

It was clear how personal contacts with individual members of the ECSSS inspire us to become committed to this church-to-church relationship.

Bishop Samuel Peni spoke about the Joint Peace and Reconciliation Commission (see below). John Poole from the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales (including the former Bradford Diocese) described the discrimination and persecution that Christians in Sudan are experiencing, and how, nevertheless they show their faith publicly and try to build churches. He also talked about the dreadful plight of the people in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile region as they hide and flee from Northern Government bombing.

Deanery Links are growing despite the many difficulties of communication and conflict. They are greatly valued as a way of bring the Church in Sudan closer to the hearts of people in our parishes.

JOINT PEACE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (JPRC)

Bishop Samuel Peni of Nzara is leading an ecumenical initiative to involve churches in peace-making in South Sudan. A group of leaders from various Christian denominations travelled to Rwanda in late May to learn from the Rwandans' experience of healing the wounds of violence within their communities. The group visited projects and communities, talked to survivors, government officials and people responsible for developing new attitudes and relationships. The aim of the Commission is to develop a unified vision for their country using Elijah as the model; how he encouraged people to move back to Jerusalem from Babylon. The ecumenical group members intend to take their vision to the President and other leaders and to form peace committees at Cluster, Diocese and Parish Level. The Sudan Committee is providing financial support for this project.

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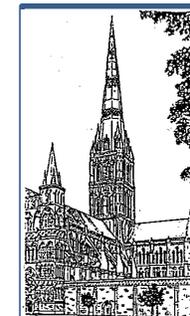


SALISBURY/SUDAN LINK

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Jesus, giver of peace, we look for your gift amidst the conflicts that afflict both Sudans.

You are the Saviour who searches for us, the Friend who longs for us, the Redeemer who strives for us, and we set our troubled hearts before you.

Turn from us despondency, and keep us searching for the way that leads to peace;

Turn from us disillusion, and keep us longing for the healing that makes for peace;

Turn from us despair, and keep us striving for the change that will build peace;

until our hopes find their fulfilment in your gift made real. *Amen*

SUDAN DAY

Saturday 10 October 2015: Shaftesbury School. 9.30am – 4.15 pm.

A booking form is enclosed for this annual event, where you can hear about the Sudans from expert speakers and learn how we try to support the church and people. Alternatively please contact sudan.secretary@salisbury.anglican.org or tel 01963 23726

SHARE THE NEWS

Please put a copy of this Bulletin in your church. Also maybe you could give a copy to a friend and invite them to sign up for our mailing list by email or post. Contact details are on the back page.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The general security situation in both Sudans continues to deteriorate and conflicts are spreading. The areas worst affected by the civil war in the South are Upper Nile State, Unity State, Jonglei State and Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal States.

Incidents of violence have extended into Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria, which were previously peaceful. Although generally under-reported in the UK media, the conflict between the Southern Government and rebels was the subject of a BBC World News interview with Linda Thomas-Greenfield USA's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. You can view it by 'googling' **BBC HARDtalk** then going to the Episodes tab and date of 3 June 2015.

It is hoped that the suspended peace talks will resume in July. The UN is expected to impose a world-wide travel ban and assets freeze on military commanders involved on both sides of the conflict reinforcing existing US and EU sanctions.

In Sudan, South Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to be under the control of armed groups and experiencing terrorism by bombing from the Government of Sudan. Meanwhile Darfur remains one of the world's most notorious human rights blackspots with 80% of its population relying on humanitarian aid for survival.

NEWS FROM THE SUDAN COMMITTEE

The inter-tribal conflicts continue in South Sudan, and we have difficulties in supporting the Provincial Office of the ECSSS (Episcopal Church South Sudan and Sudan), yet we are able to support the people of South Sudan in providing humanitarian aid through our partnership with Christian Aid. 100% of the funds (£50,000) we send to Christian Aid is spent on the projects. We continue to develop our Deanery to Diocese links and encourage the ECSSS dioceses to open and manage their own bank accounts. Meanwhile we press on with our advocacy initiatives working closely with our partners in the USA and our Foreign Office and our new Ambassador to South Sudan.

MEDICAL LINK

The Medical Link Garden Fete, held in the Bishop's Garden on Sunday 7 June raised an amazing £12,500. Tremendous thanks are due to Helen Holtham and all the organisers and helpers for their efforts. This money, together with other fundraising, will support the Medical Link's work which continues unimpeded by the political troubles. A consignment of basic medicines worth approx. £12,000 was delivered to ECSSS clinics this Spring, and a further consignment is envisaged in September. The continuing programme to train local health professionals includes plans this year to fund 7 midwives, 4 nurses, 1 lab assistant and 1 clinical officer. These will be required after graduation to work in their dioceses for a period as least equal to the length of their course and effective sanctions will enforce the contract

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

So far this year the Education Committee has provided £4,500 each to theological colleges - Bishop Allison College, Bishop Gwynne College and in the north, the Shokai Bible Training Institute (which teaches in Arabic). SOMA's short-term team missions received some support with a grant of £3,000, and £2,000 has been given to a secondary school teacher training project in Juba. A basic school teacher training project in Juba Diocese has been approved with detailed work yet to be done. The Committee is looking at creative ways to use education funds in future, including the possibility of allowing Deaneries to apply for support towards their educational projects with their link Dioceses in Sudan and South Sudan.

DEANERY LINKS

There were opportunities at the Deanery Partnership Day on 18 April for members of Deaneries with Sudan links to share their experiences and ideas. People from Devizes Deanery talked about their link with and recent visit to Kajo-Keji, and Chalke Valley about a recent visit to Cuiebet. Some very moving personal testimony was given about memorable encounters with people in the Sudans and about their faith in action.