

AFRECS E-Blast: September 30, 2015

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Messages from AFRECS Executive Director, Richard Parkins

An Appeal for Prophets

Dear Friends,

We continue to pray that the fragile peace that was agreed to by the leaders of the warring factions who have victimized much of South Sudan will hold. Sadly the suffering continues in some parts of South Sudan as we receive word from Bishop Stephen Dokolo of upheaval that has hit the Diocese of Lui and word from Bishop Samuel Peni of trouble in Nzara. However, we have also received word of the successful completion of a peace mission to Bor diocese carried out by a team of the Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission of the ECSSS. Peacemakers press forward even as purveyors of violence inflict more destruction upon a nation that will soon approach its second year of civil war.

As I invariably do, when I listen to the lessons being read and preached upon on Sunday, I seek messages that help me connect with our concern for what is happening in South Sudan. This Sunday I heard a call for recruiting more peacemakers for South Sudan - possibly even more prophets to speak of the truth and power of reconciliation. From the book of Numbers we hear Moses wish that all the people of the Lord might be prophets even as some fussed about the legitimacy of some who assumed the mantle of prophets. In the Gospel message, Jesus speaks of including as many as possible ambassadors of love and healing as he tells John that "who is not against us is for us". Both texts convey messages that would warm the heart of any who are recruiting apostles for peace and reconciliation.

Please consider this a commercial for the upcoming AFREC conference (October 23-25) where we shall gather as friends of our Sudanese brothers and sisters and hear messages from leaders of the ECSSS telling their stories and asking for our prayers and support. As we reflect upon the words of bishops from Renk, the Nuba Mountains, Wau and Nzara, we shall enlarge our understanding of journeys of faithfulness and hopefully deepen our desire to journey with these "prophets" as they serve their people. Those who have responded to earlier calls to ministry in South Sudan will tell of the fruits of their work. Our collective prayers will remind us that God accompanies all of us as we remain committed to the restoration of a peaceful South Sudan.

Our coming together to learn, pray and worship might be seen as a reaffirmation of our friendship with the church in South Sudan and a commitment to prayerful engagement with the cause of peace and reconciliation at a time when a precarious peace struggles to become the basis of a genuine peace.

What emerges as an essential truth in both Old and New Testament readings was the acceptance and embrace of all who will work to bring about God's kingdom. For us in AFRECS, our conference and our ongoing work seeks to be the place where those who care about South Sudan can gather and "would that the Lord bestow his spirit on (us) all".

Peace,
Richard

AFRECS CONFERENCE REMINDER

Dear Friends,

I hope that you will register for the **AFRECS conference** which occurs from **October 23rd to October 25th** at **St Paul's Parish in Alexandria, VA**.

PLEASE REGISTER ASAP for the conference if you have not already done so. Early registration **helps us with our planning**. We are fortunate to have generous support for our conference by **friends at St Paul's**, but in order for them to serve us better, having a count of the number of guests would help. Likewise, **friends at Christ Church** will host our dinner of the 25th evening. Again, **having a count of the number of guests to expect is needed**.

We shall soon have an **agenda** to share with you. We will be blessed with the presence of **four bishops from the ECSSS** as well as a **priest who has led a recent peace effort in Bor diocese** who can report on that effort. Joining us also will be **US policy makers** who are intimately connected with the work of our Government in South Sudan. Of course, **your presence as a participant in our shared ministry to South Sudan counts for much of what will make this conference worthwhile**.

Check our website ([AFRECS website](#)) for conference registration materials. Register either on line or by mail. Feel free to contact me (richardparkins1@gmail.com) with questions about our time together.

Faithfully,

Richard

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Global

New York Times: *Rallying Global Support, Obama Pledges Larger U.S. Role in Peacekeeping Missions*. Posted 9/28/15. Written by Somini Sengupta.

"UNITED NATIONS — [President Obama](#) announced Monday that the United States would bolster its support for [United Nations](#) peacekeeping missions worldwide, as he rallied more than 50 countries to promise to expand their contributions, amounting to around 40,000 new soldiers and police officers. Leading a summit meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations [General Assembly](#), Mr. Obama said the United States would provide more logistical support...; build airfields or base camps...; and train

peacekeepers to counter improvised explosive devices, which are a common danger and often prove fatal for peacekeepers...."

..."Some European countries said they would once more put boots on the ground under the United Nations' blue helmets; among them, Britain pledged engineers and other specialists for the mission in South Sudan."

South Sudan

[New York Times](#): *South Sudan President, Rebel Leader Trade Blame for Fighting.*

"UNITED NATIONS — South Sudan's president and rebel leader on Tuesday blamed each other for breaking the country's cease-fire, although President Salva Kiir told a high-level U.N. meeting that his commitment to the peace deal is "unwavering." U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged Kiir to uphold his promise: "I hope you will not betray and disappoint us." Kiir addressed the U.N. meeting via videoconference after annoying the international community last year by skipping a similar meeting. Rebel leader Riek Machar attended in person as diplomats from several countries urged both sides to calm a conflict that has killed thousands and displaced 2 million. Kiir said he will respect the peace deal: "I know there are people who doubt my commitment ... I will prove the doubting Thomases wrong." ...

[New York Times](#): *South Sudan Army Leaves Juba as Peace Agreement Calls For: Commander*

"JUBA — South Sudan's army is moving its forces out of the country's capital, in accordance with a peace agreement signed with rebel forces aimed at ending a conflict that erupted in December 2013, an army commander said. Under the peace agreement signed by President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar in August, the capital, Juba, and some other centers will be demilitarized. Shifting the army, the SPLA, out of Juba marks a step toward implementing the agreement, although both sides have been accused by international mediators of violating a permanent ceasefire that was put in place after the pact was signed." ...

[New York Times](#): *In South Sudan a Fragile Peace Allows Food Deliveries.*

"KOCH, South Sudan — Sarah Nyanchar fled her home in South Sudan's war-torn Unity state months ago, but with fighting continuing despite a peace deal signed last month she still doesn't feel safe enough to return and begin rebuilding her life. "The peace did not reach here," Nyanchar told The Associated Press Friday, after venturing from her hiding place in a rural forest to Koch town to get [food aid](#). "We heard that there would be no fighting here," she said, adding that she has heard clashes since the peace accord was signed at the end of August." ...

..."In Koch, Nyanchar said she won't wait to see if this lull in fighting will last. Clutching a yellow token which entitles her to a sack of World Food Program sorghum, she said she'd head for the uncertain bush as soon as she received her food because she did not feel safe with the soldiers in town."

[South Sudan News Agency](#): *UK to send peacekeeping troops to South Sudan.* "The government of the United Kingdom is ready to deploy troops to South Sudan and Somalia as part of United Nations peacekeeping missions in volatile regions, UN diplomatic sources have confirmed. UK's Prime Minister, David Cameron, is expected to announce and outline for his government decision to send troops to South Sudan and Somalia on Monday, September 28, 2015, at the United Nations." ...

[AllAfrica posted this recent Radio France Internationale \(RFI\) report](#): *UK troops to South Sudan Raise Fresh Hopes of an End to Conflict*. "Britain is to send up to 300 troops to South Sudan to try and bring the desperate security situation under control. Fighting continues to spread despite a peace deal being signed last month. The United Nations warns that the situation has gotten worse since the August agreement. For Britain's Prime minister David Cameron, the purpose of military deployment is to curb illegal migration from countries like South Sudan to Britain. That can only happen if there is stability, which is why the UK Premier has faced off opposition from Labour back benchers to push ahead with his plans. Downing Street however insists that the 300 troops will not play a front-line role in South Sudan's conflict but would help with training and logistics support, it said on Monday ahead of a UN General Assembly summit."...

On 9/28/15, the [Sudan Tribune](#) reported: *The caretaker governor of South Sudan's Western Equatoria state has defended a decision behind imposition of curfew in Yambio, capital of the state*. "Governor Patrick Raphael Zamoï explained during an exclusive interview with *Sudan Tribune* on Monday that he had a two-pronged plan for keeping the peace: a voluntary curfew and an information blackout." ... "We want to know who these people who kill people are. We want to know at what hours they are active. We want to know how they move, what or who they target." Is it shops or government institutions? (We want to know) who or what, exactly, they are up to, Zamoï said. "To get information about these banditry activities, there must be a coordinated strategy and proper planned security system in place," he said. This article also details a leadership meeting planned to gather all the county secretaries of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) from all the ten counties along with county commissioners, traditional leaders, youth and women groups. The meeting, held in Yambio, capital of the state, will be an occasion for important decisions and resolutions to be made about how to manage the affairs of the area. This will chart a way forward in creating a peaceful, stable and conducive environment for developmental activities in the state, the article concludes, as well as peaceful coexistence between and among communities,

[Acuil Malith Banggol](#), an official from the SPLM's national secretariat, received a Master of Arts in Transformational Leadership & Change (MATLC) at the University of Greenwich on March 11, 2014. The topic for his thesis was: 'Role of Traditional Authority Leadership in Taking Towns to Rural Peoples.' Follow [this link](#) to access his recently published paper: 'Merit of Community-Based Societies & Community Leadership in South Sudan: A Course to Realize SPLM's Vision & the IGAD Plus Peace Agreement 2015.

[theguardian](#): Conflict & development

South Sudan: Women & girls raped as 'wages' for government-allied fighters. Posted 9/28/15.

"Testimony reveals systematic abduction and abuse of thousands of women & girls as young as 12, held in "rape camps" across Unity state." Written by Hannah McNeish in Bentiu.

Taken from [theguardian](#) Global development website: This website is funded by support provided, in part, by the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#). Content is editorially independent and its purpose is to focus on global development, with particular reference to the millennium development goals and their transition into the sustainable development goals from 2015.

[theguardian](#): Global development

The harsh reality of life in South Sudan's Bentiu camp - in pictures. Posted 7/3/15. "The UN compound in Bentiu offers refuge to 70,000 people who have fled the violence of South Sudan's civil war. Many are children who have witnessed or experienced abuse - they are forced to cope with the trauma & endure harsh conditions within the camp." Photos by Jacob Zocherman

[Huffington Post](#): *Coffee and Peacebuilding in South Sudan (Part II)* by John Predergast, Founding Director of the Enough Project. "Can coffee production contribute to peace in a war-torn African country? On its face, that would seem like a facile link. But sustainable peace is not won solely through negotiations and foreign aid. Responsible private investment in support of the diversification of the economy of a country struggling for peace is also an important pillar of peacebuilding."

[WLKY](#)

This clip from a local TV station in Louisville, KY shows one of the 'Lost Boys' sharing his experiences with eighth grade middle school students, who are reading the book, **Long Walk to Water**. The authors, Solomon John & Abraham Auele, offer this take-away message: "*No matter the difficult life you've been through, you can still find something to do and make your life mean something.*"

Both South Sudan & Sudan

[Radio Tamazuj](#): *Sudan and South Sudan: 5 key political stories*: "Your weekly roundup from Radio Tamazuj of key political stories from Sudan and South Sudan."

[Lam Tungwar calls for peace implementation in Unity state](#) (Radio Tamazuj, 25 September 2015) - The Minister of Youth and Culture in Unity State, Lam Tungwar Kueigwong, says that it is time for officials to "speak to the people" of the state and the military encouraging them to embrace peace and accept implementation of the new peace agreement.

[Pagan Amum says he was threatened by government](#) (Radio Tamazuj, 21 September 2015) - The Secretary-General of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Pagan Amum, says that he and the exiled 'Group of Ten' that he represents will not return to Juba yet because they have been threatened by the government and by Salva Kiir personally.

[Machar: 'I will return to Juba in December'](#) (Radio Tamazuj, 21 September 2015) - South Sudan's armed opposition leader Riek Machar says he will return to Juba to assume his position as First-Vice President in December this year.

[S Sudan foreign minister: 'Our reservations must be addressed'](#) (Radio Tamazuj, 21 September 2015) - Foreign Minister of South Sudan Barnaba Marial Benjamin says that the reservations raised by the government against the recent peace agreement must be addressed or else implementation of the deal will be 'very difficult'.

[South Sudan VP to attend UN meeting in New York instead of President Kiir](#) (Radio Tamazuj, 21 September 2015) - South Sudan's President Salva Kiir will not attend the United Nations General Assembly meeting this month in New York, government spokesperson Michael Makuei Lueth said.

Sudan & Region

[Sudan Tribune](#): *Sudan to take "appropriate action" against two western diplomats*. "A senior Sudanese diplomat said the foreign ministry is making arrangements to take the "appropriate action" against two

western diplomats for expressing support to the families of the victims of the deadly protests of September 2013."...

Al Arabiya News: *One South African killed and four others wounded in peace keeping force in Darfur.* "One South African peacekeeper was killed and four wounded when a convoy they were escorting came under fire in Sudan's Darfur region, the U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission said on Monday. The attack took place on Sunday near Mellit, in North Darfur state, and resulted in an exchange of fire, the mission said. U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon condemned the attack and called on the Sudanese authorities to investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice as soon as possible, his spokesman said."...

Voice of America: *UN Condemns Killing of Peacekeeper in Sudan's Darfur Region.* "The United Nations Security Council condemned an attack Sunday in the Darfur region of Sudan that killed one peacekeeper and injured four others.

Unidentified gunmen fired on the peacekeepers as they escorted a logistics convoy near the town of Mellit in North Darfur. One of the injured was in serious condition, the U.N. said. A Security Council statement called on Sudan to "swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice."...

CBS News: *Ask documentary photographer Brian Sokol why he started taking photos of refugees, and he'll give you a simple answer: "They're real people. They're not numbers."*

"Sokol has been traveling to countries in the Middle East and Africa since 2012, documenting the journeys of refugees fleeing war and poverty in search of a better life. He started a project called "The Most Important Thing," in which he takes a photo of the people he meets with the most important object they brought with them when they left home. The project includes refugees from Syria, Sudan, Central African Republic, Mali, and Angola so far.

"The Most Important Thing" exhibit is currently on display at **Half King Photo Series** in New York City through November 8th, 2015. Sokol also plans to travel to Europe to document the current wave of refugees desperately seeking safety and asylum."

Thank you to our readers for your interest, your prayers, and your support.
We invite you to visit our **Website:** <http://www.afrecs.org/>
Ellen J. Hanckel
Editor

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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.

* 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.
