

AFRECS E-Blast: May 29, 2013

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

### **In the church**

#### **A Message from AFRECS Executive Director Richard Parkins DEATH IS ALIVE**

A couple of Saturdays ago, I was part of a project at my parish, St Alban's in Washington, DC, where I was busy making bones from clay. This strange endeavor was part of the ONE MILLION BONES project designed to call the public's attention in as dramatic a way as possible to the millions who have been annihilated through acts of genocide through the years and those who remain in the path of genocidal acts in various parts of the world .

While the extermination of six million Jews or the horrors of Rwanda come to mind, to name only a couple that lurk in the annals of history, my thoughts were about those in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan who continue to be victims of relentless bombardment by the government of Sudan. Those whose lives are not snuffed out by bombs face the prospect of starvation as food aid continues to be blocked by a hostile government unmoved by pleas of the international community or any sense of compassion for their own people. This tragedy is compounded by its seeming intractability, aided in part by a less than robust outcry from the international community. It appears that the international community is surrounded by so many accounts of human tragedy that it is able to overlook the plight that the people of the Nuba Mountains are experiencing now.

The Million Bones project will result in one million bones being assembled on the Mall in Washington, with each bone reminding those who encounter the project of those lost to genocide and urge them to speak for those in Sudan, South Sudan, the Republic of the Congo, Burma, and Somalia who remain at risk of being consumed by acts of genocide.

A couple of years ago, I was at a viewing of a film on genocide that highlighted not just atrocities of the past but those that could occur in countries where the ingredients for genocide are present and where misguided and ruthless politicians could tip the scales in favor of the elimination of some group whose presence could be depicted as a possible threat to another and thus worthy of extermination. At that time, I did not expect that the people of the Nuba Mountains - no strangers to threats of extermination - would still be targets of some of the most persistent attempts at elimination in recent history. Our nation and those of us who believe in the God-given sanctity of all life cannot be complicit in this tragedy by our silence. Most especially, our brothers and sisters in Sudan need to know that we lend our voices in prayer and protest to stop these egregious assaults that a calloused government in Khartoum continues to commit against its people.

Richard Parkins

PS To learn more about the One Million Bones project at [www.onemillionbones.org](http://www.onemillionbones.org) or call [809 310 9901](tel:8093109901).

### **In South Sudan**

United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is launching a program in which South Sudanese youth leaders come to Washington D.C. to be in residence at USIP for approximately four months. The program is designed to contribute to young leaders' development by giving them opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and confidence that they can use for years to come. [See here](#) for more information regarding this worthwhile program. Then follow the link to the USIP website for further information, including eligibility requirements.

"The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has recaptured Boma town from the David Yau Yau led rebel group in the volatile Jonglei state, an official has announced," as reported in [Gurtong](#) news on 5/19/13. Also see this [Washington Post](#) article on the same topic.

### **In Sudan**

[See here](#) for the letter to Secretary of State John Kerry from the four co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Sudan and South Sudan. AFRECS was one of the signatories prompting this letter as was Crisis Action whose Washington Director, Catherine Read, provided the following summary.

The letter was sent ahead of Kerry's trip to the African Union (AU) Summit in Addis Ababa last weekend and, in particular, called on Kerry to: 1) Use his visit to Addis Ababa to engage constructively with the AU and other actors on the continent to promote the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the problems in Sudan; 2) Use US leverage to support the implementation of agreements already laid out by the AU High-level Implementation Panel and backed by the UN Security Council; 3) Support a comprehensive US strategy to end serious human rights violations in Sudan, require genuine accountability, support Sudanese democratic reforms, international isolation of the government of Sudan and reinvigorate a genuinely sustainable peace effort that can end Sudan's crises.

In a press release dated 5/22/13, a coalition of over 120 civil society organizations from across Africa and the Middle East issued a stark warning about the conflict in Sudan, currently affecting over 4.4m people, calling on the African Union to 'make history' by supporting a new, bolder and comprehensive approach to peace. [See here](#) for the full release entitled, "50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of African unity a chance to make history on Sudan."

[See here](#) for this Huffington Post article making a plea for President Obama to activate his Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) and focus on the situations in Sudan, North Korea and Syria. The article, posted on 5/20/13, is written by Rabbi Abraham Cooper and co-authored by Professor Samuel Totten.

Here is a [Recorded Briefing](#) by Yasir Arman, Secretary General, SPLM-N made last week. It gives an update on the humanitarian and political situations as well as recent military developments in Sudan. This material is distributed by Esther Sprague on behalf of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

### **In Both Sudans**

"The invasion of Abyei: two years of more agony" is the topic of this commentary recently published in the [Sudan Tribune](#), dealing with the death of Paramount Chief Kuol Deng. The author, Luka Biong Deng, is a fellow at Harvard Kennedy School.

[See here](#) for The Niles, a news website that presents itself this way: "Sudan Votes has changed its name to reflect the most integral link between Sudan and South Sudan, namely, the Nile rivers. Bringing together journalists from both countries, The Niles attempts to bridge rifts, break down barriers and recognize the shared cultural treasures of both Sudans. From inside Sudan and South Sudan."

### **News from AFRECS**

The AFRECS National Conference is scheduled for October 18-20, 2013 in Chicago at Seabury Western seminary. Please save the dates of Friday, October 18th through Sunday October 20th and plan to join us in Chicago.

### **Pray**

Dear Friends,

It is with profound sadness that I share with you news of the passing of Joseph Taban who served as the head of Bishop Gwynne College in Juba. Joseph was guiding the college with great skill and faithfulness, and his passing is truly a loss for BGC and the ECS. His death is the result of a cancer and the complications that followed surgery. He died in Nairobi after having returned home to Juba, only to return to Nairobi where he passed away. He will be mourned by all who knew him. May his soul rest in peace and may God's embrace surround his wife Esperanza, their children, and Joseph's mother. They all remain in our prayers.  
Faithfully in Christ, Richard Parkins

A tribute on behalf of AFRECS to Joseph Taban prepared by Board Members Rick Houghton and Ellen Hanckel (also a Visiting Teacher at BGC) reads, in part: ... (W)e mourn the loss of Principal Joseph Taban Lasuba. Please express our deepest condolences to his wife, Esperanza, and their children as well as the community of Bishop Gwynne College.

The AFRECS community weeps that Joseph's wisdom and spirit are no longer physically present with us in this world. At the same time we rejoice that he is with the Lord in life everlasting.

Memories of his vision and passion for BGC fill the empty spaces inside of us right now. May we also ponder the exponential influence he will have on South Sudan, his beloved country, as his inspired graduates grow into their full potential. Joseph was a catalyst for good and his work will continue to flower through the generations.

South Sudan has lost a leader and I have lost a friend. I count my time serving as a visiting teacher at Bishop Gwynne College under Joseph's leadership as a powerful blessing in my life. I will always remember his personal attention to detail and his depth of caring for students, teachers and staff alike. These qualities touched the school in its formative stages and they touched all of us who knew him. May we live up to his inspiring example while we strive to carry on.

In closing, I am reminded that his last email to me was signed with the poignant salutation: "Working, working, Joseph+". Now he can rest in peace. Well done, my friend. Well done, my fellow servant in Christ. Amen.

On Sunday, 5/26, Bishop Anthony Poggo of the diocese of Kajo-Keji wrote: "This morning I was informed of the death of Rev Canon Dr Oliver Meru Duku which occurred this morning in Nairobi where he was undergoing medical treatment. Arrangements (were) made to transport the body from Nairobi to Juba and on to Kajo-Keji for burial. Canon Dr Duku was the former Principal of Bishop Alison Theological College in Arua. Pray for the family, relatives, friends and Christians of the ECS." Dr Duku was in his late 70's.

Give thanks for the restart of the Healing, Peace & Reconciliation Conference in South Sudan under the leadership of Episcopal Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul with the support of Roman Catholic Bishop Paride Taban. Pray for the strength of the leaders, the members and for this process to proceed towards healing, peace & reconciliation for all concerned in the new nation of South Sudan.

Pray for an overwhelming response to the advocacy efforts detailed in these E-Blasts. Pray especially for the cessation of indiscriminate bombing in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan and for the people of Yida, as well as other refugee camps, located in Unity State of South Sudan.

### **Urge**

Prayerfully consider going to the [Enough Project Advocacy event](#) in DC, Monday, June 10. See [March 20th E-Blast](#) for more information.

### **Give**

Give a modest amount today to further the work of AFRECS by becoming a member. ([See here for how to join.](#))

## Learn

Learn more by reviewing the last [E-Blast: May 15th](#) and by going to the [AFRECS home page](#).

In Christ, with thanks for your efforts and prayers for peace,  
Ellen J. Hanckel, Editor