived in desperation and pain. We were all blessed by Carolyn's embrace as she gave vitality to our mission to Sudanese Christians, recognizing that regardless of one's theological perspective, we were all bonded as Christians who cared about our Sudanese friends - friends who were at risk but whose courage and faithfulness deserved companions.

It is the quiet, steadfast faith of people like Carolyn Mackay who keep hope alive in others in those places where the light of Christ might be the only illumination that there is. Carolyn exemplified in as bold a manner as possible what it means to connect ones work and ministry with one's faith.

We give thanks for the life of Carolyn Mackay and for the witness to Christ that it represents.