

AFRECS E-Blast: December 4, 2013

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

In the Church:

Thanks for a Chance to Serve: A Message from AFRECS Executive Director Richard Parkins

Often in our thanksgiving litany, we mention a host of gifts for which we are thankful but often overlook the gift of service and the lessons learned from those whom we serve. For many members and friends of AFRECS, it is right to give thanks for the opportunity to share friendship and partnerships with our Sudanese friends, especially those of the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

As I contemplate the many years of engagement with Sudanese friends, I feel grateful to have friends whose faith is so steadfast and vibrant. I recall an early encounter with a few thousand Sudanese refugees in the Kakuma camp in northern Kenya where I was privileged to experience such incredibly spirit filled worship. I also remember during that same experience the incessant praying of my Sudanese hosts and am grateful to have encountered lives where prayer was an integral part of the daily routine. I am grateful to have known people whose faith was so triumphant when adversity was so prevalent and who sustained their lives with constant prayer. To have been exposed to such a witness of faithfulness has been a gift that continues to enrich.

I am grateful for the vivid reminders that I have of Sudanese friends who in spite of untold suffering were not defeated and who persisted in rebuilding their lives, sometimes in a new land but also in their homeland when independence finally happened. The sacrifices made to survive unimaginable hardship and the strength expressed to demonstrate the resilience of the human spirit speak to the new life that is possible,

I am grateful to Sudanese church leaders who have afforded us a chance to walk with them in sacrificial service to their people even when resources were scant and obstacles seemingly insurmountable.

As milestone events in the history of Sudan and South Sudan invited us to be advocates for those causes that promoted their peace and safety, it has been a gift to be a proxy voice for them as they attempted to assert their need for greater recognition from global partners in their long and arduous quest for peace and safety.

I believe that many join me in giving thanks for the chance to work on behalf of our Sudanese friends because our various expressions of service have deepened our own faith. The privileged of service is indeed something for which we might give heartfelt thanks as we recite our litany of thanks this season.

Richard Parkins

ECS Diocesan Newsletter

The Diocese of Wau has just published the [December edition](#) of its quarterly newsletter, which is full of interesting news and encouragement.

ECS Provincial Meeting

The Provincial Standing Committee of the Episcopal Church of Sudan met last week in Bor. The standing committee, which consists of the Houses of Laity, Clergy, and Bishops, issued a [report](#) that changes the name of the province to the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSSS); deplores conflicts, unrest, and crises in the two countries and applauds aid and progress; and reiterates the stance of the province on same-sex relationships, urging the archbishop to sign the Anglican Communion Covenant.

Appeal from the Diocese of EZO

Dear Friends,

Kindly see a request from Bishop John Zawo of the Diocese of EZO (below). If any of our readers can respond to his appeal, kindly indicate your interest directly to Bishop Zawo using his email address Kjohnzawo@gmail.com or his mobile [+211 918 504 217](tel:+211918504217). Hopefully, some in our network can offer assistance in support of the needs noted by Bishop Zawo. If responding, kindly indicate to AFRECS that a response has been made.

Thanks,
Richard Parkins

Writing to a number of Christian individuals and entities, Bishop John says he is "wondering whether we can set up some kind of link between our Diocese office with your good offices to allow your office source information for us concerning reliable non governmental organizations ready to supply us with the hereafter mentioned used items for a Christian fee, to help our work in South Sudan.

"USED BICYCLES, USED HOSPITAL EQUIPMENTS, USED SPORTS EQUIPMENTS, USED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, USED OFFICE ELECTRONICS, USED CLOTHES FOR MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, USED FOOTWEAR AND OTHER ITEMS THAT CAN BE OF USE TO THE COMMUNITIES OF A NEW BABY BORN COUNTRY LIKE SOUTH SUDAN.

"I will be grateful if you could tell me if you think this is a possibility, and if you have any ideas as to how it might work."

In politics -- the two Sudans:

Abyei

The UN Security Council has voted to renew the mandate of UNISFA, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, leaving UN peacekeepers in the Abyei area through May of 2014. The [UN News Centre](#) and [Voice of America](#) offer takes on the decision.

Meanwhile, delegations from Sudan and South Sudan have been meeting to discuss [security arrangements](#) for the Abyei area, but they disagree on acceptance of the African Union's proposed zero line from which to demarcate a demilitarized zone.

Returnees Still Stranded

The IOM (International Organisation for Migration) says some 19,000 people of South Sudanese origin are still [stranded in Sudan](#) and suffering, unable to return to South Sudan. The organization is asking for \$10.5 million to assist this vulnerable population.

Sudan Sending Flood Aid to South Sudan

A shipment of [two thousand tons of corn](#), out of five thousand promised, is on its way from Sudan to South Sudan to provide relief to victims of recent flooding.

In politics -- Sudan:

Sudan: War in the East?

A [report](#) from the International Crisis Group suggests that conditions in eastern Sudan may easily lead to war with the government; however, the government of Sudan [denies the validity](#) of the International Crisis Group's report.

A Show of Force

Thousands of Sudanese [security troops](#) marched through the streets of Khartoum and Omdurman this week to send a message to would-be rebel groups and coalitions of opposition parties.

In politics -- South Sudan:

Special Envoy's Travel

Ambassador Donald Booth, the US Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, is traveling to Juba today to attend the South Sudan Investment Conference. The State Department's [press release](#) says that "he will also meet with senior leadership from the Government of South Sudan and

members of civil society in order to discuss issues including economic development, peace and security, human rights and good governance." *The Sudan Tribune* has [more](#).

Jonglei

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation has a new [analysis](#) of the situation in Jonglei. It is available for free download.

South Sudan's First Oil Refinery

The [Bentiu oil refinery](#), with which Russia is helping, is slated to begin construction before the end of this year.

PRAY: Pray for peace in and between Sudan and South Sudan. Pray for the leaders and people of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan.

GIVE: As you wrap up your charitable giving for 2013, remember that 100 percent of any [donations to AFRECS](#) go to carefully vetted projects in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan.