

SPRING 2009

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

SUDAN CONNECTIONS



AFRECS - AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SUDAN





Connecting Hopes and Gifts

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:

US TEAM VISITING TORIT
AND BOR, FEBRUARY,
2009. *PHIL DARROW*©



August 10, 2009 is the deadline for submissions for the next *Sudan Connections*. Send information to Susan Jones at susanmjones@verizon.net or afreecs@afreecs.org.

**LETTER FROM AFRECS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
C. Richard Parkins



Photo by Constance Wilson ©

GOOD FRIDAY +
April 10, 2009

Dear Friends of the ECS,

As I write to you during this holy season, I am mindful of the many ways it is reflective of the journey of our brothers and sisters in Sudan. They experienced a protracted Lent

as they awaited a new day when their lives and their nation could be restored to peace. Through our connections with them, we have learned much from their faithfulness as we witnessed their perseverance on this long and torturous journey. We are witnesses to the faith, hope and expectation that there would be an Easter for them and their nation.

In 2005, there was a serious investment in bringing this hoped for change to reality. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is the result of that investment – an agreement that is extremely prescriptive in setting forth the steps needed to be taken as the two major players in the peace process see to its implementation.

Some of us have listened, first hand, to spokespersons for the new Sudan who express their anxiety and, at times, their skepticism about the emergence of a united, peaceful Sudan. The fragility of the peace process is tied to a lack of transparency in how oil revenues are being shared. Escalation of violence inflicted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), increased suffering of the people

of Darfur as the Khartoum Government stymies humanitarian assistance, and the lack of development and services in the South in response to the thousands of returning refugees do not bode well for a future of peace.

And, yet, the ECS remains faithful to the dream of a united and peaceful Sudan. It is rebuilding itself as a force for reconciliation and progress, and embraces the Easter message of resurrection even in the face of formidable challenges.

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church is in Anaheim, CA, in July, and AFRECS will be there. You are invited to visit the booth, which promises to be a dynamic display with information about what many partners of the ECS are doing to respond to the cry of our Sudanese sisters and brothers.

AFRECS has committed itself to a more proactive stance through an Advocacy Task Force. A resolution has been submitted to General Convention, our Presiding Bishop has issued a statement on the attacks by the LRA, Richard Jones, President of AFRECS, has sent a message to the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, and I, as your Executive Director, sent a letter to President Obama urging him to make the crises in Sudan a priority. Go to www.afreecs.org to find out what you can do NOW!

Be the Body of Christ in the world. Make resurrection happen for those who have endured an overly long Good Friday.

Faithfully,

Richard Parkins

Executive Director

COMINGS AND GOINGS, ETC.

MAY 20-29

The Very Rev. Matthew Gunter, Shirley Holt and Mary Kleine Yehling of St. Barnabas, Glen Ellyn, IL, Diocese of Chicago, travel to Renk Diocese to visit their partner parish, St. Barnaba, in Maban. Shirley will work with Dr. Paul in Renk Clinic, which St. Barnabas supports with funds for medicine and a midwife. Mary Kleine will lead seminars for women, clergy and seminarians at Renk Theological College (RTC) on micro-enterprise development. Fr. Gunter will visit Maban and lecture at RTC. Chicago and Renk are Companion Dioceses.

JULY 8-17, Anaheim, CA

AFRECS will be present at the 76th General Convention of TEC with a booth and exhibits about the work of AFRECS and the ECS, the ministries of companion diocese relationships, advocacy information, visitors from the companion dioceses. The Dioceses of Bethlehem, Chicago, Missouri, Indianapolis, SW Virginia and VA will spotlight their unique ministries each day. Visit the AFRECS booth where you will find Sudanese crafts and pick up a copy of *Why Haven't You Left?*, a collection of letters from Marc Nikkel. Contact Connie Fegley, conniefegley@yahoo.com to join the team of volunteers for the AFRECS booth.

WWW.SUDAN.ANGLICAN.ORG

For the latest reports on Archiepiscopal Visitations of The Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul

AN INVITATION TO MAKE THE MARTYRS OF SUDAN KNOWN

"They died that others might live." These are the words of a Sudanese priest retelling some of the stories of the martyrs of Sudan. All who are drawn to stand with the Church in Sudan are stirred deeply when we learn that tens of thousands of Christian Sudanese have died in the 56 years of civil war in Sudan. Even today more are being killed for their faith in that war torn country. But there is another cry as haunting as those of this priest: "Does anyone care? We are a forgotten people. Our suffering is not known."

How do we remember and how can God use this remembrance to stir our faith to respond more fully in honor of those who died in the face of persecution?

An Icon Project: A resolution to approve a feast day for the Martyrs of Sudan to be added to the Episcopal Church Calendar will be presented at General Convention in July. A Sudanese artist, Awer Bul, Richmond, VA, has been commissioned to design an icon representing the men, women and children who have died for their faith. Various formats will be made available with proceeds going to support the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church in Sudan. You are invited to share in this gift of affirmation to the Sudanese Church by making a donation towards its completion.

How you can join others in the icon project: The cost of this project is \$1,500, with additional costs anticipated for initial reproductions. Donors will receive a print of the icon in thanksgiving for any size gift. You can donate directly on line at www.hopewithsudan.org. Click on "Donate" to use PayPal, and indicate "icon". Send an email to Jerry Drino, Executive Director, Hope With Sudan, jdrino@hopewithsudan.org, to confirm your online donation. Or, mail a check to Hope With Sudan (earmarked "Icon"), 5038 Hyland Ave, San Jose, CA 95127. More information on how to purchase additional icons will appear on the AFRECS web site www.afreecs.org in June.

ANNOUNCING WEBSITES FOR ECS DIOCESES

Many ECS Dioceses now have their own websites, and others are in the process of getting them. You can find the most current websites at <http://www.sudan.anglican.org/dioceses.php>.

JOHN ASHWORTH REPORTS

As of April 13, the population of Southern Sudan is 8.2 million - 20% of the population of Sudan. Find current news about Southern Sudan by John Ashworth at www.afreecs.org; click on LINKS.



EASTER PRAYER OF ARCHBISHOP DANIEL DENG BUL

FOR THE CHURCH IN SUDAN

Let us pray to you, the Lord, the Shepherd of my people --
We remain without care. Come and rescue the people of Sudan, come and strengthen the weak, heal the sick, and bind up the injured. Help us to uncover and revoke those that are destroying the CPA, those that are stealing cattle, and those that are abusing their political power and wealth. Lord Jesus, protect this country, and let her live in love, peace and unity, forever and ever. AMEN.

ROBIN DENNEY EXTERNAL AGRICULTURE CONSULTANT FOR ECS

Southern Sudan: Robin Denney shown working with the people of the South, helping implement new procedures to raise more food. For information about ECS Agriculture programs, please contact Robin Denney at redenney@gmail.com.



ST. JOHN'S, BEDFORD, VA, JOINS "CLUB 157"

By Phil and Robin Darrow, Co-chairs

...and, here's how they did it. St. John's committed 50% of its Christmas offerings to support the ECS through Club 157. Perhaps, a similar commitment for Easter offerings might be a way for churches to raise support and practice good stewardship for the Church in Sudan.

We are pleased to report that through a combination of efforts by Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul and friends in the U.S., \$66,000 has been raised to help retire the \$157,000 debt of the Province of the ECS. The Archbishop approached the business community in the South for support, and Arop Company, Ltd., responded with a donation of \$33,000.

This effort will enable the ECS to move forward with its goals of promoting peace in Sudan through education, health care, and other avenues of human development. Together, in true partnership, great strides have been made. But, there is still quite a bit of "rolling away of the stone" says Archbishop Daniel.

Make checks out to: St. Michael's Episcopal Church -- designated for "Club 157", 647 Dundee Avenue, Barrington, IL 60010, Attn: Kim Lessner.

For further information, contact Co-chairs Phil and Robin Darrow, bardar5@aol.com, or Bishop Frank Gray, U.S. Commissary to the ECS, frankgray@comcast.net.

HISTORY OF CLUB 157

What is Club 157, you ask?

Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul announced at the AFRECS Conference in Chicago in May 2008, that the Province of the ECS was \$157,000 in arrears. Phil and Robin Darrow, of St. Michael's, Barrington, IL, made a commitment to the Archbishop to lead a fundraising campaign to erase this debt.

The Board of AFRECS encourages you to join Club 157 today. (St. Michael's has a long-standing covenant of relationship with Renk Diocese, from which Archbishop Daniel was elected.)

CONTACT THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS & MEMBERS

The Advocacy Task Force of AFRECS encourages its members, friends and partners with the Episcopal Church of Sudan to inform President Barack Obama, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations of concerns about the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005, between the North and South governments of Sudan. Letters, phone calls, and emails will lift the issue of this fragile peace to a higher priority.

The U.S. Government and those nations that share a stake in the peace process need to exert greater pressure on the Khartoum government to honor its obligations as set forth in the CPA. Without such adherence, the peace agreement could unravel with dangerous consequences to follow.

*If you contact the U.S. Government advocating for the people of Sudan, AFRECS has set up an email address:
advocacy@afreecs.org. Please copy AFRECS with your comments.*

Thank you.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA
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202-456-1111
www.whitehouse.gov/contact

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U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY - SUDAN
Maj. Gen. J. Scott Gration, Ret.
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

AFRECS wrote a letter to Secretary of State Clinton informing her of the deteriorating peace situation in Sudan. www.afreecs.org, click on Advocacy.



AFRECS AND ADVOCACY

Russell V. Randle, partner with Patton Boggs, LLP, Washington, DC, and member of Christ Church, Alexandria, VA, serves as the Chair of the Advocacy Task Force for AFRECS. Following is Resolution D007, Sudan Peace and TEC Partnership, proposed by him to be presented to both the Houses of Bishops and Deputies at General Convention of TEC in Anaheim, CA, in July. Please encourage your Bishops and Deputies to support this Resolution.

RESOLUTION D007, Sudan Peace and TEC Partnership

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention adopt the following objectives to guide our church's advocacy for peace in Sudan: (a) support for the full and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, settling the prior civil war between the north and south, (b) support for increased private investment for economic development in southern Sudan, as now permitted by U.S. law, (c) continued and increased U.S. government development assistance in southern Sudan and other areas affected by war in Sudan, and (d) an early end to hostilities in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, and assuring full access by humanitarian organizations to assist refugees; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge each diocese in The Episcopal Church (TEC) to consider, after careful consultation, entry into a Companion Diocese Relationship or other covenant-based link relationship with a diocese in the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) or with an ECS-approved Bible translation project, as a means (a) to strengthen the proclamation of the Gospel in both the TEC and ECS, and (b) to further the cause of peace in Sudan. Each TEC diocese is requested to report the results of such consideration by July 1, 2010 to the Executive Council for posting on appropriate TEC websites after review by Executive Council; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request our Presiding Bishop to designate, after consultation with other interested denominations, a period of several weeks in 2010 as a Season of Prayer for peace in Sudan, where our churches are urged to include prayer for peace in Sudan in each public liturgy, and that such Season of Prayer culminate in a National Day of Prayer for peace in Sudan, including the celebration of relationships by TEC dioceses and churches with the ECS.

Note: Explanation accompanying Resolution D007 can be found on the AFRECS website: www.afrecs.org and click on ADVOCACY.



AFRECS MEMBERSHIP FORM



CONTACT INFORMATION

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City State Zip Code _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

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MEMBERSHIP TYPE

Student/Resident Alien

Individual

Organizational

FEE SCHEDULE:

- ‡ \$20 for students and resident aliens
- ‡ \$50 for individuals
- ‡ \$100 for churches or organizations with an annual budget of under \$250,000
- ‡ \$250 for churches or organizations with an annual budget of \$250,000 to \$500,000
- ‡ \$500 for churches or organizations with an annual budget over \$500,000

Membership is from January 1 - December 31 of the year in which you make your payment

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM AND YOUR PAYMENT TO: AFRECS, 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304

"AFRECS is a close and long-standing partner of the ECS in the United States, fulfilling an essential role of partner coordination, advocacy and networking in America on behalf of the Sudanese Church. It is a highly valued partner in our joint mission for Christ, and I pray it may long continue, for His glory in the USA and the Sudan."

His Grace, the Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul

"Communication is an important aspect for all of us involved with assisting the ECS in its mission and ministry. AFRECS offers a needed vehicle through its excellent newsletter, *Sudan Connections*, and by maintaining a listserve of the various partners in mission with Sudan. It is my hope that these vehicles for communication will be accepted on a broader basis as more organizations and individuals become involved with ECS."

*The Rt. Rev. Francis C. Gray
American Representative for the ECS*

“DISCERNING CHRIST IN THE GAPS OF TODAY’S SUDAN” LAMBETH PALACE SUDAN ROUNDTABLE ON AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

February 23-24, 2009

Contributed by:

Dr. Ellen F. Davis, *Duke Divinity School*

The Rev. Dr. Richard J. Jones,

Virginia Theological Seminary

Nicholas Ramsden, *International Coordinator, ECS*

Jackie Kraus, *Diocese of Chicago &*

Sudan Connections Editor

His Grace Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul originally conceived this historic Lambeth Palace Roundtable for the Episcopal Church of Sudan when he was Bishop of Renk. His vision was to bring key partners together to map out strategies for the Sudanese Church. Dr. Ellen Davis, Prof. of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke Divinity School and Coordinator of the Visiting Teachers Program for Renk Theological College, shared his vision for creating new initiatives, establishing new support networks, and deepening existing partnerships through cooperation and mutual learning.

Dr. Davis planned the agenda, working with the staff at Lambeth Palace, arranged for travel support of the representatives from the ECS, and led the Roundtable through small group discussions and reports. Archbishop Daniel Deng opened the meeting with his challenging address, “Holistic Evangelism for Real Development”. (*The complete address is published in the Spring issue of “Sudan Church Review”*).

Partners at the Roundtable were representatives of the Province of the ECS, the ECS Theological Commission, Sudan Relief and Development Agency (SUDRA), Renk Theological College, Duke and Berkeley Divinity Schools, Virginia Theological Seminary, American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS), Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), US and UK partners, Dioceses of



Virginia and Chicago, Diocese of Salisbury, Lambeth Palace, Government of South Sudan (GoSS), and the Archbishop’s Commissary in the U.S. Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, joined the Roundtable for the presentation on theological and university education.

Strategic issues of ECS development at provincial, diocesan and parish levels in today’s context over the next three to five years were the focus of this meeting -- theological and university education, agriculture, community health and nutrition, and organizational management coordination. Why focus on these areas now? They are essential components of a stable social structure. They represent aspects of the ECS’ ministry of peace, justice and reconciliation for all the peoples of South Sudan.

We came to the table to work. Working in groups, we developed recommendations for ECS action over the upcoming years, responding to priorities for the ECS, as stated by Archbishop Daniel -- retire the \$157,000 debt; acquire technical assistance, especially in the Finance Department; support for the Agricultural office, agriculture being the backbone of

"DISCERNING CHRIST IN THE GAPS OF TODAY'S SUDAN" LAMBETH PALACE SUDAN ROUNDTABLE ON AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND EDUCATION , CON'T.

the ECS; strengthen theological education to help the church rebuild the country; and replace missionary hospitals destroyed by the war.

Decisions and action points were made in plenary sessions, being guided by organizational and management coordination. The outcomes for each issue are wrapped in the gauze of a "global ecclesiological mindset" -- the true nature of Christian partnership, sharing of human resource, realities on the ground, and professionalism in today's world. Archbishop Daniel likened the future of this "new missionary mindset" or "new missionary age" to the ideal of One Church bringing technical expertise to build up a truly indigenous, interdependent ECS.

Commitments were made, expressions of support were pledged, and Archbishop Daniel blessed the group and expressed deepest gratitude on behalf of the ECS to Dr. Davis and partners of the ECS. Bishop Hilary Garang, Malakal, sent us forth with this challenge, "Due to continuous war, people have grown tired of giving to Sudan. They are reluctant to visit because they are frightened. They look to the oil fields and the build up of the army and wonder what will happen if South Sudan becomes independent. But, it is critical that we continue to stand by the side of Sudan. How can we walk this walk together?"

This historic Roundtable for the ECS at Lambeth Palace, seat of the worldwide Anglican Communion, is the first step toward walking together into our future and for sharing responsibilities among church leaders on three continents. The overall goal is to help the ECS create sustainable capacity. In the words of His Grace, Dr. Rowan Williams, "What the Roundtable really did was attempt to discern Christ in the gaps of today's Sudan, and to articulate our intentions to take a lead in filling those gaps."

Editor's note: For an overview of the discussions and decisions of the Roundtable, go to www.sudan.anglican.org/news.php.



Theological Education Working Group.



Joanna Udal and Pierce Klemmt greet Bishops Hilary Garang and Joseph Garang Atem.

WE ARE ALL CALLED -- HEAR THE CRY OF THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF SUDAN

*By Anita Sanborn
St. John's Cathedral, Denver, CO, and Board of AFRECS*

In every corner of our lovely and hurting world, there are those whose cries we cannot ignore. Some voices I hear and some you hear. Once we have recognized the ones who need us, the ones who love us, and the ones who make our hearts glad, we cannot ignore them. We are bound by faith, by love, having heard our name called.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been brutally terrorizing the people of Uganda, Congo and Sudan for many long years. At a Midnight Mass in a Congolese town near the border with Sudan, over 425 were killed. Thousands of people then fled into a camp near Ezo town in Sudan.

In January 2009, messages from several of the bishops in dioceses of South Sudan began surfacing throughout the Diaspora. The words spoke of attacks, children abducted, crops burned, elders murdered. Trauma and suffering followed in the wake of attacks by the LRA along the Sudanese border with the Congo and Uganda. Bishop John Zawo of Ezo wrote: "Today a group of LRA have crossed some 7 miles away from Ezo town heading toward Bagidi Payam which is going to cause another displacement of people...the humanitarian situation is terrible as we have not received any assistance on the ground..." In late February, Bishop Zawo wrote again: "Please we continue to face problems from the LRA...people have been shot and abducted and communication between Ezo and Yambio is about to cut off due to this insecurity...life is hard for people in Ezo."

Another voice, Bishop Wilson Kamani of Ibba, spoke: "Western Equatoria is in a very bad situation because of the increased activities of LRA. I came this morning from the bush to rush to Yambio 57 miles from Ibba to invite prayers for us in Ibba. Since Christmas up to this date the Christians in Nabanga



Photo by Constance Wilson©

and Bahamani have been sleeping in the bush. Beginning from the attacks in Maridi and Mundri, the Christians in Ibba are also sleeping in the bush. The worst is the house of the chief of Bahamani Payam was attacked yesterday at midnight and he was gunned down and later chopped to death. Christians in Nabanga and Bahamani are deserting the area. I have no means of communication or I would have updated you...."

Bishop Bismark M. Avokaya, Mundri wrote: "Thank you very much indeed for your prayers and practical assistance to enable us to cope with the plight of our people following the tragic events of the LRA....generally the situation is now calm and according to the County Commissioner who is Chairman of Security, the LRA has been pushed away from Mundri West County. However, the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are still afraid to return to their homes because of the trauma. It will take some time for everyone to fully recover from the trauma."

WE ARE ALL CALLED --
HEAR THE CRY OF THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF SUDAN, CON'T.

Will these cries from Sudan never cease? We are the Body of Christ and when one part of the body suffers, we know and hear it and, therefore, we must respond! We, who are in relationship with the Episcopal Church of Sudan, know what it is like to pick up the phone and listen to the news of the latest attack, the latest flood, the latest outbreak of cholera or meningitis. "God bless you! Send medicine. Pray! Send money? Where? How soon can we raise it? Pray! Orphans are in the bush! No food! No shelter! Fear rises like sweat off their skin. Hope rises in their hearts. God will not forget them. Through us there may be some relief. If we hear them, pray without ceasing! Their fate is our fate.

Matthew 25: "...Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn't help? He will answer them, "I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me – you failed to do it to me." (The Message)

A few days following the fourth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which brought an end to active hostilities in southern Sudan, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori issued a pastoral message to all Episcopalians urging us to: educate ourselves about Sudan; pray for Sudan; be advocates and give whatever money we could to alleviate the latest wave of LRA terror extending from Ezo in the west adjacent to the Democratic Republic of Congo as far to the east as Torit. (www.afreecs.org) and go to AFRECS Press Releases) Shortly after that, the Primates meeting in Alexandria (Egypt) also called attention to the worsening situation in Sudan in their own letter.

SAINT JOHN'S CATHEDRAL STEPPED FORWARD

In congregations throughout the US, people raised funds. In Denver, CO, the leaders of the Sudanese congregation, worshipping at Saint John's Cathedral, met with clergy and lay leaders from the Cathedral and, in the course of one weekend, raised over \$5,000 for two of the Sudanese Dioceses that had been hard-

est hit. It happened quickly and without any special event. The message was delivered and the people gave what they could. It was good to see and it was good to know that we are not experiencing "compassion fatigue". We literally are a community and the wider communion is a reality. We have brothers and sisters in Sudan.

My trip to Juba, Sudan, had been planned months before, and it was providential that I could deliver the funds into the hands of the bishops who were dealing with the heaviest LRA attacks. As a member of the AFRECS Board, I have developed relationships with leaders in the ECS over many years. Not only at our annual meetings here in the U.S., but on three previous trips to Sudan. I am familiar with the outlines of several bishops' plans for improving education, agriculture, and peace building in their communities. It was a joy to cross the dusty yard of All Saints' Cathedral in Juba and hear words of welcome from the bishops just returning from their week-long retreat in Yei. I knew that Buck Blanchard, VA, and Ret. Bishop Frank Gray, US Commissary to ECS, would be there, too, and it was a happy coincidence that our paths crossed.

The most significant learning for me is that the more we hear and respond to our call, the more we will be building the kingdom of God. I encourage you to mobilize people in your congregations.

Anita Sanborn is President of the Colorado Episcopal Foundation. Her trip to Juba, on February 16-22, 2009 had multiple missions, including introduction of the Leadership Institute of the New Sudan, a developing partnership between the University of Denver, Josef Korbel Graduate School of International Studies, Juba University and other NGOs committed to equipping leaders who will serve their communities throughout Sudan. The team also did extensive interviews with government and church leaders for a Sudanese Oral History project underwritten by Betty Wilson, a parishioner at Saint John's Cathedral.



PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING MISSION TO ECS DIOCESES IN SOUTH SUDAN

Reported to AFRECS by Buck Blanchard and Phil Darrow



In February, AFRECS members Buck Blanchard (Diocese of VA) and Phil Darrow (Diocese of Chicago), along with Robin Denney (Diocese of El Camino Real and recently appointed ECS External Agricultural Consultant, sponsored by Volunteers for Mission) visited several dioceses in South Sudan as part of a continuing effort to build relationships and foster expanded partnerships with dioceses in the U.S. Visited were Juba, Torit, Rejaf, Bor, Rokon, Lui, Mundri, Maridi, Ibba, Lainya, and Yei. Only two, Bor and Lui, have companion diocese relationships, Indianapolis and Missouri, respectively. Website development for each diocese, with photos and information, gleaned from the visits, is ongoing.

Torit in the southeast was their first destination. Bishop Balmoi talked of the struggles to provide support for the large influx of returning refugees. Because the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continued to be active in Torit for several years after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, resettlement of refugees from camps in Uganda and Kenya was delayed and has reached a peak in the last six months with the withdrawal of the LRA. People have returned

to their villages, having to start over on the basics of shelter and developing food supply, plus building schools, churches and other essential elements of a community.

Bishop Michael Lugor welcomed the team to Sunday services in Rejaf. He told them, "Never did I dream in my lifetime that visitors from the U.S. would come and pray with us in our church. I feel as though I am alive again."

The journey continued north to Bor. Bishop Nathaniel Garang, hosting a meeting of priests from all over this far-flung diocese, took time to host the team and explain the challenges and opportunities in Bor, where the majority of the population affiliates with the ECS, but where many tribal and other conflicts continue to smolder and sometimes flair. Further north, the team visited the new Diocese of Twic East, original home of Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, his wife, Deborah, Bishop Joseph Garang Atem (Renk), and the late President of the South, Dr. John Garang.

Buck and Robin traveled west from Juba into several dioceses now experiencing the terror of the LRA. Remnants of this group, led by Ugandan Joseph Kony, are attacking several villages in south Sudan, stealing supplies, kidnapping boys to train as soldiers and girls to use as concubines, senselessly killing men, women and children in their tracks. Buck wrote about sights seen along the way -- roads that the Land Rover had to think about before trying; communities starving because they are in the "gap" of time between the U.N. food runs out and their crops are ready for harvest; kids tending cattle camp with thousands of longhorns, each boy covered in the ash of dung fires to ward off flies; a community praying over the site of previous massacres committed by the LRA, asking God to forgive their enemies' sins, "for they know not what they do".

They stopped in the Diocese of Ibba, Wilson Kamani, Bishop. Ibba is a small town in Western Equatoria State, 180 miles west of Juba, a very rough 10-hour drive. It is now a refuge for 69 families who fled the town of Wowo January 22, after an attack by

PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING MISSION TO ECS DIOCESES IN SOUTH SUDAN, CON'T.

the LRA which not only killed many villagers, but then proceeded to hack up their dead bodies with machetes. Those IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons) now huddle in fear, with no intention of returning to Wowo any time soon.



Behind the church property, families had set up "house", typically under mango trees. They scrounge for food each day. They were sending the men back to Wowo during the day. While some stand guard, others collect what food they can, walking the 14 miles back to Ibba.

They stopped to visit with one family. They had few possessions, but clearly lacked pots and other utensils, plastic sheeting against the sun (and soon the rain), jerry cans to collect water -- and food. There are few NGOs (non-governmental organizations) working in the area to assist the people, although Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) resources are on the way. Bishop Wilson and his people are looking to the Episcopal Church to help. Ibba, as a diocese, has no funds.

Robin, gracefully and compassionately, led a prayer under the family's mango tree. They blessed us for coming, for "suffering the hardships of traveling to this part of Sudan". It was wrenching -- them blessing us. We told them that the Episcopal Church in the U.S. would be praying for them and would try to help. And, Buck adds, "I hope we will."

While the mission had little to offer in terms of immediate material support, they were warmly welcomed everywhere, and the offer of continuing prayers and efforts to find U.S. partners was accepted with great enthusiasm and hope. For many, it was the first time visitors from the U.S. had come to them. Speaking on behalf of the team, Phil said, "We were humbly reminded, time and again, of the critical importance, central to the mission of AFRECS, of building relationships and partnerships between the U.S. and ECS dioceses to help sustain peace and foster economic and social stability in Sudan."



DIOCESE OF MARIDI RESPONDS TO VICTIMS OF ATTACKS BY LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

A STORY OF PARTNERSHIP

By David Gough, Regional Mission Partner for CMS-Ireland Northern & Central Africa

Editor's note: David Gough informed AFRECS of this account of the displaced in Maridi and the combined efforts of Church Missionary Society-Ireland (CMS Ireland) and the Diocese of Maridi to set up an Emergency Committee to provide aid in Mangua Village following an attack by the LRA on February 20. (www.cmsireland.org)

CMS Ireland was already supporting its Global Partners in Maridi, where over 6,000 have been displaced, 56 killed, and over 50 abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgents. The Diocese of Maridi and CMS Ireland, along with GoSS staff set up an Emergency Committee to provide food, jerry cans, medicines, blankets and cooking equipment for the victims in Maridi Town. CMS Ireland supports the Diocese with funds raised for relief.

I attended the opening service of the ECS Bishops' Retreat in Yei in February, where I met Bishop Justin Badi Arama from Maridi Diocese. He gave me an update of the situation on the ground in Maridi. He told me things remain tense, and by the time I returned home from Sudan, there had been renewed activity by the LRA.

In an email message on February 20, Bishop Justin reported the latest attack, as follows: *The news I got from Maridi this morning was not good. Yesterday the LRA again attacked Mangua Village, which is 4 miles west of Maridi on the Yambio road. They killed 3 people, and the villagers also killed one of the LRA. We request your continued prayers for the situation and our Diocesan Synod scheduled for March 12 to 15.*

The brutality of life and death faced by many people in Maridi is truly horrendous. Madula, pictured above, was forced to watch on as her two children, her husband and her father were murdered by the LRA -- man's inhumanity to man. She's pictured



with her surviving baby.

Bishop Justin told me that these stories are, sadly, not uncommon, but that the local church has been able to bring some hope into the situation. Within two weeks of the LRA attacks, the church, with CMS Ireland's help, was distributing relief items to over 700 displaced families with funds raised through a "massive response to Maridi emergency appeal".

Since early January, the displaced population has increased to 1,866 families -- 10,779 people. The Bishop has committed the church to continue supporting these vulnerable people until the end of March, when he hopes that other relief organizations will be in place to continue the support.

On a recent visit to Juba, Heather Dunlop from Belfast, now working for the U.N. in Juba, informed me that the church, with support from CMS Ireland, was the first to respond to this emergency. "CMS Ireland and the church have led the way in providing much needed relief in Maridi. Sometimes international organizations are slow to respond. Thank you for all that you've done. Little did I know that my own country would be helping the situation in Maridi."

Bishop Justin sends his greetings to all those who have been faithfully praying for the people of Maridi in their current difficulties. 

SUDANESE FOREIGN MINISTER AND SPLM SECRETARY GENERAL ON PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN SUDAN WOODROW WILSON CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Photo by Constance Wilson ©

*By Fritz Gilbert,
AFRECS Board
Treasurer*

On April 1, the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., hosted an event featuring Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor Kuol and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretary General Pagan Amum Okiech. In town for meetings with the new

Administration, especially President Obama's new Special Envoy for Sudan, they spoke about implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and overall hopes for bringing about peace and reconciliation in Sudan.

The Foreign Minister led the presentation. He considers the CPA is about 70 per cent implemented, but he said that some of the most essential issues remain unresolved, and that progress lags in some of the most important areas. The National Congress Party (NCP) refuses to accept the findings of the Abyei Boundary Commission of experts, even though the CPA stipulated that their findings would be binding. This stalemate was under discussion between the NCP and the SPLM when the town of Abyei was overrun and largely destroyed by the national army and northern-backed militias. The matter has now been referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. Its decision is expected in July. The big question is whether the NCP will accept the Permanent Court's decision if it upholds experts findings.

The commission on the North-South border has thus far not yet started work. When it will be allowed to start is not known. Integration of forces has not occurred. The CPA called for mixed units comprised of forces drawn from the National Army and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Instead, units drawn solely from each side are being deployed side-by-side.

Oil revenues are being shared, but there is insufficient transparency in the process to assure that the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) is getting its fair share. The GoSS and the SPLM don't have the presence in the bodies responsible for the oil sector that they would like.

In principle, presidential and parliamentary elections are to take place in July. However, the SPLM considers that some nine laws concerning citizens' rights and related matters need to be passed before the elections. (Meanwhile, the National Unity Government (NUG) has decided that the elections will be held in February 2010.)

Concerning Darfur matters, now that President Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), some rebel groups are showing less willingness to negotiate. Demonstrations against the ICC indictment of Bashir took place only in the North. The NCP wanted the SPLM to participate in the northern demonstrations, but they refused. The NCP position on the indictment is that the Security Council should withdraw the case from the ICC, or the ICC should just cancel the indictment. The African Union's (AU) position is that the indictment should be deferred for one year to give the political actors a chance to reach an agreement. The Arab League agreed with the African Union. The SPLM agrees with the AU-Arab League position.

The expulsion of the 13 NGOs was decided without the knowledge of the Foreign Minister or the cognizance of the SPLM minister for humanitarian affairs.

SUDANESE FOREIGN MINISTER AND SPLM SECRETARY GENERAL ON PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN SUDAN
WOODROW WILSON CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C., CON'T.

Eight of the thirty ministers in the NUG are from the SPLM. The SPLM has a strong representation among the ministers of state, also. However, there has been some gerrymandering of departments under SPLM ministers to prevent unwanted SPLM influence over them.

The Secretary General reported that Sudan is threatened with disintegration if the country's political forces don't cooperate in finding solutions to the current crises that have resulted from a long pattern of conflict between the center and the country's peripheries; e.g., Darfur, South Sudan, Eastern Sudan, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. The transition to democracy and fairness that would occur through implementation of the CPA is being encumbered through forces that are fomenting crises and conflicts. The SPLM position is that Sudan must change direction by implementing not only the CPA, but also agreements aimed at resolving other conflicts and disputes affecting others. And, laws granting freedom of speech and other civil liberties need to be established. Presently, the print media are restricted to publishing only what government security service approves. People can be detained for months without

trial. This is incompatible with good democratic governance.

The Secretary General said that 21 months is about all the time that remains to bring about the needed changes. Failure will bring disorder and chaos. The way out of the current situation is based on dialogue and finding agreement on a "national project", something that failed to happen when Sudan became independent in 1956. But this approach is anathema to those who are only concerned about holding on to power. International support for implementation of the CPA is essential.

The entire discussion is available on the Woodrow Wilson Center website:
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ondemand/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.play&mediaid=8744FFEA-C847-4F56-3853AF1C0B6201B5>



PRAYER REQUEST FOR THE DIOCESE OF TORIT

Please Pray for the Diocese of Torit for the following reason.

Some bandits have emerged between Juba and Torit thereby creating insecurity on the roads. So far three civilian passengers have been killed in an ambush and one unknown armed man has been shot dead by a military passenger riding a motorcycle.

These bandits are practicing robbery.

Travel between Torit and Juba is at risk. There is fear that this may extend to the Magwi Torit road. It is especially unfortunate that these are the roads through which food is being transported to Torit.

It is therefore probable that Torit may face danger of starvation because cultivation may be halted or made difficult in these insecure areas of food production.

Pray for us please
+ Bernard



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Connecting Hopes and Gifts