

SUDAN CONNECTIONS

10th Anniversary Edition

FALL 2015



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1



AFRECS - AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE SUDANS

SPORTS FOR PEACE TOURNAMENT, KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

THEME: WAR IS PSYCHOTIC, PEACE IS PATRIOTIC

SEPTEMBER 2 – 9, 2015

The Sports for Peace Tournament successfully began with training and organizing of teams on August 30. Play began September 2, ending with the championship game on September 9. In spite of many challenges due to the extreme heat and movement from one field to another, it was clear that peace can be achieved in South Sudan if everyone is willing to cooperate and there is collective responsibility. The youth should not wait for the leaders to

show them direction, but it should start with them. They need more training and education on the importance of peace in their daily lives. They should embrace dialogue and unite to achieve their goals for the betterment of the country. It was recommended that there be more tournaments to bring people of different communities together. Donors will be needed to provide future opportunities for Sports for Peace. *(From a report by John Jal Gatwich, Sec. Gen., South Sudan Youth for Peace & Reconciliation.)*



LET US PRAY FOR SPORTS FOR PEACE INITIATIVE IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

Merciful God, you hear the cries of your people for peace and security, and you have put it into the hearts of your people to seek what makes for peace. We pray, especially, for the youth of Kakuma Refugee Camp and their supporters who seek through sports to bring the children and your people in the camp together across the lines of tribe, language and tradition, to make them one people. Inspire their vision, give them courage and patience, and help them to make Sports for Peace a sign for all South Sudan of the reconciliation and peace you hold out for all people.

This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Prince of Peace. AMEN.

*For information on how you can support the Sports for Peace initiative being planned for Kakuma Refugee Camp, and other questions, contact The Rev. Jeffrey Gill, Trinity Parish Episcopal Church, Seattle, WA, Jeff@trinityseattle.org, 206-624-5337, X23. See *Sudan Connections*, Fall 2014 issue, "Kakuma Peace Institute", pages 8-11, www.afrecs.org. The Diocese of Olympia received a \$15,000 United Thank Offering (UTO) grant to fund mentors and trainers for the Sports for Peace Initiative in Kakuma Refugee Camp, in cooperation with its Companion Diocese of Aweil.*



SUDAN CONNECTIONS

CONNECTING HOPES AND GIFTS

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American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS) is an organization of U.S. churches, non-governmental organizations, and individuals who care deeply about the struggles of the Sudanese people.

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COVER:

Photo:
Robin Denney©



Send submissions for the next *Sudan Connections* to Richard Parkins, Executive Director, at richardparkins1@gmail.com.

FINDING A WAY

A Letter from the President

THE RT. REV. DAVID C. JONES, RETIRED SUFFRAGAN BISHOP, DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA



Dear Friends,

As Friends of the Episcopal Church in Sudan and South Sudan, many of us have pondered the question, “*How do we move forward in relationships marred by profound differences?*” It is not new to anyone involved in world mission to experience the struggle of reconciling differing cultural, religious and political understandings. They are a given.

So, how do we move forward given the tensions of the present day?

First, we need to pray – to pray for a spirit of humility to accept that issues and understandings that divide people are bigger than we are – that we are not called to solve them - that we do not need to be right or in the right. Our call is to be friends and to accept our friends where they are – wherever they are. In prayer, we need to lay divisive issues on the table and allow God to help us sort them out in God’s time.

Second, we need to pray for the most pressing needs faced by our friends. We cannot forget their suffering and fear and grief. We need to keep a vulnerable people close to our spirits in prayer and not forget them.

Third, we need to constantly pray for peace – to pray for peacemakers – to pray for the victims of violence – to pray for justice and accountability for the perpetrators of violence.

Fourth, we need to pray for our friends by name and to give thanks for their valiant faith in the midst of suffering, loss and violence. We need to continually let our friends know of our prayers.

When we practice prayerful humility grounded in love, we reflect the loving spirit of Jesus who gave His life for all – even for those who rejected Him. Might we hear St. Paul speaking to the people of Corinth as he spoke of love. *4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant; 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things* (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NRSV).

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Jones".

David Colin Jones, President of AFRECS

Ed. Note: In this issue is Resolution B018, Support for Sudan and South Sudan, proposed by Bishop Jones, endorsed by Bishop Jeffrey Lee, Chicago, and Bishop Sea Southwestern Pennsylvania, passed unanimously Houses at the 78th General Convention, 2015.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

C. RICHARD PARKINS

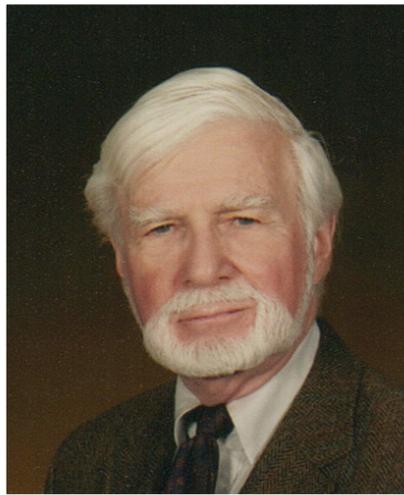
Dear Friends,

AFRECS shares the pain and sadness of so many that the conflict between the warring factions in South Sudan continues leaving thousands displaced and thousands more on the brink of starvation. What confounds so many is the intransigence of the principal adversaries in frustrating efforts to end the conflict and give peace a chance. We are challenged to understand how a nation which claims to be Christian can so totally subvert the Gospel message of forgiveness and reconciliation.

There is now the expectation that the churches of South Sudan will be major agents in carrying forward a message of peace and reconciliation and stand ready to implement that message through the length and breadth of South Sudan. Coupled with this challenge is the ongoing violence that afflicts Darfur and the Nuba Mountains where Sudan persists in waging war against its own people. Conflicts in both countries present the churches with staggering obligations. AFRECS invites its friends and supporters to seek ways of partnering with faith communities in South Sudan and Sudan in being effective instruments of peace.

It is commonplace to exhort the church to be the peacemaker in this troubled part of the world. But such exhortations do not equip the church for the onerous task of peace making. The churches cannot take on the painstaking mission of leading thousands of suffering persons to recovery without help. A mandate without resources is of little value to those whose lives have been shattered by protracted warfare. Helping folks to heal and to prepare themselves to forgive those who have so grievously wronged them is a chore that takes time and

the guidance of practitioners in trauma healing and peace making. Given the horrific consequences of this ongoing war, parallel efforts to provide so many with their basic needs must accompany any peace and reconciliation initiatives. The receptivity of hungry and sick people to peace making gestures may be limited unless they can feel safe and secure as they return to the communities from which they were violently displaced.



Sometimes a problem as complex and vast as that facing the churches of South Sudan and Sudan can be a pretext for doing little if the task is seen as too overwhelming. But overwhelming tasks are such only if we do not parse them into manageable pieces. It will be the collective efforts of many friends of faith groups in Sudan and South

Sudan who will be the catalysts of change.

What has characterized the several networks of ministry in South Sudan and Sudan has been a willingness to step out in faith as ambassadors of Christ's love, believing that resurrection can happen even when the odds are formidable. We all look forward to being a part of the rebuilding of South Sudan where destruction has been so prevalent. and encouraging those sisters and brothers who are purveyors of peace and healing. An effective way to do this is to invest in church partners who are assuming that daunting task of peace making.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "C. Richard Parkins".

A REASON FOR HOPE

C. RICHARD PARKINS

Much of what reaches me today is sad news...the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, the intransigence of the leaders of both sides, and yet another failed attempt at peace. Accompanying this is usually a recitation of the numbers of our South Sudanese sisters and brothers who have been killed, forcibly displaced, on the brink of starvation, or dealing with unimaginable human rights abuses—all casualties of this senseless war. It was a special joy, therefore, to meet recently consecrated Bishop Moses Anur Ayom, Diocese of Athoch, new diocese in Bor, on his first visit to the U.S. He was reconnecting with friends who shared part of his life as a Lost Boy living in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya.

Bishop Moses is young, energetic and faith filled, focused on a better future for his people. He is a graduate of Renk Theological College and St. Paul's College, Limuru, Kenya. He is thankful for his mentors, Bishop Joseph Garang Atem and friends from Duke Divinity School, who supported him throughout his studies. He would be the first to tell you, "I am a baby bishop trying to walk".

Within minutes of meeting Bishop Moses following a service of Sudanese worshippers at St. Paul's, Alexandria, VA, I was given a description of the diocese, for which he is seeking partnerships. He handed me a thoughtful, well-organized plan of his vision for Athoch and its 27,000 people. I share this story because it embodies a key reason for continuing to support our church friends in South Sudan, despite the dire circumstances that greet us daily with reports of devastation in that war ravaged nation. Bishop Moses and other church leaders persist with courage and hope to be pastors to their people in the midst of horrendous circumstances. It is the faithful-



L to R: Majok Chaw, Richard Parkins, Bishop Moses Anur Ayom and Sonia Patterson, CEO of Five Talents.

ness and hopefulness of leaders like Moses that encourage us to share their journey into a better future.

Bishop Moses oversees a diocese that has no school, no clinic and, virtually, no infrastructure. As a new bishop, he faces the daunting task of building a diocese facing an array of formidable challenges. I was impressed that even though his plan is an ambitious one he understands that his bold aspirations for the diocese cannot be realized without a difficult and protracted journey. He realizes that the full scope of his plan is beyond the reach of most partners. Therefore, he is seeking support for key pieces of the plan from prospective donors. Support for an essential program or project signals to his people the dawn of new possibilities. The bishop's clarity of vision, along with his practical bent, are encouraging signs that the future of the Diocese of Athoch is in competent and creative hands, guided by the belief that with God's help and our friendship good things can happen.

A REASON FOR HOPE, cont'd.

When asked about priorities, Bishop Moses noted, without hesitation, that a school and clinic are essential, or the people will experience a bleak future. Also, because the church is taking on the mantle of leadership in Athoch, pastors need to be prepared to assume the responsibilities that confront the diocese as it seeks to establish peace among the people and reverse the poverty that plagues them. Training of pastors is imperative.

Also, close to the top of his list of priorities, the bishop spoke passionately about the need to empower the women. He enthusiastically described a sewing project that would provide work as seamstresses and allow them to generate income for their families. With support of some American friends, sewing machines were purchased, and a new micro enterprise is underway. With additional assistance a business can be developed that would lift the women up as community leaders and give their families a chance at self-sufficiency. As Bishop Moses put it, "Women's empowerment is important".

The land of Athoch is fertile, and the bishop expressed hope that one day, with a bit of capital and technical assistance, the farming potential of the area can be realized. In a place where food insecurity is a serious problem, this is also a priority.

Reflecting on my time with this young, talented Sudanese leader, I experienced a hopefulness that still exists in this war ravaged country and the talents and gifts that can be lifted up to translate that hopefulness into new possibilities for South Sudan once peace comes. As a new bishop, Moses faces the daunting task of building a diocese facing an array of formidable challenges. His need for friends and partners is urgent.

Let Bishop Moses' hopefulness be our hopefulness as we pray for the peace that seems remote and allusive. Let us be attentive to voices, such as those of Moses Anur Ayom, even as we deal with the discord and conflict that brings suffering to so many in South Sudan. Let us pray for Bishop Moses and his people, and, if possible, add to those prayers our resources that will bolster the hope, as followers of Christ, we know will dispel the darkness now so prevalent in South Sudan.

Contributions to projects in the Diocese of Athoch can be made through Church of the Holy Family, 200 Hayes Road, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27517.

SUDAN: THE ART OF RECONCILIATION

Sudan's civil war finally came to an end in 2005, after claiming 2 million lives. *The Art of Reconciliation* was southern Sudan's first art exhibition after the cessation of hostilities. It featured work by Sudanese artists and school children, and was the brainchild of Bishop Hilary Garang Deng of Malakal. It toured in the UK in the summer of 2008 and stopped off at that year's Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in Canterbury. For more info and art, see page 10.



Brass relief by artist David Morbe Aquilina. 'If there is peace and no reconciliation, the peace is not meaningful,' says David. 'It's not possible to really find peace with reconciliation because there is pain inside you.'

DR. CAROLYN WEAVER MACKAY WILL BE MISSED

Carolyn Weaver MacKay, beloved wife of Robert, devoted mother of Taylor and Ben and stepmother of Stacy O'Bryant, grandmother of Patrick and Joseph O'Bryant, sister of Kenneth, Jr., Brian and Scott, aunt and cousin to a host of nieces, nephews and cousins, passed away in Arlington, VA, August 26, 2015, with her loving family by her side. She was 63.

Carolyn, a native of the DC area, graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Mary Washington College in 1973 with a degree in Economics. She received her Doctorate in Economics at Virginia Tech in 1977. Her professional career includes positions on the economics faculties of Tulane U. and Virginia Tech. She was a Research Associate at the Center for Study of Public Choice at Virginia Tech. She was a Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institute at Stanford U. Carolyn served as Editor of *Regulation* magazine, and was a Resident Scholar and Director of Social Security and Pension Studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Carolyn was chief professional staff member on social security for the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, under Chairman Senator Robert Dole. At the same time, she served as Senior Advisor to the 1983 National Commission on Social Security Reform ("Greenspan Panel"). She served on several federal advisory councils dealing with social security and disability policy, including the 1994-96 Social Security Advisory Council, the 1994-97 U.S. Social Security Advisory Board, the U.S. Disability Council, and the Social Security Public Trustees Working Group on Trust Fund Solvency. She was a founding member of the National Academy of Social Insurance. Carolyn testified frequently on Capitol Hill on issues of social security and the budget, social security solvency and reform, disability policy, and welfare reform. She authored books, articles and editorials on these subjects and was a policy advisor to two presi-

dential candidates. Carolyn is recognized in *Who's Who in America*.

Carolyn lived out her faith in service to the Lord as a Sunday school teacher, a member of the Pastoral Care Committee and a Vestry member at St. Paul's Episcopal Church,

Alexandria, VA. As a member of The Falls Church Anglican, she was active in Women's Ministry Bible Study and served on the Guild of the Christ Child and the Hospitality Committee. She was a long-time supporter, mentor and tutor with Central Union Mission in Washington, D.C. She also devoted herself to outreach and

service to her Christian brothers and sisters in Uganda and Sudan, and was a founder of American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS) in 2005, and Board member until her passing.

Her passion and commitment to the mission of AFRECS unfolded as proponent of partnership-building between dioceses in the U.S. with dioceses in the ECS, now the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSSS). The Fall 2007 issue of *Sudan Connections* featured her article, "AFRECS to Promote Partnerships". The theme of the 10th annual AFRECS Conference, "Peace and Partnerships", will serve as a tribute to our dear friend, faithful founder and Board member, Dr. Carolyn Weaver MacKay. We will miss you, Carolyn. Your memory and spirit will linger in the hearts of all whom you have touched.

GIVE REST, O CHRIST, TO THY SERVANT CAROLYN WITH THY SAINTS, WHERE SORROW AND PAIN ARE NO MORE, NEITHER SIGHING, BUT LIFE EVERLASTING.

Carolyn's family has requested donations be made to the Central Union Mission, www.missiondc.org, with a designation for the Carolyn Mackay Education Fund.



AFRECS INVITES YOU.....10TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

OCT. 23-25, 2015, ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA, VA "PEACE & PARTNERSHIPS"

Partners sharing with partners – sharing experience; exploring strategies for enriching and deepening partnerships; examining individual and collective roles as companions as they seek ways of healing & recovering from wars—creating a culture of peace going forward.

The Rt. Rev. Samuel Enosa Peni, bishop of Nzara and Chair of Justice, Peace & Reconciliation will be a major contributor to our discussion on peacemaking. Bishops Joseph Garang Atem (Renk) and Moses Deng Bol (Wau) will be present with first-hand accounts of the consequences of recent violence, as well as a bet-



ter understanding of where the church needs to go to as an agent of healing and recovery for its several million members.

Share this information broadly with your dioceses and churches throughout U.S. The goal of this 10th

Annual AFRECS Conference is to foster stronger ties among us, as partners, leading us toward greater collaboration and coordination as we continue on the journey with our South Sudanese friends toward a more secure and peaceful future.

Check the AFRECS website for conference updates – www.afreecs.org. Contact Richard Parkins directly with questions – richardparkins1@gmail.com

10TH ANNUAL NATIONAL AFRECS CONFERENCE

OCT. 23-25, 2015

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
ALEXANDRIA, VA

"PEACE & PARTNERSHIPS"

B018 SUPPORT FOR SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN



TOPIC: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

COMMITTEE: 06 – WORLD MISSION

PROPOSER: THE RT. REV. DAVID JONES

ENDORSED BY: THE RT. REV. JEFFREY LEE;

THE RT. REV. SEAN ROWE

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church (TEC), mindful of resolutions D-007 from 2009 and A019 from 2012; Joyfully celebrate the vitality and growth of the Episcopal Church In South Sudan and Sudan and give thanks for the Church's efforts to bring about justice and peace in South Sudan and Sudan; and be it further

Resolved, the 78th General Convention heartily commend the Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan (ECSSS) for its steadfast efforts to end the civil war which broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, and to help resolve older and continuing conflicts in the border areas of Abyei, and in Darfur, Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains in Sudan; and be it further

Resolved, the 78th General Convention strongly urge

TEC dioceses and parishes to consider prayer partnerships and joint work with bishops, dioceses, and church organizations in ECSSS to support them to reduce and resolve the current conflicts, help refugees, hold war criminals accountable, and improve people's living conditions; and be it further

Resolved, the 78th General Convention request the Presiding Bishop, in cooperation with other denominations and other provinces of the Anglican Communion to set aside several weeks in 2016 for prayer for peace in South Sudan and Sudan; and be it further

Resolved, that the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church direct the offices and agencies of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to utilize all measures at their disposal to advocate for the protection of refugees, conflict resolution and sustainable development in South Sudan and Sudan with appropriate governmental and international agencies and offices.

(Go to www.episcopalarchives.org/gc2015/2015-B018.pdf for related resolutions 1994-D012.

SUDAN: THE ART OF RECONCILIATION

Bishop Hilary of Malakal, below, works on a fish sculpture, which represents the three ethnic groups, living on the banks of the Nile in Malakal - the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk - and their journey towards reconciliation. For more info: <http://www.christianaid.ie/whatwedo/eyewitness/africa/sudan-reconciliation-gallery.aspx?Page=1>.



Each of these figures below by artist Abdel Rahman Shagal represents one of the three main ethnic groups that live in Malakal - a town on the banks of the Nile in southern Sudan. The Shilluk, Nuer and Dinka (from left to right) all have distinctive facial markings.



SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES STATEMENT

SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Head Office

P.O Box 209 - Juba, South Sudan



مجلس الكنائس جنوب السودان

مكتب الرئاسة

ص - ب ٢٠٩ جوبا - جنوب السودان

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Juba, 31st July 2015

**SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
STATEMENT ON
PROPOSED COMPROMISE AGREEMENT ON THE RESOLUTION OF
THE CONFLICT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**

"SIGN THE AGREEMENT!"

We, the Heads of the member Churches of the South Sudan Council of Churches, met today in Juba with our collaborators to reflect on the Proposed Compromise Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan presented to the parties by IGAD.

Since we issued our first statement on 17th December 2013, we have consistently called for an immediate and unconditional end to the fighting. The war must stop immediately. There is no moral justification for this senseless war. It is unacceptable that people continue to kill and be killed while leaders argue over power, positions and percentages.

We are calling for an immediate ceasefire, and we ask the IGAD PLUS to put down the mechanism of protecting and maintaining the ceasefire. This will give the parties in the conflict an atmosphere for frank, trustful and sincere talks. We welcome the Proposed Compromise Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan because it achieves this end. Within 72 hours of its signing, a Permanent Ceasefire comes into force. This is a worthy achievement, a major step forward, a great blessing, and we warmly thank all those who have worked to bring it about. We therefore urge all parties to sign the Agreement, and to honour it by implementing the Ceasefire.

As Church leaders we do not wish to comment on the substance of the Agreement. We are not politicians and it is not our place to enter into the details. We see many good things in the Agreement, but we are also aware that many people have reservations and concerns about parts of it. We reiterate that the most important part of it is the Permanent Ceasefire. Once the guns have fallen silent, there is a window of opportunity, a breathing space in which South Sudanese can consider all the points of disagreement and controversy in a peaceful manner until a consensus is reached which meets the needs of the people, not just the political and military elites. This Agreement is not in itself a solution but it is a mechanism by which a solution can be reached. It creates a space in which we can all discern together how we will become a nation.

Once the Ceasefire is in effect and the people of South Sudan begin to grapple with the way forward, there will be more need than ever for the Church-facilitated Peace Process described in our Statement of Intent issued in Kigali on 7th June 2015. It will have three main pillars: Advocacy to change the narrative from war to peace; a Neutral Forum where stakeholders can discuss the pressing issues in an atmosphere which builds trust rather than polarisation; and Reconciliation. The Church has a special role to play in Reconciliation, and we will ensure that we are in the forefront of this great endeavour to bring healing to our people.

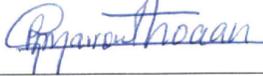


SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, cont'd.

Once again we urge the parties to sign this Agreement and to implement the Permanent Ceasefire. Do not miss this opportunity to end the evil which has befallen our country. The Agreement is a compromise, it is not perfect, it has its shortcomings, but disagreement with some aspects of it does not justify the continuation of the war. It must be signed and implemented in good faith.

We pray for the warring parties, for those who have worked to bring about this Agreement, and for all the people of South Sudan. May God guide you and bless you all.

Given in Juba this 31st day of July 2015



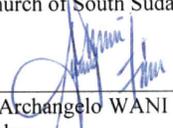
Rt. Rev. Peter GAI LUAL MARROW
Chairman
South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).



His Grace Paulino LUKUDU LORO
Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba
Catholic Church.



Rt. Rev. Dr. Daniel DENG BUL
Archbishop and Primate
Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSS/S).



Rt. Rev. Dr. Archangelo WANI LEMI
Presiding Bishop
African Inland Church (AIC).



Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaiah MAJOK DAU
General Overseer
Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC).



Rt. Rev. James PAR TAP HON
Moderator,
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (EPCoSS/S).



Rev. Alex Gabriel LADU
Moderator
Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (PCoSS/S).



Fr. James OYET LATANSIO
General Secretary
South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).



(President Salva Kiir Signs Proposed Compromise Peace Agreement, Aug. 27. Go to www.nytimes.com/2015/08/27/world/africa/south-sudan-peace-deal-rebels-president)

COMMUNIQUE OF ECSSS BISHOPS RETREAT IN RWANDA

THE MOST REV. CANON DR. DANIEL DENG BUL YAK

PREAMBLE

The Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission (JPRC), under the leadership of His Grace, Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul Yak, organized a 7-day retreat, held at East African Villa, Kigali, Rwanda, May 26-31, 2015. It was attended by 13 South Sudanese Bishops, three women and one pastor.

We appreciate the support, hospitality, spiritual guidance and wisdom of the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Rwanda and his team, who tirelessly arranged for and planned the activities for the retreat. Above all, we are indebted to the great speakers and testimonies that inspired us and rekindled our quest to search for lasting peace in our hearts and nation.

We recognize and acknowledge the warmth and the support of the Rwandan government for hosting us and providing a safe environment throughout our stay. We appreciate and acknowledge the solid development and the spirit of unity the Rwandan people have taken.

STATEMENT

We have come to Rwanda as Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSSS) Bishops because we recognize our particular mandate, role and responsibility, as faith leaders, to help bring peace, forgiveness and reconciliation to our new nation, the Republic of South Sudan. This retreat gave us time to be relieved from our usual duties and responsibilities to reflect and meditate together taking the post-genocide Rwanda context to seek God's grace.

As church leaders, one week together gave us time to pray and focus on our prophetic role, our spiritual and pastoral mandate to promote peace, unity, and to establish reconciliation, forgiveness and healing in our nation. As Jesus said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"*. (Mt.5:9)



What happened on December 15, 2013, and is still happening, has brought our new nation down to a low level of statehood, not only in the eyes of the international community and regional governments, but even in the eyes of God, our Creator. God is weeping with those who weep for this nation.

The condition of our nation is evidence that we need God's divine intervention. Fierce fighting, destruction of lives and property, massive displacement, hunger, poverty, deaths, rape of women and girls, cattle raiding, revenge killings, and breakdown of families are part of the many problems which our country is facing today.

We need to lift up our nation to the Lord in prayer and fasting, taking the prayer of Jesus on the cross. *"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."* (Luke 23:24) We, therefore, urge our government and opposition group to immediately stop the war, the bloodshed and destruction of resources and human lives. The blood of the innocent women, men and children is crying, "Enough is enough".

Instead of war, we need peace. Instead of tribalism and ethnic violence, we need unity and spirit of nationhood. *We are who we are, South Sudanese.* Instead of lying, we need honesty and truth. Instead of cattle rustling and raiding and revenge killings, we need love and mercy. Instead of nepotism and corruption, we need responsibility and accountability. Let us rise from the tomb of destruction and violence into the light of Christ, falling at the foot of His cross, seeking His forgiveness and healing.

Based on our reflection and meditation, and after learning from the stories and experience of our counterparts in Rwanda, we determined our distinctive role as faith

COMMUNIQUE OF ECSSS BISHOPS RETREAT IN RWANDA, cont'd.

leaders to:

- > Speak out against any form of destruction and human rights abuses.
- > Call our leaders, both in the government and opposition to stop the war. Implore our people to take the spirit of nationhood. *"We are who we are, South Sudanese."* The nation is not built on the foundation of tribes, but on a foundation of love and unity, for each tribe in South Sudan is created in one image, the image of God. Our economy is not a tribal economy. Even our education is not based on tribe or ethnicity. They belong to the nation.
- > Condemn the spirit of impunity and promote and advocate justice, peace, reconciliation and accountability.
- > Sensitize and engage men, women, boys and girls towards transformation and reform from a spirit of violence and revenge killings.

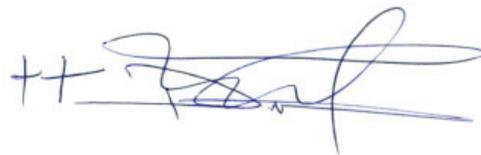
As ECSSS church leaders, we commit ourselves to:

- > The values and principles of faith that held us together as one church, one people and one nation.
- > Find the means and ways that bring lasting peace and stability in our nation.
- > Stand in solidarity with the innocent civilians being killed, raped and tortured.
- > Promote development, rule of law and justice to end impunity and criminality in our nation.

We call on all faithful citizens of our beloved nation to join us in ending this senseless war that has destroyed God-given resources we have, both human and material. And, we pray for God to walk alongside us and help us fulfill His will now and always.

We thank the Anglican Alliance for the financial support they have rendered to us through Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan Development and Relief Agency (ECSSS/SUDRA), which has enabled us to accomplish this mission. We ask God to bless everyone who has contributed to the JPRC programs.

God bless you all,



The Most Rev. Canon Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak
Archbishop, Primate and Metropolitan of the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan
Bishop of Juba Diocese

Ed. Note: This "Communiqué" is excerpted from a more complete report on the ECSSS JPRC Bishops Retreat in Kigali, Rwanda, May 26-31, 2015.



EPISCOPAL BISHOPS TRAVEL TO RWANDA, BUILD CAPACITY FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

PHIL DARROW, AFRECS BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEWS BISHOP JOSEPH GARANG ATEM

As reported by Bishop Joseph Garang Atem, Bishop of Renk, thirteen ECSSS bishops traveled to Rwanda in June for a week of study and reflection, learning from those who helped forge a new nation following the Rwandan genocide. Led by Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul and Bishop Samuel Peni of Nzara, who chairs the ECSSS Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, the group was hosted in Kigali by the Archbishop of Rwanda and heard many profound and powerful stories of forgiveness and peacemaking from a variety of clergy, government officials and lay witnesses. The group also visited historic sites of the genocide and experienced a “Circle of Peace,” at which a young woman met with and forgave the killer of her family, all of whom she lost as a 7-year-old. The Bishops also reserved two days at the end for prayer, meditation and planning for the implementation of similar reconciliation efforts in South Sudan.

According to Bishop Joseph, the three key learnings from the Rwandan experience were the use of organized Circles of Peace of former adversaries for confession, repentance and forgiveness, a strong message urging mercy from the President and other national leaders coupled with a generous amnesty program, and efforts by many to break down tribal division and create a Rwandan identity. One especially moving and deeply symbolic story in this regard was of the death of a group of Hutus who were killed by other Hutus while protecting Tutsi civilians. This is widely seen as a sacrifice on behalf of the reborn nation.

Although Bishop Joseph notes that a coordinated, Province-wide peace and reconciliation effort in South Sudan is frustrated both by a lack of funding and by ongoing security concerns in the conflict areas, he is determined “not to wait”, and is acting locally by re-telling the stories and experiences of Rwanda to a wide variety of others inside and outside the church. He noted that now is an especially opportune (and dangerous) time in

Renk itself, as it is now the provisional capital of Upper Nile State and once again an island of relative calm amidst the surrounding conflicts. As such, a diverse group of people of all ethnicities have flocked to Renk, both for security and to collect salaries. While this situation is potentially volatile, Bishop hopes to establish Circles of Peace and pilot a model of peace building in Renk that can be duplicated in other parts of Greater Upper Nile and beyond. He is talking to as many returnees and displaced others as possible, and doing his best to “train trainers” based on his experience in Rwanda.



As to how U.S. partners can help, Bishop Joseph, in addition to asking for continued prayers for peace in South Sudan, hopes for additional investment in peace and reconciliation training programs. The conflict has led to extraordinary prices in Renk, where a gallon of

fuel now costs \$50 U.S. Despite such daunting logistics, Bishop Joseph is determined to establish a robust peace and reconciliation program at Renk Theological College. He will be in Renk to initiate such efforts before traveling to the U.S. in September and October to meet with partners and continue advocacy efforts for peace.

The persistent conflict in South Sudan, which has exposed deep divisions and widely spawned fear and mistrust, has seemed intractable, but Archbishop Daniel, Bishop Samuel, Bishop Joseph and other leaders of the ECSSS have a clear eye on the future, and are faithfully determined to foster the forgiveness and reconciliation that must follow the violence. The Rwandan experience provides a compelling example that South Sudan has the ability to duplicate, with clergy and lay members of the churches in the forefront. The ECSSS is doing its best to prepare for this role despite limited resources, and Bishop Joseph noted that a 40-member delegation from the South Sudan Council of Churches is in Rwanda for similar training now. In this learning and nascent effort lies hope.

SEARCHING FOR THE LIGHT

THE REV. DR. ELLEN HANCKEL, AFRECS BOARD MEMBER

Out of deepest darkness comes light. The events in South Sudan have been so dark and brutal. I went in search of something to shed light on the conflict that has been raging there since December 2013. Thankfully, I found the Duke Divinity School Summer Institute for Reconciliation, an annual program held on the campus in Raleigh, NC, this year, June 1 - 6, 2015.

“...(We) gather to engage with this story: that ‘in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19),” reads a message from Dean Richard B. Hays describing the conference. “In a confused world fractured by conflict and competition, and torn by tragic racial and ethnic tension, the message of reconciliation must be proclaimed more urgently and confidently than ever. ... This week will provide space for testimony, lament, worship, and hope...”

And so, more than a hundred participants gathered, representing approximately 28 states in the U.S. and 14 other countries, including several from the continent of Africa -- South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Canada, China, India, Japan, S. Korea, Mexico, and the U.K. were represented, as well. Conversations over good food gave us opportunities for mixing with others outside of our seminar groups. Friends reconnected, and strangers made friends, as all of us stood on the common ground of reconciliation.

Each conference day carried a different theme: Welcome; New Creation; Lament; Hope; Spirituality; and Sending. Strong addresses for plenary sessions came from Dean Hays, Prof. Ellen F. Davis, Rev. William J. Barber, II, and Rev. Cecilia J. Williams. Bold preaching led worship sessions, and resonating music filled Goodson Chapel during morning and evening services. Incorporating a variety of traditions that encouraged participation from everyone, the worship space came alive with bright fabric, candles, and even stones. They provided us with take-home reminders of our experience and our commitment to continue as we returned home to work in our own fields.

Seminar topics offered a wide range of subjects. Participants chose to be in one of the following study groups which

met most afternoons: 1)Theology of Reconciliation; 2) Faith-Rooted Community Organizing; 3) Mission among the Poor; 4)Segregated Sundays; 5)Sharing Communion but Not Convictions; 6)Theology and Practice of Faith-Based Organizations; 7)Isaiah and a Prophetic Ministry of Peacemaking; and 8)Christian-Muslim Peacemaking for Christian Leaders.

By happy coincidence, Bishop Abraham Nhial, Diocese of Aweil, ECSSS, and I were in the same seminar giving us the opportunity to know each other more fully. In addition, several of the students I knew during the two semesters I taught at Bishop Gwynne College in Juba, South Sudan, came from Aweil Diocese. Now, they have returned to their home areas, serving under Bishop Abraham. Gladly, I heard news about them, their ministries and their families.

In closing, I quote again from Dean Hays’ conference message: “We are called to proclaim and embody God’s reconciliation of all creation.... In and through the conversations of the coming days, I pray that we will find God, by his Spirit, ‘entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.’ If so we will go forth from this temporary gathering nourished, and newly empowered to offer peace and hope to a world desperately seeking both.”

I consider it a blessing to have found the Duke Divinity School Summer Institute for Reconciliation. There I found others who were seeking renewal in our calling to embody the ministry of reconciliation. For me among others, it shed some light in the darkness, giving us strength to move forward in our journeys. Gratefully, I am renewed.

This program will be held June 6 -11, 2016. Information and applications are available online at www.dukesummerinstitute.org.



WHY WE GO

ED EASTMAN, MEMBER OF HOLY FAMILY CHURCH, CAPEL HILL, NC

There are a lot of countries on this earth that are attractive destinations. We are constantly reminded through various media advertising channels what we are missing. The focus is generally targeted to appeal to our need to relax, sightsee or experience an exotic adventure. The emphasis is on self-refreshment. So, this past March, when I was given the invitation to come back to South Sudan, it was with outright disbelief that many of my friends and business associates made comments like, “Isn’t there a war going on?”, or “You’ve got to be kidding me!”. But, then some of my friends who have been to South Sudan and experienced the people there appeared quite envious “Wow, I wish I was going with you!”.

So, why do we go? For me, it is the deep friendships I have with these brothers and sisters in Christ, all of whom have their own incredible stories of how God has acted in their individual lives. They routinely deal with and overcome hardships that would seem insurmountable to most of us. Their daily walk with our Savior Jesus Christ is real and tangible to them. The perspective and love given to me is more than I could ask from any vacation to “an attractive destination”.

This was my third trip to South Sudan, and I have a feeling it will continue to be my destination of choice, God willing. My first trip in 2010 was to lend a hand in getting a college garden started at Renk Theological College. I accompanied my wife, Susan, who was invited to teach a short course in Greek under the auspices of the Visiting Teachers Program from Duke Divinity School and Virginia Theological Seminary.

I flew into the Nairobi airport and was met by my good friend Abuna (Fr.) Jacob Panchol Majok from Renk Diocese. Fr. Jacob, graduate of RTC, is currently living in Nairobi where he is finishing his Bachelors Degree at the African International University.

I have known Jacob for several years beginning at RTC where he was Dean of Students in 2010. His story is not unusual in South Sudan. As a youth he walked with thousands of other boys to Ethiopia, then walked to Kenya. His quiet leadership and obvious Christian dedication was noticed by his SPLA commanders, who appointed him



chaplain. Fr. Jacob graduates this year and will be working closely with Bishop Joseph Garang Atem in Renk Diocese.

The itinerary was simply to go to Juba, capital of South Sudan, with Fr. Jacob and Bishop Joseph and to meet the 13 students and 4 staff of Renk Theological College, which had relocated temporarily to Bishop Gwynne College in Juba because of the security instability in Renk. The need for relocation, instead of temporary suspension, was explained as the importance of continuity in the students’ education.

Here, I learned that these students had left friends and family (many are married with children) in order to continue their studies. Since the housing costs in and around Juba are prohibitive, the students live in a rented house on the outskirts of Juba, a 40-minute taxi drive each way to BGC. The house had no electricity, and the students’ only complaint was that they could not study very well at night.

WHY WE GO, cont'd.

My arrival was met with much enthusiasm; here was someone from the United States who had come to visit! I was told that I was the first person to visit since the fighting had erupted in 2013. In fact, it was my first visit back since I was evacuated from Renk in December 2013. The students eagerly told me of their ambitions to be pastors, acknowledging the hardships as just something that had to be overcome. I could see in my individual discussions that each one would one day be responsible for much, and succeed greatly. They were amazing young Christians.

My main objective on this trip was to learn as much as I could about the current situation on the ground, to give support and friendship and to take what I saw and learned back to North Carolina to promote awareness and partnerships. The Episcopal Guest House in Juba was a perfect place to stay since it is a “catch all” meeting place for so many clergy, bishops, doctors and NGO workers who were either displaced from their own areas or were en route back to them from their travels. Each day was full of new people to meet, and everywhere I went I was greeted warmly and thanked for coming.

I was able to visit Bishop Gwynne College several times to meet the staff and participate in the worship services with the students. Meeting with the staff of the Committee for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation showed me their dedication, traveling out to villages to address and train citizens of the root causes of the civil war, stressing the importance of overcoming tribalism. I got the sense in Juba that so many were completely disillusioned with the government’s inability to meet the needs of the people, and instead of rioting and revolution there was a resigned patience to wait until elections and hope for better times. This is actually quite remarkable, albeit very difficult and sad.

I had a very interesting meeting, totally unplanned, with a South Sudanese businessman. We had known each other from my previous visits to Renk. He explained to me his different businesses, from agriculture to government contracts. He also mentioned, in an offhand way, his donations of vehicles to clergy and other gestures of philanthropy in goods and services to his fellow South Sudanese. This is encouraging to me, not only because of my own interest in small business here in the U.S., but also because it made me aware of the network of South

Sudanese men and women who have somehow managed to acquire working capital. My good friend, Bishop Moses Anur Ayom, bishop of the new diocese called Athoch north of Bor, told me how another South Sudanese businessman paid for a beautiful modern church built in his diocese. Why? Because it was needed. This is heartening news that needs to be incorporated into awareness campaigns to our churches and organizations as potential partners and donors. In my own experience, many people have expressed reservations about giving to a country that can’t seem to get it together and are always in need of constant help. And, I wonder how many many more hopeful stories are there of South Sudanese helping South Sudanese?

This is not the time for us to give up, to be reluctant to help our brothers and sisters until stability magically happens. It may be awhile, but in the meantime, there is so much we can do. I had the flexibility in my business and personal life to make these trips, and I feel especially honored to be able to get to know such people. We give what we can, we pray for each other, but I will never forget the warm, proud smiles as my friends look at me, embrace me, and tell me to come back soon. This is why I go.



PRAYERS FOR SOUTH SUDAN

SOUTH SUDAN LIFE PUBLISHERS

South Sudan Writers Team announces its premiere publication under the auspices of Media Associates International (MAI), which seeks to end the drought of life-changing Christian literature in hard places of the world. Over 3 years, a team from Renk Diocese participated in workshops to develop locally authored books, which Bishop Joseph Garang Atem sees as a key to “nation building” for planting Christian values in society.

Prayers for South Sudan is dedicated “To all the people of South Sudan”. From the Foreword written by Bishop Joseph... “For anyone who wants to think carefully and



widely about what to pray for the nation of South Sudan, *Prayers for South Sudan* is a great place to start.” It is divided into 4 sections: “Prayers for the Nation of South Sudan”; “Prayers for the People of South Sudan”; “Prayers for the Church in South Sudan”; and “Prayers for South Sudan from the Diaspora”.

Remember that Lord you are the one who has given us this country, please forgive us and unite us to serve you here in South Sudan. This is our humble prayer, in Jesus name. (excerpt from the Prayer for Forgiveness.) ISBN: 978-9966-69-016-6

COMINGS & GOINGS, ETC.

O God, surround those who travel in Your service, with Your loving care; protect them from every danger; bring them safely to their journey's end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY-JULY 2015

Between May and July 2015 Santino Dut, parishioner at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA, took leave from his job at Virginia Seminary to assist his disabled brother move from Juba to Abyei. Dut returned from South Sudan a married man.

SEPT. 9 - OCT. 29

Bishop Joseph Garang Atem, Diocese of Renk, returns to the U.S. for his annual visit to meet with partners in the Diocese of Chicago and supporting agencies. AFRECS and the Diocese of VA will host him on visits to the State Dept., NGO's and other government offices on The Hill, as well as partner parishes in VA. He will also travel to the Diocese of North Carolina. He expects to attend the AFRECS Conference at St. Paul's, Alexandria, VA, Oct. 23-25. Contact: Jackie Kraus, jackie.kraus41@gmail.com.

OCT. 23-25

AFRECS 10th Annual National Conference, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA – site of the inaugural AFRECS conference. Theme: *Peace & Partnerships*. Contact Executive Director, Richard Parkins with ques-

tions, richardparkins1@gmail.com. Visit the AFRECS website for details: www.afrecs.org.

2015 TRIENNIAL MEETING OF EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN & UNITED THANK OFFERING

UTO grants \$61,290.00 to two ECSSS Dioceses: The Diocese of Olympia (WA), on behalf of Companion Diocese of Aweil, requested funds for mentors and trainers who will select, mentor, and train South Sudanese youth living in Kakuma Refugee Camp, to participate in mix-tribal teams for soccer and volleyball. The project will be a venue for promoting peace and reconciliation and for enlisting other young people to be trained and mentored as peacemakers. \$15,000.00 (*The Diocese of El Camino Real is also in partnership with Olympia and Aweil.*)

The Diocese of Virginia, on behalf of Companion Diocese Ibba, requested funds for an essential vehicle for Bishop Wilson Kamani to transport him out to reach the area of his diocese. \$46,290.00 (*For further information about 2015 UTO grants, go to <https://uto2014.wordpress.com/2015-grant-awards>*)

