

AFRECS E-Blast: July 9, 2014

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Message from AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins

A Modest Gesture - Great Results

As the ongoing crisis in South Sudan continues to engage our thoughts and prayers, the dangerously unsettled situation in the Nuba Mountains continues with much of the area besieged by Khartoum's relentless bombing. Nevertheless, in the Diocese of Kadugli where our brother in Christ, Andudu Adam Elnail, courageously leads his people, the church endures and grows. Recently, we received an update from the Reverend Yusef Ali, the principal of [Korkel Theological School](#), informing us of the results of a grant of \$7000 made by AFRECS to the Diocese of Kadugli. The purpose of the grant was to sustain and expand the training of ministers to serve those remaining in this dangerous area. The principal's message was a testimony to the resilience of the church and the faithfulness of its people.

The report was a reminder of the difficulties faced by those who choose to be God's faithful servants in this desperate part of the world. The grant from AFRECS meant that all of the teachers received their salaries - something that does not always happen. The faculty was enlarged to allow for an increase in student enrollment and for the wives of pastors to be trained in basic hygiene and pastoral care giving. Students and faculty had sufficient food to participate in school for the full term, not having to interrupt their education to return home mid term for food. There are now funds to allow one of the students to have occasional internet access at a site requiring a four hour journey. The ability of this school to operate keeps the presence of Christ alive in a place where His presence is so sorely needed.

This reflection is not so much to laud the work of AFRECS but rather to remind us all of the commitment of God's servants at a time and in a place where God's presence is sorely needed and where modest gifts can restore hope and sustain faith. It is so easy to be overwhelmed by the horrors of war and the daunting statistics of suffering that we may feel despair and hopelessness about how we can be agents of recovery. The account from Pastor Yousef Ali tells us that there are ways to respond that make a difference and where our far away friends can embrace us as partners in mission with thanksgiving.

Faithfully,
Richard Parkins

Editor's note:

This AFRECS E-Blast happens to coincide with the third anniversary of Independence for the new nation of South Sudan, the 193rd member of the United Nations. Today, July 9th, still marks that occasion, but on a much more somber note than in the past. The hostilities that have taken place over more than six months have taken their toll on the lives of the people. An estimated ten thousand have been killed and an estimated one and a half million have been displaced, either internally or externally. Whether they live in the country - perhaps in a UN camp - or in a refugee camp in a neighboring country, their living conditions are overcrowded and their lives are interrupted in ways that are difficult for many of us to imagine. As it now stands, the country is at risk for wide-spread famine.

On this third Independence Day, may we continue to hold the people of South Sudan in our prayers. May we continue to hold out hope for their future and take appropriate action where we can.

Follow this link, [Enough Project Email](#), to see the complete cover letter that is now posted on the AFRECS website. Written by Akshaya Kumar, it offers, in part, a new report entitled 'Janjaweed Reincarnate.' A brief excerpt of the letter follows:

"... (M)y colleague Omer Ismail and I just finished an in-depth [report](#) on Sudan's Rapid Support Forces, who we've dubbed the Janjaweed Reincarnate. We're committed to raising the profile of their resurgent campaign against Sudan's civilians. Already, the New York Times' Jeffrey Gettleman carried an [exclusive preview](#) of our research earlier this week and highlighted our unique use of satellite imagery and photos from RSF's own Facebook page to tell the story of this new force's atrocity crimes. Additionally, last week my colleague John Prendergast joined George Clooney in writing about the appalling scale of violence in Sudan in an [oped for VICE](#)."

[A Bloomberg article](#) posted today details a multi-million dollar sale of arms to South Sudan by China.

In a joint press release from Juba dated yesterday, [UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#) are stepping up joint missions to reach desperate people in remote areas of South Sudan where the number of children at risk of death from malnutrition-related causes has increased dramatically and a hunger catastrophe is looming.

A comprehensive article about the US foreign policy towards Africa was printed in the New York Times on June 15th. [Follow this link](#) to read 'Can General Linder's Special Operations Forces Stop the Next Terrorist Threat'. The author is Eliza Griswold.

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

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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@afrecs.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.