

AFRECS E-Blast: September 16, 2015

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Messages from AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins

### **Please Pray Without Ceasing**

Dear Friends,

If one were to pray without ceasing, it would be a good idea to look to the **pleas of our friends in South Sudan** as causes worth incessant prayers.

First, we all are concerned that the **IGAD peace agreement hold in spite of the qualified endorsement that President Salva Kiir has given to its terms**. In spite of the reservations, the army has been asked by the President to cease fighting unless fired upon. The insurgents have likewise been asked to cease military action. **Our prayer must be that restraint on both sides will be exercised** and that the death and destruction that has brought such suffering to our friends in South Sudan will end. This conflict of nearly two years has brought havoc to much of South Sudan. **Let there be peace in the name of the Prince of Peace.**

Prayers have also been requested by the **Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission of the Episcopal Church** as they undertake **a pilot peace and reconciliation exercise** in Bor County. The pilot is to commence on September 21st in Upper Nile State. That will be the test area for translating the learning that members of various faith communities have gained as a result of **their journey to Rwanda**. There church partners helped them to understand what practices and experiences brought Rwanda from the pain of genocide to a day where tribal differences no longer overwhelmed the peace and stability of the country. The pilot project will hopefully bring peace and healing to a part of South Sudan where the anguish of conflict has been deeply felt. **Let our prayers be with the team who will guide the training**. May their efforts be a blessing to those with whom they work. And may this undertaking give wisdom and insight into what the church can and must do as a powerful instrument of peace and healing for her people.

**Our friends in South Sudan ask for our prayers** knowing that we are dependable partners in prayer. I trust that those parishes and dioceses in which you worship will **be mindful of these requests and ask for God's protection and guidance** as our sisters and brothers try to usher in a time of peace and reconciliation to replace months of pain and anguish.

Please consider joining AFRECS on October 23-25 as we join with several church leaders from the ECSSS in our bond of friendship and as **partners in peacemaking and reconciliation**.

Peace,

Richard

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**Please Join Us for the AFRECS 10th Anniversary Conference**

Dear Friends,

I encourage you to join us for the **10th Anniversary conference** hosted by **AFRECS**. As we gather at **St Paul's Parish, Alexandria, VA** on Friday, **October 23rd through Sunday, October 25th**, we will examine how we can deepen and expand our partnership with the people of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan. This is especially important at this time when the eyes of so many are on sustaining the peace that both sides agreed to two weeks ago. Most of us have relationships with friends in South Sudan and are praying fervently that the peace that has faltered on so many previous occasions will endure. We know that many of our church friends are working to make peace a reality.

We are looking forward to having **several bishops from the ECSSS** with us to guide our understanding of what lies ahead for the church as the hard work of peace and reconciliation moves forward. **Bishop Samuel Peni** who heads the Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission will keynote our conference. Additional reflections and observations will be offered by **Bishop Joseph Garang Atem** of Renk and **Bishop Moses Deng Bol** of Wao who will give us a perspective on what needs to happen to establish a culture of peace in their part of South Sudan. Also, we are hoping that **Bishop Andudu Adam Elnail** from the Nuba Mountains will remind us of the ongoing suffering being experienced by the Diocese of Kadugli. This promises to be a wonderful occasion to receive first-hand information about life in South Sudan as recovery takes hold.

We are seeking ways in which we can **enrich our ties** to those in South Sudan. We seek to **be more connected** among ourselves as we witness as partners in prayer and service. We **hope to walk with our South Sudanese friends** to a better tomorrow.

Because we are meeting near **Washington, DC**, we will be **engaging policy makers** in both the administration and Congress in discussions about our participation in the future of South Sudan. Also, we shall hear from **experts** based in centers where persons are trained as practitioners **in peace and reconciliation work**.

**Overall**, our time together will allow us to deepen our witness and understanding of how we can express solidarity with our Sudanese friends while they press forward toward a peaceful and secure tomorrow.

Please consult the [AFRECS website](#) for information about the conference and feel free to contact me ( [richardparkins1@gmail.com](mailto:richardparkins1@gmail.com) ) with questions about our time together.

Faithfully in Christ,

Richard

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**THE CUTOFF DATE** FOR REGISTERING FOR THE CONFERENCE RATE AT THE HAMPTON INN, RICHMOND HIGHWAY ALEXANDRIA, VA IS **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST** AND AT THE HILTON HOTEL IN OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA THE DATE IS **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH**. VISIT THE [AFRECS WEBSITE](#) FOR CONFERENCE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES.

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**Tribute to Carolyn Weaver Mackey, founding AFRECS Board Member, and friend**

The AFRECS Community lost a colleague and friend on August 26th with the passing of Carolyn Mackey. Visitation and services were held on September 10th & 11th. See her obituary [here](#) and the full tribute that Richard Parkins offered at her funeral service [here](#). The following is an excerpt from that tribute:

"As a founding member of AFRECS, Carolyn was key in giving life to one of a handful of faith based groups who formed solid partnerships with our Sudanese sisters and brothers. These formations occurred as our Sudanese friends were struggling to assert themselves as a free and independent nation. The church with whom Carolyn helped us to connect was in 2005 - emerging from a horrific conflict of more than 50 years. The Church had been vital to sustaining its people during that struggle. Carolyn joined a few others to nurture a friendship between Christians in this country with those in a far off African land at a time when their voice was seeking to be heard.

"Carolyn was generous with her talent and treasure, steadfast in her prayers and faithful in her encouragement of those who labored to lift up the Sudanese church as a compassionate and reliable guide to its people. Carolyn's gift to Sudanese in both South Sudan and Sudan was the fostering of friendships which continue to nurture and bless both sides of this network of partnerships. Carolyn's leadership helped to define what AFRECS is all about. What Carolyn helped sponsor a decade ago now serves as a much needed link between two parts of our Communion, especially as once again the safety and well-being of our Sudanese friends is being challenged.

"I have been frequently blessed with words of encouragement as I have tried to lead AFRECS especially at times when little attention was given to the over two million Episcopalians whose lives were lived in desperation and pain. We were all blessed by Carolyn's embrace as she gave vitality to our mission to Sudanese Christians, recognizing that regardless of one's theological perspective, we were all bonded as Christians who cared about our Sudanese friends - friends who were at risk but whose courage and faithfulness deserved companions.

"It is the quiet, steadfast faith of people like Carolyn Mackay who keep hope alive in others in those places where the light of Christ might be the only illumination that there is. Carolyn exemplified in as bold a manner as possible what it means to connect one's work and ministry with one's faith.

"We give thanks for the life of Carolyn Mackay and for the witness to Christ that it represents."

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## South Sudan

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Read the above-cited **speech of President Salva Kiir** to the People of South Sudan, distributed at a September 15th press conference and now posted on the [AFRECS website](#). The headline for this [New York Times](#) article by Reuters (9/15/15) reads: "President Urges South Sudan to Unite to Implement Peace Deal."

This [Sudan Tribune](#) article (9/15/15) details partnership assurance by UN secretary general in implementation of South Sudan peace agreement. "In a letter addressed to the South Sudan's former vice president, Riek Machar, the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki Moon, has commended the opposition's leadership for signing the peace agreement to end the 20-month long civil war in the country, assuring that the world body will work closely with the parties in implementing the deal."

This [Voice of America](#) article (9/14/15) reports from the Intergovernmental Agency on Development (IGAD) that a 'critical' South Sudanese Security Demilitarization Workshop is beginning in Addis Ababa. "...a spokesman for regional bloc IGAD, which spent nearly two years brokering the peace deal, said negotiators for President Salva Kiir's government, for Riek Machar's opposition movement, for the former political detainees and other stakeholders in South Sudan's peace process, are attending the workshops. The key topics of discussion at the workshops are the drawdown of forces, the establishment of demilitarized zones, cantonment areas for troops from both sides, and the size of security forces that will be deployed in four towns, including the capital, Juba, after they are demilitarized." ... The IGAD spokesman, Haile Michael, said "the workshops in Addis are the 'most critical phase of negotiations' because if the workshop participants cannot agree on security arrangements and demilitarization of towns that have been flashpoints in South Sudan's 20-month conflict, bringing lasting peace to the country will be difficult, if not impossible." Everything that is being discussed at the workshops is included in the peace deal brokered by IGAD and signed last month by all sides, VOA reports.

From the [BBC](#): South Sudan Sanctions 'blocked by Russia & Angola' (9/16/15) "The US had proposed a travel ban and asset freeze on army chief Paul Malong and rebel general Johnson Olony for continuing to fuel conflict. The Russian ambassador to the UN said sanctions might aggravate the situation, AP news agency reports. Fighting has continued in South Sudan despite last month's peace deal."

From the [Anglican Communion News Service](#): South Sudan churches are providing safe spaces for dialogue (9/15/15)

From the [Anglican Communion News Service](#): Standing Committee Issues Statement on South Sudan (9/3/15)

From [Radio Tamazuj](#): Women's rep deplores continuing clashes in parts of South Sudan (9/14/15)

From [South Sudanese News Agency](#): South Sudanese Plan Conference to Unite Diaspora for Peace (9/14/15)

From [Gurtong](#): South Sudanese in Diaspora to Disseminate Messages of Peace Through Social Network (9/5/15)

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**Both South Sudan & Sudan**

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Following up on a topic included in the summer eblasts, the [Sudan Tribune](#) reported this story on August 6th: **Khartoum court acquits South Sudanese Pastors accused of espionage.**

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**Sudan & Region**

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Read the latest posting from [Amnesty International](#): Sudan: People's lives in South Kordofan do matter.

This [Sudan Tribune](#) article (9/15/15) reports that "(t)he rebel umbrella Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) announced its readiness to sign a six-month cessation of hostilities with the Sudanese government and called on the latter to engage in genuine and comprehensive dialogue." See the SRF [Road Map](#) & [Final Statement](#) released on September 15th after the meeting in Paris and now posted on the AFRECS website.

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Thank you to our readers for your interest, your prayers, and your support.

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

Ellen J. Hanckel

Editor

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PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE. LEARN.

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.afreecs.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](mailto: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.