

AFRECS E-Blast: December 2, 2015

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Message from Executive Director, Richard Parkins

Dear Friends,

With Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent occurring as back to back observances, certain thoughts come to mind as we continue to pray that peace will come for our friends in Sudan and South Sudan.

How does our giving thanks for our blessings and the abundance that most of us enjoy mesh with our sadness for the ongoing conflict in both Sudans and, most especially, for the tenuous nature of a recently negotiated peace in South Sudan?. There is a connection, although possibly not always recognized or expressed. Our good fortune obligates us to think of ways to share our abundance with our friends in both Sudans who struggle to be safe and free in an increasingly violent world.

Being thankful requires a response that is more than noting how better off we are than other less fortunate souls. Expressing thanksgiving can involve appreciating the ability to enter into the suffering of our friends and sharing in their journey even if it is one of unimaginable suffering. It can also include the awareness that we have of those who serve as healers and peace makers on behalf of those whose suffering we share. There is, of course, the more familiar offering that we give as we share our abundance so that our friends can be partakers of the good fortune which is ours to share. Being thankful is best expressed when we become emissaries of God's love for those whose lives, when touched, give us a clearer sense of God at work as healer and restorer. In short, thankfulness extends to giving others reasons to give thanks. .

For most of us, the relationships which we enjoy with our Sudanese sisters and brothers have enriched us. We have witnessed their courage, endurance and faithfulness because we have been welcomed into their lives - even into their suffering. Are we not thankful for friends who embrace a steadfast faith in a future of peace and justice and who allow us to stand with them in this quest? Giving thanks for these special relationships and the learnings that they provide is indeed a blessing. Having these relationships with Sudanese friends allows us to participate in their ongoing journey toward a better tomorrow. In fact, from these connections acts of discipleship are born.

As we enter Advent and the hope and expectation that come with this season, we contemplate a new journey with our friends in Sudan and South Sudan. Our feelings of sadness are real. But there are beams of light that we must capture as they shine through this gloom. Is it not uplifting to receive a newsletter from the Diocese of Wau that tells of exciting developments in that part of South Sudan? Is it not encouraging to learn of a school in Rumbek that is expanding to enroll young women as students? What about the tireless efforts of a lost boy resettled in Atlanta to support the drilling of wells in his home village where previously clean water was not accessible and where women walked miles to get water? What about plans to carry peace work into areas where acts of reconciliation are replacing the pain of conflict and displacement? The list could be extended. We wait with expectation, but waiting includes witnessing the daring acts of building and recovery that are daunting expressions of courage and faith. Gloom can overtake us if we do not have an Advent perspective.

Even as we witness such events and actions, we can also be actors in this waiting process by joining in prayer, thanksgiving, and acts of generosity on behalf of those for whose friendship we are grateful. As we say "Come Lord Jesus", let us help by being members of the welcoming party.

Faithfully,
Richard

[Click here](#) to see a news release based on the final agenda of the AFRECS conference held October 23 - 25 in Alexandria, VA.

[Click here](#) to see the latest edition of Sudan Connections. The Fall 2015 issue, edited by Jacqueline Kraus and designed by Constance Wilson, is now available.

[Click here](#) for more information regarding funds that may be available for those in Sudan/South Sudan who were harmed by violations of economic sanctions.

[Click here](#) to see a direct appeal from Bishop Moses of Wau on video: Message to the Congressional Caucus on Sudan/South Sudan, provided on Faith McDonnell's blog for The Institute on Religion and Democracy.

[Click here](#) to see a joint letter to President Obama regarding the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

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2) Food and Culture

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[CNN](#): How dogs are helping to clear Sudan's landmines

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We invite you to visit our [Website: http://www.afrecs.org/](http://www.afrecs.org/)

Ellen J. Hanckel

Editor

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If you'd like to be doing more to help address the crisis in South Sudan, please consider the following:

*Pray for peace and deep healing of the conflicts and rivalries in South Sudan.

*Join AFRECS or renew your annual membership on line at <http://www.afrecs.org/getInvolved.htm>

* If you have contacts in South Sudan and are able to get news of various parts of the country and the

church from them, keep AFRECS in the loop by replying to this email or using our main contact email address: info@afreecs.org.

* Be prepared to advocate for peacemaking with the US (or other) government, especially if attention to conflict resolution wanes.

* [Donate](#) to support the Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan's efforts to provide solace and encourage reconciliation.

* Urge others to support [AFRECS](#) as well.