

SUDAN CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2019

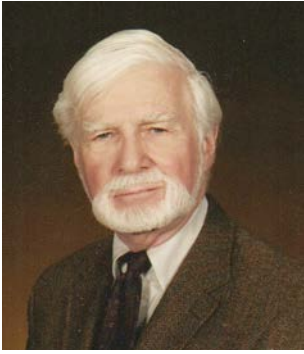


VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1



AFRECS - AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE SUDANS

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AFRECS



It has been my joy to take part in the teleconferences of the seven leaders of the South Sudanese Diaspora Network for Reconciliation and Peace.

For over a year, despite background noise and time zones, the persistence of Sarah Cleto Rial, Robert Lobung, Helen Achol Abyei, Sandra Tombe, Isaac Gang, Elizabeth Andrea, and Noel Kulang has reinforced an impression formed during my long experience with refugees resettled in the U.S. and Canada. People from Sudan and South Sudan may settle in a new land, but they continue to care deeply about their first homeland.

I hope many of you will respond to their invitation and experience the stretching and solidarity of the conference they have planned for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. Richard Parkins".

C. Richard Parkins

CONFERENCE: SOUTH SUDANESE DIASPORA NETWORK FOR RECONCILIATION AND PEACE



Grace Episcopal Church
123 W. Washington Street, Lexington, Virginia, USA Tel. 540-463-4981
Friday, August 30, 11:00 a.m. – Sunday, September 1, 5:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Dr. Jacqueline Wilson, former Senior Program Officer at U. S. Institute of Peace's Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, author of "The Religious Landscape of South Sudan".

Other speakers and co-facilitators: Justin Badi Arama, Archbishop of Episcopal Church of South Sudan; Joseph Z. Bilal, project director, Episcopal University of South Sudan; Helen Achol Abyei, author of Tribalism No More; Frederick L. Houghton, Kwathi Akol Ajawin, Thon Moses Chol – chaplains; John Thon Majok, "Nation-Building and Mother Tongue Literacy"; Dane F. Smith, Jr., retired U. S. ambassador; and Will Ferroggiaro, author of "Social Media and Conflict in South Sudan: a lexicon of hate speech terms."

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SUDAN CONNECTIONS

CONNECTING HOPES AND GIFTS

SUMMER 2019

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans (AFRECS) is a 501(c)3 organization of U.S. churches, non-governmental organizations, and individuals who care deeply about the struggles of the Sudanese people.

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COVER:

Photo of Archbishop of South Sudan
Joseph Badi Arama



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AN EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF SOUTH SUDAN, JUSTIN BADI ARAMA

Peace be with you (John 21: 1-21)

My dear Christians and all citizens of South Sudan, peace be with you.

Easter celebration this year should be to us the celebration of hope for lasting peace in our beloved country South Sudan. Easter is about a start of a new life after death.

On the first day of resurrection, the word of peace was the first gift of the risen Lord to His discouraged and fearful disciples. He said to them: "Peace be with you". And to Mary, who was worried and crying, He asked: "Woman, why are you crying?"



Indeed, as South Sudanese, we find ourselves in the same situations of worries and crying as Mary did due to the prolonged suffering caused to us by the senseless war in our country.

But the good news is that, at Easter all our tears and fears are turned to joy and hope for peace. Indeed, this is the time for peace since we already have the revitalised peace agreement as our roadmap for peace.

We have continued to pray for peace. Last week at the Vatican, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, humbled himself to kiss the feet of our leaders as a sign of commissioning them to go the way of peace. The choice is now for us and our leaders whether to choose the path of peace or to choose the path of war and bring continued suffering on ourselves.

Today, in the name of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, I encourage you all to choose peace and put an end to war.

Let us all turn away from violence and abandon conflict.



Bishop Arama with his wife,
Joyce Solomon Eremadowa Modi

We should all forgive our past and be reconciled to one another.

Blessed are the peace makers, for they will be called the children of God
(Matthew 5: 9).

I wish you all happy Easter celebration.

O God, bless South Sudan!

The Most Revd Justin Badi Arama

NON-VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING

By Dane F. Smith, Jr.



This conference assumes that the churches of South Sudan – pastors, women leaders, youth leaders – with the support of Christians in the Diaspora and others of good will represent the best hope for lasting peace in the country.

Faith-Based Peacebuilding

We have been examining the potential for faith-based peacebuilding in South Sudan. So let's review for a moment what faith-based peacebuilding is. Faith-based peacebuilding is rooted in the religious traditions of its adherents. So there is Christian peacebuilding and Muslim peacebuilding and Jewish peacebuilding and Buddhist peacebuilding. In fact, all the world's great religious traditions have approaches to peacebuilding. What we are talking about in Sudan is primarily Christian peacebuilding. It has several elements:

- The task of peacebuilding begins with trauma healing. The trauma has affected virtually the entire population. Without healing, reconciliation and lasting peace are very unlikely. Traumatized people feel humiliated. They are often filled with rage. They are often determined to seek revenge. They find it hard to work together. Peace building begins with trauma healing, and other aspects of peacebuilding must be imbedded in trauma healing.
- A second element of peacebuilding is advocacy. Christian leaders – pastors, Mothers' Union leaders, preachers, youth leaders, bishops – should be making statements, talking to political leaders, talking to militia leaders, writing letters, addressing petitions, and preaching sermons aimed at promoting effective peacebuilding. The medium of advocacy is words, both written and spoken. Advocacy by church leaders is going on. Faith-based peacebuilding requires respect for and promotion of basic human rights.
- I think you are familiar with the South Sudan Council of Churches' Plan of Action for Peace. It has three objectives:
 - Advocacy to change the popular narrative from revenge to reconciliation.
 - Creating neutral forums where the parties to conflict can meet under positive conditions to negotiate peace. "Creating neutral forums" is what many thinkers on peacebuilding would call "providing good offices" – that is bringing the parties to the conflict together on neutral grounds to negotiate. Sometimes good offices can lead to a more formal process, i.e., mediation, when those neutral persons work to frame the agreement between the parties.
 - The third element of the SSCC plan is "leveraging religious values of forgiveness and reconciliation" to move the peace process forward. The Secretary-General of the Council told me that the objective of the discussion in neutral forums is to leverage those values of forgiveness and reconciliation toward concrete and effective negotiation of peace proposals. Community conversations have begun, led by trained peace mobilizers.

Non-Violent Direct Action

- I especially want to invite you to spend time thinking about the use of non-violent direct action to move the peace process ahead. Let me summarize non-violent direct action quickly in five points:
 1. Basically, it is action – not words. Advocacy uses words. Non-violent activists use action.
 2. When is it applicable? It is most relevant in situations of asymmetric power. That is, a situation in which one side has the political power and the military power to enforce its will and the other side, usually consisting of the common people, has little political influence and is unarmed.
 3. What can you do to seek change, if you don't possess the military force to resist, or have decided, for reasons of faith, not to use violent means of resistance? A few examples: you can march in protest with signs and banners, you can boycott, refusing to sell products to the other side or refusing to buy its products. You can halt work by calling a strike.
 4. To be effective, non-violent direct action requires careful strategic planning. Spontaneous action without analysis and preparation is usually not successful and may worsen the situation.
 5. Direct action should be combined, whenever possible, with peacebuilding dialogue and negotiation.

A Menu of NVDA Choices

What choices do non-violent activists have? The possibilities for direct action are almost infinite. The choice should be made to maximize publicity and effectiveness and to minimize the risk of a violent reaction. Here are four common types of action:

- *Marches* are the most common type of direct action. Marchers carry signs and banners that publicize their demands. Marches should follow a clearly defined route to ensure that people stay together. Marshals are desirable to ensure that marchers maintain discipline and don't resort to violence (e.g., stone throwing) if halted by the authorities.
- *Strikes and general strikes.* Strikes by workers or farmers can be effective. A general strike shutting down the commercial activities of a town may have even more impact. In western Cameroon those parties seeking more autonomy for their English-speaking regions shut down commercial activity in their state capitals, Bamenda and Buea, in early 2017. In French this action is called *ville morte* or "dead city".
- *Sit-ins at military headquarters.* A church or group of churches could arrange to march to a nearby military headquarters to seek a meeting with the commander to discuss peace. If a meeting is refused, those seeking the meeting could agree to remain until a meeting takes place. Those "sitting in" need to avoid showing hostility toward the military, but rather patience and persistence. Group prayer may be helpful. Leaders of such action may face arrest. If so, they should not resist.
- *Street theater.* Groups can put together skits or plays in public places which illustrate their demand for justice. Such productions should use humor and pageantry to make their presentations entertaining and draw spectators.ⁱ

NVDA is Not Inconsistent with Peacebuilding

To some, non-violent direct action and peacebuilding might seem mutually inconsistent. Boycotts, strikes, and mass demonstrations are sometimes criticized as escalating conflict. Most would agree we should advocate for peace and promote channels for dialogue. But some would also say that in the end, Christians should submit to the authorities.

The Scriptural Witness. Such persons might cite the words of Romans 13:1, "Every person must submit to the authorities in power, for all authority comes from God, and the existing authorities are instituted by him." I Peter 2 says, "Submit yourselves... to every human authority, whether the emperor ... or to governors." But against those few sentences there are many more that support civil disobedience as part of faithful witness. Remember that the Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's orders to kill the Israelite baby boys. Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers in the Temple portico. Those money changers were profaning the holy place, but they were not acting in violation of law. Peter and Paul preached that Jesus, not the Roman emperor, was the Son of God, and were imprisoned for doing so. Ephesians Chapter 6 says that "our struggle is ... against the authorities and powers of this dark age." Today, as Christians, we must surely be engaged in the struggle against the evils of this dark present age.

What Paul meant by submitting to the authorities was not to obey government and military leaders at all times and places. What he meant instead was, "Pay your taxes and obey the law in normal circumstances. But you may oppose evil policies and atrocities and injustice by the authorities." He also meant that you should be prepared, if necessary, to suffer the consequences.ⁱⁱ

In fact, advocacy and dialogue can work together with non-violent direct action. In his famous 1963 "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. responded to criticism from persons of good will. They said that the direct action taken by the movement he led was untimely and provocative and should be set aside in favor of dialogue. He replied,

Why direct action? Why sit-ins and marches? Isn't negotiation a better path? You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.

In fact, relying on advocacy and dialogue alone in cases where there are profound power asymmetries and massive injustice can seem futile. If the authorities are not listening, you have to get their attention. Non-violent direct action is an attention getter.

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REST IN PEACE, FATHER OJA GAFOUR

January 1, 1945 – June 29, 2019



The Reverend Oja Gafour was born in Sillara, Nuba Mountains, Sudan, to Ando 'la Gafour and Tuna Katkadfour, seventh-born of eight children. He is survived by two sons, Ando 'la Gafour and Lejjy Gafour. He died peacefully in Denver, Colorado surrounded by his family and friends.

Oja earned bachelor's degrees from the University of Saskatchewan and Emmanuel College, Saskatchewan in 1981, a master's from the University of Toronto, and in 1999 a Ph.D. from the University of Wales, Lampeter, UK. He published "My Father the Spirit-Priest: Religion and Social Organization" in 1989. He was ordained priest Aug. 28, 2010, and served the Sudanese community at St. John's Cathedral, Denver, CO.

Oja believed that if you worked hard, treated every human being decently and according to the will of God, you will have a decent life on earth and in eternity. He was an advocate for social justice in Sudan. President Nimeiry and other national leaders of Sudan were hostile towards him. After he traveled to Canada, the government of Sudan cancelled his passport and banned him from returning to Sudan.

His grandniece Sonya Ibrahim said in his eulogy, "Fr. Oja has fulfilled the promise of his call to the service of the people of God with integrity and humility. My family, as well as other communities, will sorely miss him. At the same time, we all have faith in God that gives us strength and joy to know the soul of Fr. Oja is with God. He was a pious and devoted priest in his tasks and services to the communities he loved to serve. There are no words to express his influence, compassion and servitude in our lives!"

A VISIT TO BOR AND IBBA

By Buck Blanchard, Missioner for Outreach and Mission, Diocese of Colorado

When I visited South Sudan this past spring, it had been three years since my last visit – the longest I had been away since I first went in 2007. I first took a brief trip to Bor to meet the leaders of Project Education South Sudan, a women's education program supported by a number of parishes and individuals in my new home state of Colorado. I next flew with Bishop Wilson Kamani to the Diocese of Ibba. With all the rough news concerning South Sudan over the last several years, I did not expect to see much progress in Ibba. I was wrong.

I attended Palm Sunday services in Ibba's recently completed – and magnificent – cathedral. Although I was told it holds 1,500 people, I estimated 2,000 in attendance, every one of them waving palm fronds and singing. The people of Ibba built the cathedral with no outside help, including making all 99,000 bricks that it took for construction.

During my stay, we traveled to several remote villages, including to one accompanied by the county commissioner, whose bodyguards kept stopping to try to shoot guinea fowl with their automatic rifles (no luck). The main thread of each visit was of a community hungry for education, but nowhere near the number of qualified teachers that they need. They ask for our prayers to help their children find good teachers.

Each night after dinner, we would sit with whoever showed up and talk. Ibba does not have cell service, and the only (intermittent) internet is at the diocesan office, so our evening discussions were completely uninterrupted by folks checking their phones. We were left to talk and listen to one another. It was precious, and it felt just right. After several evenings, I commented to the group that Ibba felt like my second home. "Yes, it is," they said, "it is."





South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), P. O BOX 209 Juba, South Sudan

Nairobi, 19th July 2018

PEACE NOW!

STATEMENT BY THE HEADS OF CHURCHES OF SOUTH SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SSCC)

"I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war." (Psalms 120: 7).

We, the Heads of Churches of the South Sudan Council Churches (SSCC), met in Nairobi, Kenya on July 17-19, 2018, to pray, listen to the voice God and reflect on the recent developments in our country.

We as the Shepherds of the People of South Sudan continue to mourn and grieve for our country. Our hearts pain for the suffering, tired, hungry flock and for our leaders with all their fears, anger and trauma as they struggle both across our nation, the region and the world. The winds of violence and conflict have continued to obscure our road to light and peace, while the international community remains discouraged and frustrated by the absence of peace.

We have taken note of recent developments in which IGAD has mandated the countries of the region to support the peace process that has resulted in the signing of permanent ceasefire agreement known as the Khartoum Agreement in June 2018, and the Entebbe peace proposal on Power sharing. We thank and commend our good neighbours for these vital initiatives of peacemaking in our country. But we still express strong and serious concerns over untimely emphasis on the technical aspects of the agreement before trust has even been built between the parties. The parties themselves have acknowledged that the entire implementation of the agreement will be dependant on how trust can be built both now and in the long term.

On this note, we thank the IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan Dr. Ismail WAIS, for his courageous and exemplary role in heeding the call of the parties during High Level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa to invite the CHURCH to facilitate them in closed-door healing and dialogue, and encourage genuine deliberation to narrow the gaps in their hearts.

It is well known that the CHURCH has historically played a key moral and spiritual role in healing and mediation at various points in our history to stop bloodshed and make peace. The approach of truth telling or 'vomiting out the truth' is a necessity to bringing people together again. While the efforts of the Church this year in May did not significantly narrow the technical gaps on security and governance, yet the parties met face-to-face for the first time in several years. The parties have expressed willingness for the CHURCH to facilitate space for genuine dialogue.

Despite the many efforts of the region and international community, the tragic dimensions of the problems of South Sudan need an immediate and lasting cessation of hostilities and nothing less! This senseless war has increased the suffering in the country, frustrated development and the fulfillment of justice on which true peace depends. Peace is the call from the hearts of all the people of South Sudan. We are tired of war, violent conflicts of interest and we are urgently calling for all communities of South Sudan to shun tribalism, and all kinds of fragmentation that inhibit from attaining true nationalism, durable unity and working together for comprehensive peace and genuine reconciliation. Our people in the IDP camps, the Protection of Civilian sites, the refugee camps and in the diaspora need to engage one another, embrace the possibility of peace and walk the long journey towards healing, peace and prosperity in our beloved land.

We, the Heads of Churches of South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), have been present to our people in the refugee camps and the Protection of Civilian sites to encourage them to remain faithful and hopeful; we have sought

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to meet our leaders and encourage them through prayer into dialogue. We have facilitated and mediated within neutral forums and community conversations. We have spoken out for peace and justice, we have called for our leaders to be accountable and we pledge to work continually for peace in our country, encouraging all of our people to hold on to faith and hope, trusting wholeheartedly that peace will return to our country sooner rather than later. We believe and therefore we speak!

Without genuine dialogue, healing and substantial trust building amongst the Parties, the political will needed for the successful implementation of a peace agreement will be lacking, and will void all efforts. The CHURCH reiterates to all stakeholders that peace is not an event, nor a document, but a process requiring commitment and sacrifice. Since the war began in December 2013, several agreements have been signed but never fully implemented, and as a result our country remains in despair. The people of South Sudan will no longer accept false promises.

We resolved to stand, and work together for peace through the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) Action Plan for Peace (APP). We continue to express our prophetic voice, as we listen and are guided by the Holy Spirit. We reach out to all the Leaders without seeking popularity or favor, acting to remind them of their duties to protect life. We seek to pursue a vision that will bring our people out of the desert of this violence to an oasis of peace where all the fragmented people of South Sudan will seek a vibrant and cohesive nation that is ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION and ONE SOUTH SUDAN.

OH GOD BLESS SOUTH SUDAN

Rt. Rev. Moderator Peter GAI LUAL MARROW
Chairman, South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), JUBA.

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Fr. James OYET LATANSIO
General Secretary, South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC).



EPISCOPAL PEACEMAKERS IN SOUTH SUDAN

By The Rev. Stephen M. Mou, National Coordinator, Justice Peace and Reconciliation Commission, ECSS



We are still struggling with peace building.

Our ECSS Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission (JPRC) works with others in a Re-Constituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) seeking to revitalize the peace agreement of 2015.

JPRC, in conjunction with RJMEC, recently brought at least 50 religious leaders for a workshop on understanding the Revitalized Peace Agreement, progress made, and challenges facing the agreement's implementation. However, on Friday 19th July 2019, the two Greater Lakes communities of Pachong and Maleng Agok fought, leaving at least ten people dead and seven others wounded. Recently another person was killed there. The fighting, which occurred between Pakam and Rup communities in May, has now extended to the Pachong and Maleng Agok communities within Greater Lakes.

The field Coordinator for JPRC in Greater Lakes reported that the situation remains tense and another worse fight may erupt any time. He calls for ECSS/JPRC to step up quick intervention to defuse the tension. JPRC may quickly gather traditional chiefs, youth representatives, women representatives, and religious leaders representative to a safer locations for dialogue and discuss a strategic plan on how they would want Greater Lakes issues to be handled, and to address issues of revenge killings.

Note from Buck Blanchard: Episcopal Relief and Development, the relief arm of The Episcopal Church in the U.S., works through SUDRA (Sudan Development and Relief Agency) The JPRC can receive financial support for its peacemaking work through ECSS SUDRA.

FEAR GOD, NOT EACH OTHER

By The Rev. James Dak Rut

I don't think fear is a sin, but in another way it is. The fears the Devil stirs up in us lead to death.

The fear of the Lord leads us to life (*Proverbs 19:2*).

Fear keeps me from walking into busy street, not touching a power line, not to kill someone, and not to break the Ten Commandments. Fear tells me not to harm myself or not to commit a crime. In the Bible, fear is more often associated with God than the things of this life.

Brothers and Sisters, fear of the Lord makes us turn away from evil temptations. Remember the story of Joseph, sold as a slave to an Egyptian named Potiphar. One day the wife of his master tried to engage Joseph to have relationship with him. Joseph rejected that temptation and said, "How can I do this wickedness and sin against my God?"

Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of those who can kill the physical body. Fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (*Matthew 10:28*). The only things we need to fear is the things offending against the Lord, who has rescued us from the all others fears.

The fear of self interest has been a big challenging in our generation today. Let me remind you how, when Jesus was born, King Herod slaughtered every male infant in Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Jesus, because the story said he will be the king. Herod didn't think about how long the baby Jesus will grow up to become a king, and he didn't think of how old he will be when the baby Jesus will grow up to become a king. That is the act of Devil Spirit.

The same thing happened December 15, 2013, in our country South Sudan. Our President tried to kill the people who announce themselves to contest for the presidency in 2015. Our president didn't think of how many years left for the election to come. That is a Devil Spirit act which we don't need in our country South Sudan in this critical time.

Brothers and Sisters that is a definition of good fears and bad fears. Fearing the things we all follow in this world leading us to hell, and fearing our God leading us to life.

Excerpt from a sermon preached December 18, 2016 by the chair of the Nuer Christian Mission Network, Omaha NE
james.rut.rev@wisynod.org

CROSSING BRIDGES TOGETHER

By Linda Abwa, Partnership Coordinator, Church Mission Society - Ireland

The idea for the Oct. 14-28, 2018 “Crossing Bridges Together” peace and reconciliation conference in Arua, Uganda came from a request from our partners in South Sudan. When I asked Bishop Hilary Adebale Luete of the Diocese of Yei in April what he wanted from a peace and reconciliation conference, he said, “I want to be able to tell our story and for people to listen”.



So we took on the task of putting together a week-long program that would give space for our partner dioceses in South Sudan, along with representatives from the dioceses of Down & Dromore and Connor in Northern Ireland, as well the diocese of Albany in the U.S., to be heard -- and to learn from each other. South Sudanese participants included bishops, their staff people, youth leaders, and Mother's Union leaders.

Frustration, pain and suffering were often the topics of discussion. Archbishop Justin Badi's opening line to the conference was: “I was born in war, grew up in war, and still live in war”. He spoke of witnessing killings, the abject poverty of displaced people, and the suffering of people in refugee camps, which he described as “beyond expression”.

And yet, there was throughout an overwhelming sense of dignified passion and hope that the church can still work effectively for change. Bishop Hilary told the conference, “Jesus still cares for us; His providence and grace are with us. God will never leave us. We will pray and continue praying until something good happens”.

Bishop Emmanuel Murye Modi, Diocese of Kajo Keji, spoke passionately of the power of faith to interrupt conflict. “If you take away arms by forced disarmament, they will find another weapon. It is minds and hearts that need to be disarmed. This is what Jesus can do!”

We discussed the quiet diplomacy of the church -- pastors assigned to go without fanfare to difficult areas and meet the perpetrators of violence in the hope of promoting peace; pastors as the only people who find courage to respectfully remove bodies from the street, hoping, but never sure, that wearing their vestments might protect them from gunfire.

Interwoven in the calls to action were always stories of suffering, many of them experiences of the bishops and their families, but always the conference turned back to the hope held in faith. Archbishop Justin confirmed what the conversations were suggesting to me: “The light in the darkness of South Sudan is the church. You have come at the right time, and God has brought you...”

FROM ALBANY TO MARIDI

By The Rev. Donna Steckline, Christ Church, Gilbertsville NY, Diocese of Albany



Following the “Crossing Bridges Together” conference, the Irish and American teams went out into the Rhino Refugee Camps in Uganda to worship on Sunday, to give messages of hope and encouragement, and to pray with our brothers and sisters experiencing separation from their homeland in South Sudan. Over the next few days, the team returned to listen, love, and pray with the communities and remind them that we still stand in fervent prayer alongside them. We listened to many of their concerns and heard their stories of escape and subsistence in the camps. Their fellowship and joy in the Lord are amazingly strong. There are many difficulties that were brought back to the teams' respective communities to pray about and consider ways to help.

In the spring of 2019, the Steckline family from the Albany Diocese returned briefly to Rhino Camp to reconnect with some of the leaders there. Leaders and youth who made considerable impressions on the team were encouraged to seek further education. Some computers were given with this end in mind. This most recent visit revealed to us that our prayer concerns have been considered and answered. More stations to acquire clean water were in place, as well as more centralized locations for distribution of rations.

There is much to be done. We cannot do it all, but we can each do something. Lord, what will you have us do?

Ed. Note: Albany's first visit to Maridi was in 2001. The Diocese of Albany hopes to return to Maridi in May 2020, with Dioceses of Down & Dromore and CMS-Ireland.

CHALLENGES BEFORE THE EPISCOPAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH SUDAN



Dr. Joseph Zebedayo Bilal

Almost half of the population in South Sudan are displaced from their homes and living either as refugees in neighboring countries or displaced persons in camps inside South Sudan. With the peace agreement now signed, there will be a mass movement of people returning to their homes from neighboring countries and IDP camps. This may bring other social challenges. Trauma counseling and support is needed apart from other humanitarian needs. People with expertise within this area are needed to help the returnees heal from their wounds.

There had been, and still is in South Sudan, the case of ethnic pluralism. Intricate intra-communal balance has more often created conflicts between communities and clans. Last August and September, the Mundari cattle keepers attacked the Yangwara farmers in Dolo and Rokon counties killing eighteen innocent civilians, including women and children, displacing more than one hundred families.

The killing caused high tensions between the two communities. The church leadership of both Terekaka and Rokon Dioceses initiated local community dialogue and reconciliation supported by the Bible Society. Our Project Director, Rev. Canon Dr. Joseph Bilal, is tasked with the responsibility of facilitating the dialogue. He chaired meetings with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNAMISS), church leadership, and community leaders. They agree to hold a three-day conference with over one hundred people in Juba.

We are thankful to Dr. Bilal for his hard work on peace building and reconciliation, while continuing to assemble the components of a new Episcopal University of South Sudan. These components include ECSSSUP (Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan University Partnership), a UK-registered charity that has been supporting the formation and development of the University at what was the old Bishop Gwynne College in Juba. A three-day conference, facilitated by Justice Africa, has considered how the Church could support the peace process, locally, nationally and internationally, and the ongoing role of the church Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

There was also a second conference that looked at the detail of setting up the new University, which is being formed by the Federation of five of the existing theological colleges (with the possibility of others joining later). Governance structures were agreed, issues of harmonization of syllabi and fees discussed, and the issue of quality control and especially the role of the senate in maintaining standard

A number of the South Sudan Archbishops attended, along with the principals of the five colleges, academics, and a high court judge. The proceedings were chaired by the Primate, Archbishop Justin Badi. Two of us were there to represent the U.K. support group. The culmination came with the Service of Validation, confirming the existence of the new University. The letter ratifying this from the Ministry of Higher Education should come any day now.

Excerpted from: EPISCOPAL UNIVERSITY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, Sept- Oct 2018, No. 6 and the Diocese of Salisbury. For further information: <https://www.ecsssup.org>

INTERNAL PROVINCES AND THEIR DIOCESES AND AREA DIOCESES - AS AT APRIL 2019



1. Diocese of Juba (Archbishop & Primate's See)

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2. Internal Province of Western Equatoria

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Diocese of Nzara

Vacant

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3. Internal Province of Eastern Bahr el Ghazal

Diocese of Rumbek

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3. Internal Province of Eastern Bahr el Ghazal (cont)

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4. Internal Province of Jonglei

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5. Internal Province of Upper Nile

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UNITED THANK OFFERING GRANT HELPS ADD CLASSROOMS IN NZARA

By Ray Gaebler, Diocese of Iowa

South Sudan became the world's newest country in 2011. During the long struggle for independence, the school system collapsed. A whole generation of children was being lost without an education. Nzara was a brand new diocese. The first bishop, The Rt. Rev. Samuel Enosa Peni, convened a strategic planning committee that set education as a high priority. St. Timothy's Pre- and Primary School began with 36 children. There were no school buildings and no trained teachers. Ugandan teachers were hired and volunteer parents helped where they could. It was a modest beginning. Within five years there were 900 students, and the school ranked fourth in the State. The St. Timothy Foundation in the United Kingdom built a few classrooms. Enrollment was growing so fast that most classes were meeting outdoors in the shade of mango trees. In 2018, a United Thank Offering Grant financed construction of six new classrooms. The St. Timothy Foundation built three more. Beginning in February 2019, all the children now meet in a real school room. Classes can continue when it rains. The school now serves about 2000 children, and is ranked number one in the State. Parents in Nzara now have the satisfaction of knowing that their children can obtain better education. The outpouring of joy at the dedication ceremony was contagious. Like parents everywhere, they want their children to have a better chance than they had.



The Hon. Pia Phillip, Minister of Education for Gbudwe State is cutting the ribbon for the dedication of the new St. Timothy's school building, Nzara, South Sudan, February 18, 2019. Bp. Samuel Peni of Nzara and Bp. Alan Scarfe of Iowa are Presiding.

A TRAVELER'S TALE: LEGACIES IN YAMBIO AND NZARA

By The Rev. H. Milton Cole, Jr., St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Des Moines, IA



On my recent third visit to South Sudan, lasting four weeks, I visited All Saints Cathedral in the Diocese of Yambio, the largest Episcopal gathering place in all Sudan and South Sudan. Its cornerstone was laid in 1925.

I also visited All Saints Cathedral in the Diocese of Nzara. This Diocese, created only nine years ago, has seen the emergence of St. Timothy's Primary School plus three other Episcopal schools with 1200 students, as well as a birthing center, medical dispensary, diocesan training center, and diocesan offices. This development arose from the mutual ministry of the people of the new diocese with their Bishop – Samuel Enosa Peni -- and the gifts of money, time, and prayers from the

Diocese of Iowa and The Episcopal Church (TEC).

Visiting with now-Archbishop Peni, his father Canon Enosa Peni, and Fr. Emmanuel, I learned that the latter two men, now in their 90's, once studied with Fr. Marc Nikkel -- someone I had met at the General Theological Seminary in New York in 1981. Marc had come from California and the Mennonite Church, was moved by the worship and also the acceptance of women as clergy in the Episcopal Church, and felt called to teach in Africa. A visiting bishop from Southwestern Virginia, A. Heath Light, a wise, Spirit-laden man, guided Marc to ordination and nineteen years of service in Sudan. Marc and four other foreign missionaries were captured and held by the Sudan People's Liberation Army in 1987. Today, we give thanks for the legacy of these leaders from the 1920s, 1980s, and 2000s.

CHURCH SEEKS TO LISTEN TO SOUTH SUDANESE IN THE U.S.

By Mary Frances Schjonberg

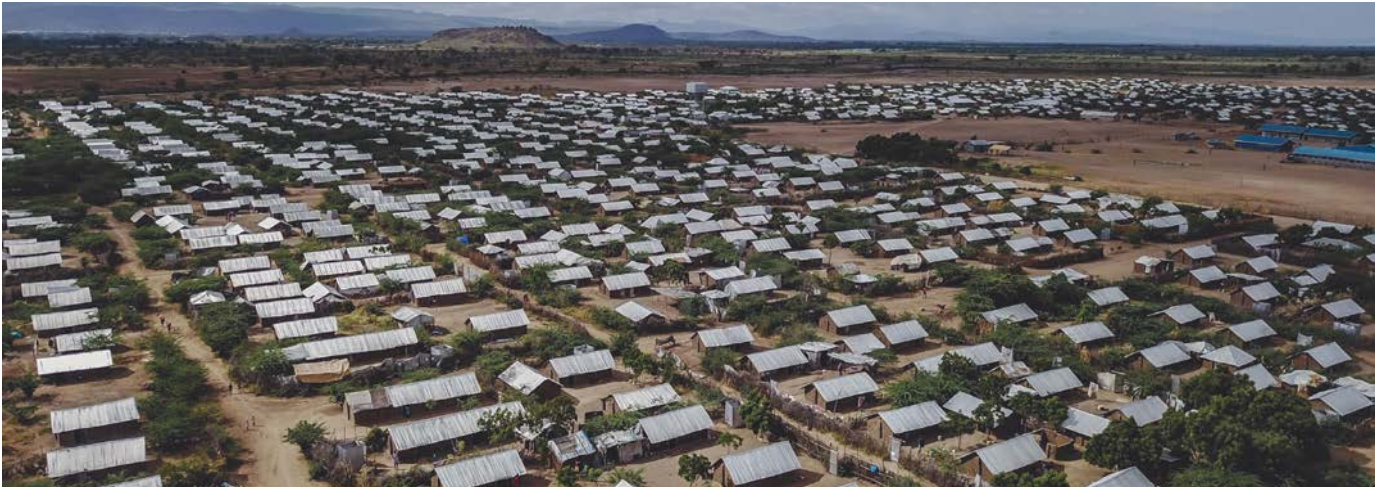


In March 2019 Bishops Alan Scarfe of Iowa and Martin Field of West Missouri asked their fellow bishops of The Episcopal Church to help locate congregations of South Sudanese in the United States. The survey uncovered nearly forty South Sudanese faith communities spread across The Episcopal Church. Some are parishes where the majority of the members are South Sudanese. Other groups are not so formally organized.

"The whole point is to help the South Sudanese realize that we want to be their church and try to meet their spiritual needs in a way that is authentic, and not something that we're asking that they do for us, but how can we be in real relationship?" said the Rev. Ranjit Mathews, rector of St. James Episcopal Church, New London CT. Mathews is a former Africa Partnership Officer of The Episcopal Church and now chairs the six-person Task Force on Dialogue with South Sudanese Anglican Diaspora Members.

The task force includes, in addition to Mathews and bishops Scarfe and Field, the Rev. Michael Kiju Paul of the Diocese of Texas, Mr. Russell V. Randle of the Diocese of Virginia, and Mrs. Jackie Kraus of the Diocese of Chicago. Four of the six task force members have registered to attend the Aug. 30-Sept. 1 conference in Lexington VA on "Uniting the Diaspora to Act for Peace".

Excerpted from Episcopal News Service (ENS), "South Sudanese in Diaspora Renews Episcopal Church Attention".



Kakuma Refugee Camp



Founded in 2005, AFRECS began through the efforts of American Episcopalians to help Sudanese refugees who fled war to resettle in the United States. As conflict in the region continued and eventually the new nation of South Sudan was born, AFRECS worked to build the capacity of the church to champion peace and address the needs of the people. Today AFRECS seeks to amplify the voices of Sudanese Christians, encourage healing and development, and advance peace and stability in South Sudan. Our work involves five key areas:

PEACE NOT WAR

AFRECS supports the Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission (JPRC) of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) in training military chaplains to be a source of comfort and protection rather than animosity and displacement. These chaplains help to train others and protect civilians against violence and abuse.

THE WORD

AFRECS helps to build the capacity of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan by strengthening theological education, especially as it impacts peace and reconciliation efforts. AFRECS partners with two major seminaries, Bishop Gwynne College and Renk Theological College, helping to support the training of pastors and church leaders. This biblical training extends to those displaced by ongoing civil violence or who have fled to neighboring countries.

THE ORPHANS

For the past three years AFRECS has worked closely with Bishop John Gattek and the Diocese of Bentiu to support orphans and unaccompanied children at a camp near Juba. One hundred and fifty boys and girls, each having lost at least one parent in the civil war, are now part of a school where they can find healing and hope. AFRECS' support provides a tangible ministry to the children through education, a steady diet, and clothing. We are the main supporting partner of the school, supporting the teaching and feeding of the children. Physical school structures are slowly replacing the tattered tent classrooms; but there's need for more support to help these children succeed. This is an area where a small gift can make a great difference.

THE HURTING

AFRECS supports an ambitious training initiative serving women and youth in Renk. This area enjoys relative peace and is seen as a place where a model might be developed for creating pockets of sustainable peace in other parts of South Sudan. By exposing youth and women to trauma healing as well as equipping them with business skills, this training makes economic development an attractive alternative to the temptation that military engagement sometimes presents, especially to young South Sudanese. Please consider supporting AFRECS as it undertakes with its partners, the Episcopal Diocese of Renk, and Five Talents this ambitious gesture toward peace making.

THE DIASPORA

The United States has received thousands of Sudanese refugees following several decades of conflict in Sudan and South Sudan. In December 2013, civil war broke out in South Sudan, initially between the two major tribes, but eventually became so widespread as to engulf most of the nation. AFRECS is committed to bridge building among the various tribes in the diaspora with the intent of demonstrating unity to their war weary homeland. Three national conferences in the US have paved the road to greater solidarity within the American Sudanese community. This includes the formation of the South Sudan Diaspora Network for Reconciliation and Peace (SSDNPR). Give generously so that this work can continue.



WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN YOU MAKE?

You can empower the church as an agent of peace and reconciliation in South Sudan. When you give generously to AFRECS, you help the Episcopal Church in South Sudan to do more for its people.

- Peace not War
- The Word
- The Orphans
- The Hurting
- The Diaspora

You can make checks payable to
“AFRECS” and mail to:

AFRECS
P.O. Box 3327 Alexandria, VA 22302

COMINGS & GOINGS

Abraham Yel Nhial, Bishop of Aweil in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, spoke to a Five Talents gathering at the Tower Club in Tyson's Corner, Virginia in July 2019. His message to Diaspora communities: "We refuse to be divided. We are one before God. I am proud of you."

Sylvester Thomas Kambaya, retired Canon of All Saints' Cathedral, Khartoum, facilitated conferences of trauma healing and reconciliation in Kedi'ba county of Amadi State (Western Equatoria) March-May 2018.

Deacon Patti Johnson and the Rev. Donna Steckline of the Diocese of Albany took part in the October 2018 "Crossing Bridges Together" conference in Arua, Uganda with members of the Diocese of Maridi, Yei, and Kajo Keji. Donna and Kevin Stekline returned to the refugee camps in Spring 2019

Ron Hart, a retired Church of England priest with a long East Africa association, including teaching in Kenya in the 1960's, and a member of SOMA (Sharing of Ministries Abroad), travelled to Juba in 2018 to attend the validation service of the new Episcopal University.

Buck Blanchard, Missioner for Outreach and Mission in the Diocese of Colorado, travelled to Bor and Ibba in May 2019.

Samuel Taban Juma, pastor in the Evangelical Free Church of South Sudan, spent January-June 2019 supervising the administration and ongoing construction at Fulaa Children's Home, relocated for security reasons from Nimule, South Sudan to Adjumani, Uganda. (Fulaa means "waterfall" in the Madi language.)

Kwathi Akol Ajawin, an Elder of Cornerstone Free Evangelical Church, Annadale VA, along with the Rev. Bill Kynes, taught expository preaching in February 2019 to several dozen new pastors of congregations in a half-dozen refugee settlements near Adjumani.

Nancy and Kenneth Knapp, parishioners of Christ Church, Alexandria VA travelled to Juba and Renk (Upper Nile) in April 2019 at the invitation of Bishop Joseph Garang Atem and his wife Rodha to learn about initiatives in women's savings and literacy circles and youth employment recently undertaken with assistance from Five Talents and the Mothers Union.

Bishop Matthew Taban Peter of Wonduruba Diocese and secretary of the Episcopal Council in the Internal Province of Central Equatoria visited Minnesota, Nebraska, and Texas in July-August 2019. In Washington, DC he met members of his own scattered family plus local Christian leaders at the residence of the ambassador of South Sudan.

Dominic Deng of Grandville MI visited Kakuma Refugee Camp in June 2019 with Christian Mission Aid to teach Christian leadership, including conflict transformation. Forty participants received Bibles in their respective dialects: Bor Dinka, Apadang Dinka, Nuer, and Bari.



The Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation has concluded that when used together on the same conflict "negotiation and non-violent action ... often have synergistic effects. They work together. That was the discovery of Mahatma Gandhi. It worked very well in India. Then it worked well when King applied it to the civil rights struggle in particular places. When black people were required to give up their bus seats to whites, blacks organized a boycott of the city bus system. The boycott got the attention of the city authorities. The company lost so much money that it negotiated an agreement --equal rights to seating in return for ending the boycott. Non-violent direct action worked.

A more recent example comes from Liberia. During the latter stages of the Liberian civil war two Lutheran women organized a Liberian branch of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), a West African regional association. The Liberian group increased rapidly in size and invited Muslim women to join. After presenting a petition for peace to Liberian authorities, they gathered daily at a prominent place in the capital to pray, sing, and dance. As their numbers grew, they secured a meeting with President Charles Taylor, instigator of the civil war, and obtained a promise to launch peace talks in Ghana. Later, when progress halted in the negotiations, the group blocked access to the meeting hall to put pressure on the negotiators. At one point, Leymah Gbowee, the Lutheran leader, threatened to strip naked, to draw further attention to their demands. That step was reminiscent of the prophet Isaiah, who took off his clothes and wandered around the Northern Kingdom for three years to portray dramatically the looming fate of Israel, as its neighbors Egypt and Ethiopia were dragged butt-naked into exile by the Assyrian army (Is.20:1-6). Leymah Gbowee was also invoking a traditional West African taboo. Men viewing the nakedness of a woman past child-bearing age may be considered cursed.ⁱⁱⁱ The Nigerian mediator of the talks skillfully took advantage of the threat and the women's presence to move the negotiators forward to final agreement, which led to the departure of Taylor and the end of the war.

NVDA in South Sudan

Church-led non-violent action has also occurred in South Sudan. I will mention two examples, but you may be able to come up with many more.

- In 2016 in Yei the pastor of the Christian Revival Center mobilized hundreds of Christians who put on white sackcloth and paraded through the streets. They called for peace and repentance. In Yei Freedom Square that pastor, John Sebit, preached from the Book of Jonah, saying that God had passed a message to the people of South Sudan to come before God and seek guidance for reconciliation. That kind of repentance march was a good start. Non-violent direct action is more effective if those involved recognize their own faults and need for repentance. However, a repentance march could be even more effective if it were followed up by a second march to nearby militia headquarters urging mutual repentance by both militia leaders and troops and Christian congregations.
- In Mundri in early 2017 there was an Inter-religious Women's March to the SPLA barracks. The women carried posters which read "Stop killing the families of your enemies. You are destroying the future of our nation." The commander met with the women and, surprisingly, he agreed, provided that they delivered the same message to the opposition. The women did so, and Mundri has since been largely quiet.

Leadership in the Nonviolent Struggle for Peace in South Sudan

I want to be clear. I am not making a recommendation today that anyone take a specific form of non-violent action in South Sudan. That would be foolish of me, as an outsider, a white American, to suggest. It is up to the faithful people of South Sudan to decide whether to take action and what action might be appropriate. If you do take such action, however, the following points may be of some value:

- Effective direct action requires imagination. What kinds of action are likely to work in South Sudan? Are there traditional methods of protest and reconciliation which may be useful? What actions will unite rather than divide followers?
- Effective direct action requires careful planning. Establish a working group for planning. Be inclusive; in particular include women and youth. Plan your moves carefully, always keeping in mind the need to bring your group forward toward your ultimate objective. Think about sequence and timing. Pray together over your work.
- Recognize the need for risk taking, but avoid unnecessary risk. Dealing with people in power, particularly militia leaders, may create some risk for you and your co-workers. Plan carefully to defuse tension where possible, but recognize that peacebuilding requires courage.

- Above all, effective direct action requires good leadership. Good leadership means courage and boldness, but avoids arrogance. Generally speaking, “leaders create a sense of urgency, clarity about current reality, and a compelling vision of what can be. ... When leaders paint a picture of the vision, momentum for change is created.”
- Church leaders have a special role. As servants of God and God’s faithful people, church leaders help the people to see their place in God’s story. In this case they help them to understand God’s dream for South Sudan and to understand their place in the future of South Sudan.

Dane F. Smith, Jr. served as U.S. Ambassador to Guinea and Senegal, Special Presidential Envoy for Liberia, and in 2011-2012 was Senior Advisor on Darfur in the Office of the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan. Condensed from his address to the May 2018 conference of AFRECS.

ⁱFor a longer listing, see, e.g., John Cartwright & Susan Thistlethwaite, “Support Non-violent Direct Action”, in Glen Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking* (2008), 44-56

ⁱⁱShane Claiborne, “Why We Go to Jail,” *Sojourners*, April 18, 2018, 37-39

ⁱⁱⁱLleymah Gbowee, *Mighty Be our Powers* (2011), 122-164

A BAKE AUCTION & THE POWER OF GOD’S GRACE

By Abigail Sylvester, parishioner, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Chicago, IL

If you walked into All Saints’ parish hall on a cold February Sunday morning, on the north side of Chicago, where 200+ people are holding bidder paddles and Styrofoam cups with steaming coffee, you would see baked goods as far as the eye can see. You might wonder what chaos and hilarity you had stepped into.



For nearly twenty years, students in grades 3 – 6 have sponsored a Bake Auction during coffee hour between the 9 and 11 a.m. Services. This is no small bake auction. Last year, students raised \$30,000 in one hour. Parishioners, young and old, bake and decorate lavish, detailed cakes that are auctioned back to the congregation. Bids from the rowdy and joyful crowd range from \$20 - \$1,500. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

The funds raised support projects and partnerships throughout Africa – South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The students not only plan and or-

ganize each year’s amazing bake auction. They also make the decisions about distribution of those funds. The results have been incredible.

All Saints’ has had a friendship with Bishop Joseph Garang Atem of Renk Diocese for over fifteen years, and has a formal partnership with the parish of St. Peter’s, Geiger, close to the border with Sudan. The bishop visits All Saints’ almost every year when he comes to the U.S., as Renk is a Companion Diocese with Chicago. We always prioritize a visit with the Sunday School students, so they can hear directly from him about the community in Renk, their joys and struggles, and the impact of the funds raised at the annual Bake Auction. The tragic effects of a civil war in a far-off country are no longer just an occasional blurb on the news. Our young people and congregation members see that we have a role to play, that we can take action and make a difference, that we can develop relationships with people seemingly halfway around the world and feel connected to them.

Over these twenty years, students have directed a portion of the funds from the Bake Auction to Renk clinic and salary for Dr. Paul, the salary for a local midwife, and for the pastors of St. Peter’s, Geiger and St. Barnaba’s, Father Isaac Chol and Father Jacob Ajak. One year, All Saints’ helped fund a restaurant on the main road from Khartoum to Renk that was operated by women in the community. The following year, funds were raised for a pump to bring Nile River water to a garden that supplies vegetables for that same restaurant. The students at All Saints’ have decided to invest tens of thousands of dollars in education, agriculture, microfinance, infrastructure, and medical projects in Renk community.

We at All Saints’ are a relatively small group of people on Chicago’s north side, drawn together by faith and the need for community. How can we possibly do anything in the face of so much violence and suffering so far away? Through the power of God’s grace, we are drawn to act, even in our very small way. To congregations that are considering joining in this truly sacred work -- we strongly urge you to take on this act of faith.

LETTER FROM THE AFRECS PRESIDENT - PHILIP H. DARROW



From the President of AFRECS

On behalf of the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans (AFRECS), I thank you for your interest in our brothers and sisters in South Sudan and Sudan. I invite your further inquiry, as well as your prayers, advocacy and gifts on their behalf. Walking with these friends has not been easy, given the difficulties of communication and the unrest that has gripped the region for so long. But, as South Sudan moves in the direction of peace and development, our continued walk is vital.

AFRECS strives to support the peace and reconciliation efforts of the Episcopal Church South Sudan, and has made a tangible contribution by funding a school for displaced orphans at one of the longstanding Protection of Civilian camps. We have also worked with Diaspora leaders in the U.S. in their efforts to raise a unified voice for peace. We look forward to hosting Archbishop Justin Badi Arama's visit to the U.S. in August and September, where he will meet with these leaders, and with leaders of the U.S. Episcopal Church, including our Presiding Bishop.

While our shared walk will continue to be challenging, we are excited for a new era in South Sudan and Sudan, and we see new paths opening in our relationships. Join us on this walk!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip H. Darrow'.

Philip H. Darrow



MAP OF SOUTH SUDAN AND SUDAN

