

AFRECS E-Blast: June 11, 2014

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Message from AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins

The Other Story

As we continue our prayers and advocacy for peace in South Sudan, we are understandably preoccupied with the horrific violence that has brought untold suffering in Bor, Bentiu, and Malakal. Nevertheless, we must realize that the conflict has been most seriously felt in about 30% of South Sudan, with much of the country existing normally. This is not to suggest that our sense of urgency and deep concern for the current crisis is not warranted; it surely is. It is important, however, not to overlook that much of South Sudan continues to grapple with problems of education, food security, and health care. In short, the development challenges that have plagued much of South Sudan before the events of December 15th, 2013 still require our prayers and attention.

Being peacemakers means not only responding to the horrors of conflict but also building a sense of security and well-being for those whose struggle continues. Without our prayers and support, these situations could become fertile ground for future conflicts. We, as friends of South Sudan, can do both - we can invest deeply in doing whatever we can to bring peace to war ravaged regions of the country while vigorously pressing forward with the unfinished business of helping our friends recover from the oppression and poverty emanating from the neglect and upheaval of years ago. This plea goes not only to those of us who partner with South Sudan and our church friends there but government agencies who may have been less engaged in development work in South Sudan either because of a preoccupation with the current crisis or a belief that South Sudan's future is too unsettled to pursue development. Being indifferent to the 70 percent or so of the country that remains peaceful would be a mistake.

Another possible casualty of our preoccupation with the current conflict in South Sudan is the ongoing crisis in Sudan - particularly in Khartoum where Christians contend with a troubling and insecure future and in Darfur where the situation remains bleak and violence continues. We must also remind ourselves that those in the Nuba Mountains still experience the bombing and devastation that has become common place for that region. Their struggle must continue to be ours.

This admonition is offered not to take away from the deep pain that we feel for the victims of South Sudan's recent conflict. It is meant to encourage us to be responsive, as so many of us have been, to the needs of many sisters and brothers in all parts of South Sudan. It is also meant to remind us of those parts of Sudan for which peace and security have been so illusive. Our prayer agenda needs to include both.

Faithfully,

Richard Parkins

An article posted on the 'Mail & Guardian' website, gives the reader a look into the tragic reality of one of the violent events referred to in the opening message. Follow this link, [Malakal: Slaughter on sacred ground](#), to read the story by Andrew Brown, subtitled, 'A priest tells of the bloodshed in Malakal, South Sudan, and of a daring escape from its cathedral.'

[An open letter to the people of South Sudan from Episcopal Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul](#) details the platform and emerging peace process in the new nation. He also issues a strong appeal for peace.

[This open letter written by Catholic Bishop Macram Max Gassis, Bishop Emeritus of El Obeid](#), is an appeal to mediation issued to the leaders of the South Sudan conflict.

The [Sudan Tribune](#) recently published a letter appealing for peace by Episcopal Bishop of Wau, Moses Deng.

This [UNHCR document reports on the current refugee situation](#) in South Sudan.

This [letter from Citizens for Peace and Justice \(CPJ\)](#) gives information about the organization and voices their deep concern with the manner in which civil society representation in the peace talks was determined at last week's symposium.

Thank you to our readers for your interest, your prayers, and your support.
Ellen J. Hanckel
Editor

If you have received this eblast in a forwarded message, you may [sign up here](#) to subscribe. Then you will receive them from AFRECS on a regular bi-weekly schedule.

PRAY FOR PEACE AND DEEP HEALING OF THE CONFLICTS AND RIVALRIES IN SOUTH SUDAN.

PARTNER, URGE, GIVE

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

* 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.

* Pay attention to the evolving events and be prepared to advocate for peacemaking with the US (or other) government, especially if attention to conflict resolution wanes.

* Give to provide relief for internally displaced persons and others whose resources are compromised by the fighting and instability. One hundred percent of [donations to AFRECS](#) go to ECSS&S entities that can provide direct help to the people most in need.