

SUDAN CONNECTIONS

CHRISTMAS 2012 / EPIPHANY 2013



VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

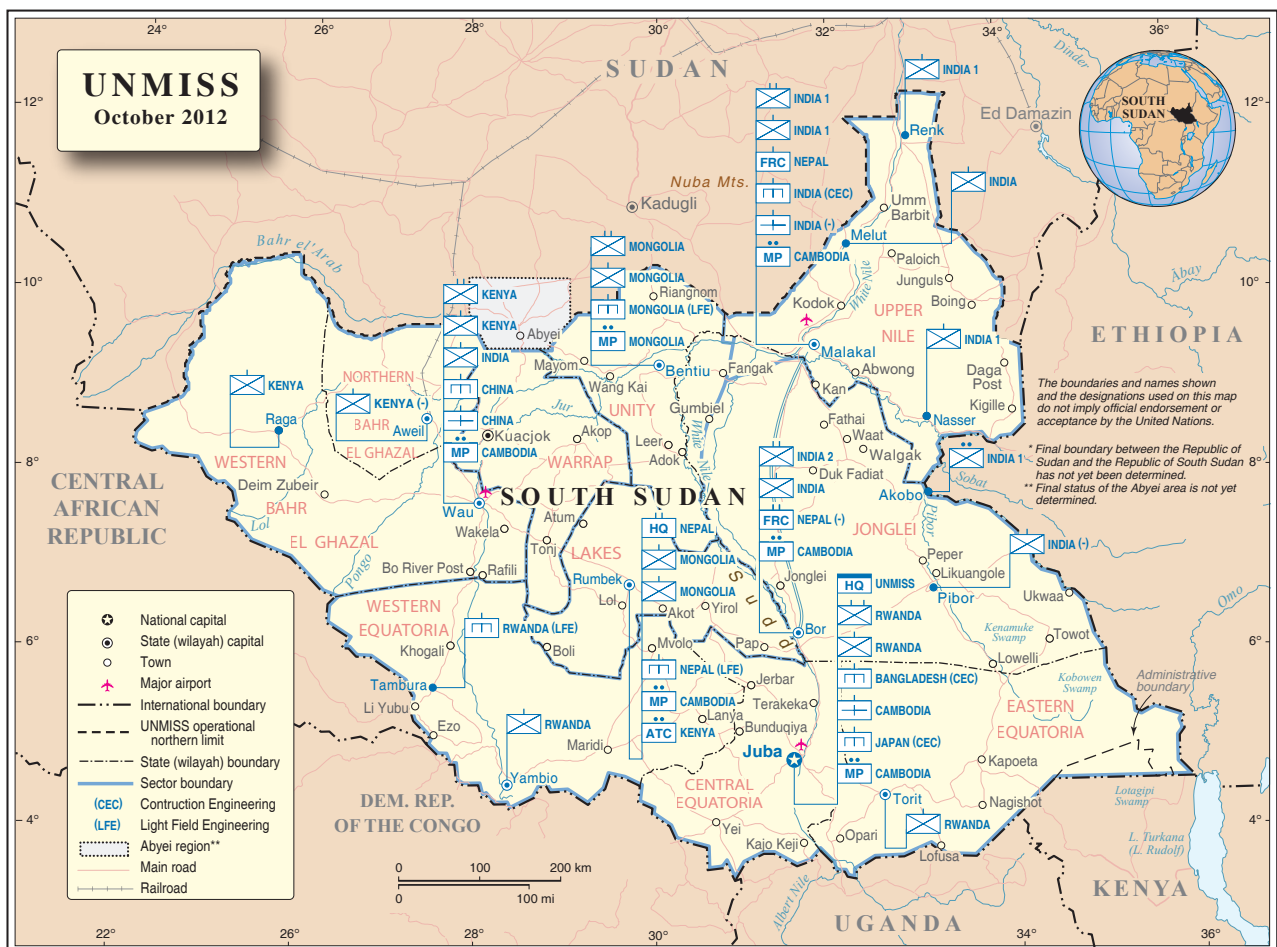


AFRECS - AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SUDAN

UNITED STATES MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN

The UNMISS was established in July 2011 and given a Chapter VII mandate by the U.N. Security Council to protect civilians “under imminent threat of physical violence”. Information about UNMISS and situations in South Sudan can be found at

www.unmiss.unmissions.org 



Map No. 4456 Rev. 06 UNITED NATIONS
October 2012 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section



SUDAN CONNECTIONS

CONNECTING HOPES AND GIFTS

CHRISTMAS 2012 / EPIPHANY 2013

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS) is an 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:

The ECS church at Yida
Refugee Camp. Photo by
Robin Denney © 2012.



Send submissions for the next *Sudan Connections* to Richard Parkins, Exec. Director, at richardparkins1@gmail.com by June 15, 2013.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

C. RICHARD PARKINS



Photo by Constance Wilson©

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the observance of Christmas and Epiphany and anticipate the holy season that is upon us, our aspirations for peace and reconciliation become more pronounced in a troubled world where war and violence are so pervasive. No part of the world seems more afflicted by the ravages

of warfare than Sudan, especially South Kordofan (the Nuba Mountains) and Blue Nile. In addition, the unsettled state of life in Jonglei State speaks to the serious unfinished business of peacemaking that confronts the Government of South Sudan as this new state seeks to become a safe and stable place for its citizens.

We lament the undeniable suffering in both Sudans, and at the same time, we give thanks for the good that is being done. There are now ten dioceses that have vibrant companion connections with dioceses of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS). Their work reminds us all that focused attention to the needs of Sudanese sisters and brothers persists even when the noise of conflict may not be far away. AFRECS made its contribution to the peace-making effort of the Province's Archbishop by providing funds to nurture the peace in Jonglei State that Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul so diligently negotiated among warring factions. We have also been able to

provide opportunities for ECS bishops to offer compelling testimony of the upheaval that still characterizes life in some parts of South Sudan, particularly in the Diocese of Renk where Bishop Joseph Garang struggles against formidable odds to be a source of hospitality and protection both to his flock and refugees and returnees who daily seek solace in Renk.

The relentless bombardment of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and the still unresolved crisis in Abyei, are advocacy targets for AFRECS. The woes of these areas defy easy solutions, but we have endeavored not to allow their seemingly intractable nature become a pretext for inaction or indifference. We strive to let the people of these isolated areas know that they are not forgotten.

As we enter again a season where the themes of hope and peace are so powerfully presented, we know that we must help prepare the way of the Lord so that when we share Christmas and Epiphany messages next year, peace for all Sudanese people will be more of a reality than an illusion.

Executive Director

+++ SAVE THE DATE +++
October 18-20, 2013
AFRECS 2013 CONFERENCE
IN CHICAGO

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE RT. REV. DAVID C. JONES, RETIRED SUFFRAGAN BISHOP, DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA



A READY BENCH

In December, I was privileged, along with nine Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Episcopal bishops, to participate in a three-day legislative briefing in Washington on Sudan. Sarah Dreier, Legislative Representative for International Policy, ELCA and Episcopal Church, led it.

Our time on Capitol Hill included leading a hearing for congressional staff on Sudan and visiting members of Congress and senators. What surprised me were the level of interest expressed and the heart-felt desire to hear first-hand information. I was able to share my own

experience with Sudanese bishops and their personal testimony about attacks on their people and churches. A highlight of our time together was an excellent presentation “*From Experience to Advocacy*” by Russell Randle, a member of the AFRECS Board. Russ is an attorney with Patton Boggs and a strong advocate for the Episcopal Church in Sudan. He helped us prepare for our visits and suggested ways to follow up with specific recommendations. What impressed me the most was the willingness to listen that we encountered again and again on Capitol Hill. We brought authentic stories and information and found a willing audience.

The Lutheran bishops were chosen particularly to be on their “Ready Bench”, so to speak, and testify on Sudan matters. They were followed that week by another team who came to be briefed on matters of the Environment and Climate Change. I was impressed by the concept of a Ready Bench. In fact, I think the model is apt for all Christians as we seek to serve Christ in the World.

As you read this issue of *Sudan Connections*, think about how you might prepare yourself to be on a personal “Ready Bench” in your congregation or your community to speak up for justice and peace for the people of Sudan and South Sudan. Your voice matters. Your letters to Washington matter. Your testimony makes a difference.

Faithfully,

David Colin Jones
President of AFRECS

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Archbishop's Christmas Message for 2012

Texts:

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-4

Christmas Greetings to you all! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

This is our second Christmas after the independence of the Republic of South Sudan. I want to congratulate the Government and the people of the Republic of South Sudan for their patience as the country endured waves of attacks upon so many fronts:

1. Cattle raiders in Jonglei State and the David Yau Yau militia and other militias in the land
2. The brief war between South Sudan and Sudan over Panthou
3. The economic problems that resulted after the flow of oil was stopped in January

We give thanks to God that even with all our problems we are celebrating Christmas today. Despite our problems God is in control; building a new country is a mighty struggle and we should not sleep.

Isaiah 9:2-7:

"Jesus is the light of the world." Christians are reminded of the light of Christ in the world in times of darkness. God promised to send a light to shine on everyone living in the shadow of death. He is both: Wonderful counselor and mighty God. The message of hope, fulfilled in the birth of Christ, He came to deliver all people from their slavery and sin. God has chosen you, this generation of the Republic of South Sudan to liberate this nation. Let us lead this generation to practice justice, peace and reconciliation, Christ's personal presence and we look forward to being with Christ. Redemption from our sinful nature, we long for the end of the battle, the battle of liberation. Our people in the Republic of South Sudan have not realized that at last they are free. We are to engage the people, that spiritually and physically

they are free. Because the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people the restoration of God for his people.

We are free from sin; He bought us and released us from the captivity of sin. We are not only free from the sentence of death for our sin, but we are also purified from our sins and influenced as we grow in Christ.

Today is the day of our redemption, this is the day God commanded circumcision when he was beginning to form his holy nation and this ceremony was a time of joy when friends and family members celebrate the life of the baby.

Family lines and family names were important to the Jews (Luke 2:1-20). The good news about Jesus is that he came to all including the plain and the ordinary. Jesus came to anyone with a heart that was humble enough to accept him. Whoever you are, whatever you do, you can have Jesus in your life.

Some of the Jews were waiting for a savior to deliver them from the Roman rulers, but the work of Jesus was more far reaching than anyone could imagine. Christ paid the price for our sins and opened the way to justice and peace with God. Jesus offered us a new heart that will last for eternity.

The sin in us is leprosy which brought Jesus to be born, to cleanse us from our sins. Jesus came to redeem us and pardon us, to restore us back to God. We have been walking in a dark history for more than fifty years but on the 9th of July, 2011 you made your position clear to the world, you decided for your destiny, a decision which we will not regret at the end of the day. We shall be mature enough to know our own direction. I dream of people no longer traumatized, of children who can go to school, of mothers who can attend health clinics, and of an end to poverty and want.

The Church of God will remain united across two sovereign countries. We must look at our differences from a new perspective. We must see our cultural diversity as strength for development and use it for harmonious coexistence. It is our mutual responsibility to ensure that the new Republic of South Sudan is built on a strong foundation of equality of human dignity and of human rights and justice for all.

The road ahead of us is rough, long and full of thorns, but we must come together, to support each other and move forward as one people.

My dear Christians, take care of yourselves. Let us hold our leaders accountable for what will happen to this new nation. God has given us His only begotten son to give us perfect peace, but some of us are rejecting the peace and they are indulging themselves with corruption, nepotism and other sins which make all the people of the Republic of South Sudan unable to live in peace. We are praying for those who want to betray our land and culture and

the dignity of our people. With this I am asking all the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Sudan to be prepared to demonstrate their witness to Christ by giving account of those who abuse human rights and to give a voice to the voiceless. It is time to provide leadership.

I am appealing to the leaders of government and the church, that this is the right time to confess to each other, let us forgive each other, let us denounce tribalism, nepotism and corruption. This will allow Almighty God to cleanse our new nation. Christ was born today and died to put an end to our hostility. He destroyed the things that keep people far from God and let us be reconciled to God through the cross. It is only in God that we discover our origin and identity, our meaning and our purpose, our significance and our destiny. Without God life makes no sense. Life is a test; Life is a trust and Life is a temporary assignment.

With this I am appealing to David Yau Yau in Pibor and other militia groups in the country to come home and let us know your grievances and we all can sit together and solve them. The Church is ready to mediate and to bring you closer to each other. We need peace; we reject war. Please listen to us, give our people a chance to rest. We appeal to our two governments to accept the African Union proposal on Abyei and let us be ready for the referendum next year.

I am appealing to the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to take concrete steps to demonstrate to South Sudanese citizens that it can deal with corruption, to ensure that security forces receive adequate capacity building and monitoring to prevent human rights abuses against citizens and visitors.

My dear citizens, there can be no free peace and harmony without honesty and integrity. If we lack of honesty and integrity we can not see our vision. If we lack honesty we can not focus and we cannot reach our destination. If we lack honesty and integrity we cannot communicate the vision for our country. But the people with honesty and integrity, they will help to keep our team focused on our joint mission.

We are called to walk in the light. The message of hope is fulfilled in the birth of Christ. Let us lead this generation to justice and peace.

Thank you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Amen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Deng Bul', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

The Most Reverend Dr. Daniel Deng Bul
Archbishop & Primate, the Episcopal Church of Sudan

ARCHBISHOP VISITS AGOK & ABYEI, OCT. 8-10, 2012

REPORTED BY LAWRENCE R. DUFFEE, ECS FINANCIAL CONSULTANT - TEC VOLUNTEER FOR MISSION
EXCERPTED BY THE EDITOR

"We have come to see and to learn and to tell the whole world about what has happened in Abyei."

Between Monday, Oct. 8 and Thursday, Oct. 11, 2012, the Archbishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS), Dr. Daniel Deng Bul, visited the area of Abyei, South Sudan. He also visited the town of Agok on the southern boundary of the Abyei area, on the border with Upper Bar-el-Ghazal State.

The purpose of the visit was to see and learn firsthand about conditions on the ground in Abyei since the area was overrun by the armed forces of the Republic of Sudan and their allied Arab militias, specifically the Misseriya tribe, beginning in May 2011. The Archbishop brought with him six colleagues from the ECS and media to objectively view the conditions in Abyei and to prepare a report detailing what conditions were like for those people still remaining in Abyei Town along with approximately 100,000 refugees who fled the fighting southwards toward Agok.

All attempts to demarcate the Abyei boundaries have been unsuccessful. Disagreements over the boundaries were allowed to drag on without resolution until 2008, when fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) erupted in and around Abyei Town. The dispute was then taken to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at the Hague Tribunal, which ruled in 2009, reducing the territorial definition of Abyei to an area focused on the permanent settlements of the Ngok, but also giving its judicial interpretation that the principal intent of the Abyei protocol was to empower the Ngok Dinka as a whole to choose their status in the referendum.

In spite of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in 2005, Abyei has remained a battlefield in South Sudan. Between Jan. 7 and 9, 2011, fighting broke out in



ECS Primary School Abyei, 2011 and same location in 2012 after attack



and around Abyei area, just as voting on the referendum was about to begin. The fighting on the 9th was the most serious, killing eight people.

In addition to the fighting, Abyei is experiencing an influx of large numbers of returnees from Sudan. This is likely to exacerbate the already worsening humanitarian situation in the area. According to the Abyei Chief Administrator, a projection of 36,000 returnees from Sudan had been made, 26,000 of which had already arrived. Some returnees joined their relatives in the rural villages, but the greater number had been settled in six displacement camps before the May 2011 violence drove them away. World Food Program (WFP) and GOAL, an international humanitarian agency, provided returnees with some basic assistance of food and basic medical services for a short period of time.



Abyei County Commissioner's office, January 2011 and the same office in fall 2012



ARCHBISHOP VISITS AGOK & ABYEI, OCT. 8-10, 2012, cont'd.

Several thousand people singing songs and dancing greeted the delegation. The Bishop of Aweil, Abraham Nhial, introduced the Archbishop to Agok Parish, where he told the congregation that he was there to pray with them, that they were not forgotten. The Archbishop told the people “not to lose hope and to reconcile themselves to God because God cannot work miracles in people who do not have God in their lives”.

The Archbishop proceeded to the offices of the Abyei Community Action for Development (ACAD), where he was greeted by the Chief Administrator, Minister for Infrastructure and Public Utilities, and the Minister of Finance and Economics. ACAD functions as an administration in exile for the large number of refugees from the Abyei community living in Agok. The Administrator reported that the military forces of Sudan, which were to have withdrawn had barely left and were less than 50 kilometers from the Abyei area, in violation of U.N. Security Council Res. 2046. The U.N. forces, which are supposed to fan out and monitor the border, instead remain in Abyei Town doing little. Dinka citizens reported that they had no protection during the northern assaults in May 2011.

ACAD informed the delegation of the destruction of nearly every building in Abyei, including schools, churches, shops, medical clinics and government centers. Buildings were burned, their doors, windows and roofing materials removed. Bore wells were sabotaged by the Arabs with rocks and debris put in them. The small number of people remaining live without food aid, without access to medical care, clean water or electric power, and have no weapons to protect themselves.


Aid groups are unable to work in Abyei because the U.N. has taken the position that Abyei is a northern area. Therefore, aid workers need visas and permission from the Republic of Sudan to travel to Abyei, permission which is never granted. And, ACAD lacks resources to provide aid. What's more, the U.N. insists that they help Dinka and Misseriya equally, even though the Misseriya are part of the cause of the problems.

ACAD's most important message to the team -- and through them to the world -- is that Abyei is not a shared or disputed area. To the Ngok Dinka it is their inviolable home and not subject to division. The ACAD leaders expressed concern that Americans seem to have accepted partition, even though the U.S. was, at the time the CPA was signed, backing a referendum for Abyei.

The Archbishop and delegates had hoped to meet with the leadership of the U.N. forces to Abyei Town, but their request was denied. Thus, it was impossible to raise the concerns regarding operations of the U.N., which ACAD and the Dinka people had voiced to them.

The Abyei area has been home to the Ngok Dinka people for millennia. The Dinka are pastoralists, living off their animals, mainly cattle, which they move seasonally in search of pasture. They have historically sustained themselves with cultivation, hunting and fishing. The Paramount Chief, Kuwal Deng Majok, has located his family to Abyei Town where they live in difficult circumstances. Chief Kuwal has deliberately chosen this lifestyle in order to make the point that the Dinka will not be pushed out of Abyei.

Lesser chiefs present at the gathering expressed the longing of the Dinka to be allowed to hold the referendum that was promised to them in the CPA. The chiefs stated that they are patient because they know God will eventually help them. *More photos on page 17.*

The ECS has issued this report for the purposes of providing information about current conditions in Abyei, and the plight of the people who fled the invasion of the military of the Republic of Sudan. For further information or to learn about assisting the people of Abyei, please contact: Lawrence Duffee, ECS, Juba, S. Sudan, lrduffee@gmail.com. The full report, with photos, is available by contacting Larry. 

FEEDING SOUTH SUDAN: AN INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP JOSEPH GARANG ATEM

BY JIM NAUGHTON, ENS



{Episcopal News Service - Episcopal Diocese of Chicago}

Bishop Joseph Garang Atem of the Diocese of Renk in South Sudan did not set out to be a politician or a fundraiser. The former principal of Renk Theological Seminary, and a man devoted to meditation, he is more at home discussing theology than international development. But worldly concerns, such as how to feed, house and provide medical care for tens of thousands of homeless people fleeing religious persecution and ethnic and political violence, have become his primary mission since South Sudan became independent from Sudan last July.

“I don’t like politics,” Garang said during a recent visit to the convention of the Diocese of Chicago, which has a companion diocese relationship with Renk. “But what leads me to talk about politics is to let politicians outside of my country know what is happening in my country where I am connecting with the grassroots people. We are living with them in daily life, and they come to the church to talk about their pain.”

Pain is a frequent companion for more than 200,000 refugees who were driven out of Sudan by fighting in the Nuba Mountains, which border Renk on the east, and South Kordofan, which lies to the west, between the Sudanese government in Khartoum and rebels previously associated with the south.

The ranks of the displaced are further swollen by people who had been living in what is now Sudan, but felt compelled by either fear or loyalty to flee to South Sudan after independence. These returnees, who are disproportionately Christian and members of ethnic groups more prevalent in the south than in the north, have poured into temporary camps in and around Renk, which is just south of the northernmost border of South Sudan. “In the rainy season it is very tough,” Garang said. “We need things to take care of people’s immediate needs: food security and health care, but also to take care of them long term, so fuel and building materials. But it is hard to get these things into the country and it can take a long time.”

And so he travels, seeking emergency assistance, resources and relationships that can help build South Sudan’s economy. “You want to meet the needs of those who are in need,” he says. “So my role is to connect the people who are in need to the people who have resources for the development of human beings. We must train many, many different people so they can take on much work for the development of the diocese and the development of the country.” In a lunchtime talk in Chicago, Garang told convention goers that South Sudan was not without economic resources, but that people were not yet able to make use of them. “There is lots of good land, but little knowledge of how to use it well,” he told the gathering convened by the diocese’s Commission on Global Ministry.

“Traditional means of agriculture don’t work as well as we need, so we need a scientific approach. We can grow food, but also, we have sunflower and sesame, and these would create jobs in the refineries making the oil. This would bring a good generation of income for the government.”

The agricultural potential of his own diocese is a subject particularly close to his heart. “Renk is one of the best areas in South Sudan for agriculture,” the bishop said in an interview after the lunch. “It could feed all Sudan if this were done in a good way. ... If there were irrigation for a whole year we would be self-sustainable, and feed maybe all Africa, not just South Sudan.”

The next step, Garang said, is to begin building villages and other infrastructure so people can be moved from camps into permanent housing, and, eventually, jobs.

FEEDING SOUTH SUDAN: AN INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP JOSEPH GARANG ATEM, cont'd.

However, this work is almost impossible with the border blockaded, fuel and building materials scarce and refugees and returnees straggling in from Sudan.

A number of dioceses, parishes and institutions within the Episcopal Church have relationships with counterparts in Sudan. Garang said he is particularly grateful for Renk's relationship with the Diocese of Chicago. St. Michael's Church in Barrington supports Renk Theological College, and a number of other churches in the diocese support parishes, schools clinics and other healthcare ministries.

The Diocese of Virginia and three of its churches—Christ Church and St. Paul's Church in Alexandria, and St. Mary's Church in Arlington, also help to sustain his diocese, Garang said. So, too, does the Tyndale House Foundation, which supports the translation of the Bible into the Dinka language, and provides assistance with communications, transportation and health care. The need remains great,

however, and the bishop is always happy to make new friends. "If I just say, 'Hey, I need help. Hey, I need help,' nobody will listen to me," Garang said. "But if you say, 'Come and see, and then you will know what to do,' then they help. That is why we are inviting our friends to come to the area. When they see they get an idea where they want to help." Like many bishops in Sudan and South Sudan, Garang has become accustomed to spending time at diocesan conventions in hotel ballrooms, visiting diocesan offices and calling on political leaders in Washington through the good offices of the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. It is not work he trained for, and yet his spiritual practices sustain him.

"In order to do this work you have to pray and make mediation and then you go ahead with this work," he said. "When you have to make time for prayer and meditation, God will show you what to do." ♦

REPORT OF A VISIT TO YIDA REFUGEE CAMP

BY ROBIN DENNEY

Buck Blanchard of the Diocese of Virginia and Robin Denney, former missionary to the ECS, visited Yida refugee camp in September at the invitation of Bishop Andudu Elnail of the Diocese of Kadugli. They visited the ECS priests and some of the 4,000 ECS members who live in the camp. They brought the greetings and prayers of people in the United States, as well as vestments and small support for the church there. Robin also conducted an agricultural assessment of the camp to help inform agriculture relief efforts.

The situation in the camp, as well as in the Nuba Mountains where people are fleeing to Yida from, is desperate. Bombing of civilians in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile and the burning of villages is being conducted by the government in Khartoum. Nearly a million people have been displaced by the conflict in those regions. The death and illness rates in Yida camp are above UN emergency thresholds. The camp, which was cut off by seasonal flooding for most of the year, is receiving supplies only by airdrop, and it is not enough. There is no agricultural or educational support happening in the camp. Because of that, these are Bishop Andudu's two areas of priority.



Despite all the difficulties, the faith of the church is strong in Yida. People are coming to be baptized because they see how the church members love and care for each other. One of the priests said, "It is our time to stand firm and pray. There is nothing to separate us from the love of Jesus."

Episcopal Relief and Development, Diocese of Colorado, and the Diocese of Virginia are all raising money to support the Diocese of Kadugli in their relief efforts in the camp, as well as the Diocese of Malakal and the Diocese of Renk which are hosting refugees, and Sudanese

REPORT OF A VISIT TO YIDA REFUGEE CAMP, cont'd.



Yida refugee camp from the air




Yida home garden

Development and Relief Agency (SUDRA), the development arm of the ECS, which is helping to coordinate support.

- ERD: www.er-d.org
- Colorado Episcopal Foundation: <http://coef.dioco.org/>
- Diocese of Virginia: bblanchard@thedioocese.net

Go to episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2012/10/08/

[fleeing-from-genocide-to-yida-refugee-camp-south-sudan/](#) for the article about Robin's trip.

Robin Denney, Diocese of El Camino Real, was an Episcopal Church missionary in Sudan from 2009-2011, where she served as an agriculture consultant to the ECS. She recently returned to S. Sudan to visit some of the Church's agriculture projects and Yida Refugee Camp. All photos by Robin Denney ©. 

+ + + SAVE THE DATE + + +

October 18-20, 2013

AFRECS 2013 CONFERENCE

IN CHICAGO

REFLECTIONS ON DIOCESE OF MISSOURI & DIOCESE OF LUI COMPANIONSHIP

BY MARIA L. EVANS, M.D.

*“He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell;
How great is God Almighty, who has made all things
well.” --from “All Things Bright and Beautiful” by Cecil
Frances Alexander*

Bishop Stephen Dokolo, Diocese of Lui, ECS, hosted yet another mission team from the Diocese of Missouri, led by the Rev. Canon Dan Smith. The team included the Rev. Christina Cobb, who served as chaplain, Gary Johnson, Cynthia and Carl Rapp, and myself, serving as medical officer. We were joined by Jeannie Stevens and Pauline Batstone of Blackmore Vale, Church of England, as well as the Rev. Marie Korner and the Rev. Anders Nihlgard of Lund, Church of Sweden.

The purposes of this mission trip were to teach basic carpentry, basic sewing utilizing treadle sewing machines available in Lui, basic health education, including sanitation and hygiene, to provide education for preschool teachers, and staffing for a Pastors' Conference. Not only were we pleased that we fulfilled our plans, we were blessed to see many of the fruits of our ongoing partnership with Lui Diocese.

Missouri has been in partnership with Lui for almost a decade, and although most of the missionaries were “first-timers” to Lui, we all experienced the depth of our relationship. Many times we met people who were eager to demonstrate skills they had learned from previous missionaries, and many would inquire about previous visitors to Lui. Their joy was contagious!

Signs of a relative peace are sprouting in Lui. The local market continues to thrive, including a section similar to American “farmers markets”, featuring locally grown fruits and vegetables. Trade between China and the Republic of South Sudan has brought many items never before seen in Lui, most notably a literal avalanche of cell phones. The cell tower in the middle of town testifies to the power of 21st century communications to help lift up the people of South Sudan.

A striking example of this phenomenon in communication occurred when a change was made to the length of the Pastors' Conference. In 2006, when a schedule change was made in a similar event, the word got out via drumming

from village to village. In 2012, all it took was a few phone calls! The lack of electrical service does not seem to be a deterrent to cell phone use. People are taking advantage of solar power and electrical sources that are generator-driven to charge phones. Shops sell time cards for phones, and also provide phone charging for a fee. One can only imagine what change will come when smart phone technology becomes commonplace.

The Mother's Union in Lui remains a formidable resource for the empowerment of the South Sudanese women. Sewing classes were in the MU shop, where three treadle machines are operational. The outcome of Christina's classes triggered a fashion revolution in Lui. She introduced the design of culottes for Anna, Lui's midwife, who rides a bike to visit women in her care. She began to show the women the basics of creating clothing from patterns. The women modeled their creations in front of Fraser Cathedral, accompanied by the Cathedral's youth playing drums and singing.

Carl and Gary taught carpentry class, the other major project on our docket. Isaac Magyangwa, of the Diocesan staff, proved to have carpentry skills, assuring that basic construction skills will continue to be learned. The class built several comfortable wooden chairs that will be used at Bishop Stephen's compound. The joy on each young man's face as they delivered them, singing, was palpable!

Yet, many challenges remain. Water is in short supply. The mysterious neurological disorder, Nodding Disease, still remains a problem. Less than one third of the children polled in our health education class have a personal drinking cup. Malaria remains endemic. Extreme poverty, high infant and maternal mortality still reign in Lui.

At night, during Compline and afterward, we talked about the presence of God in this place, even though recovery from the wars is slow and tensions at the border still remain. Daily we saw UN and International Organization of Migration (IOM) caravans of vehicles carrying singing, clapping refugees from place to place...some returning home to Lui, others starting over in Lui, others passing through. God is present in all of it. How great IS God Almighty, who is making all things well, in His time and space in Lui. ❖

JESSE ZINK RESEARCHES DINKA CONVERSION



In the past several years, I've traveled to South Sudan a handful of times and worked with Sudanese in the United States and the United Kingdom. One of the things that keeps me committed to this work is the privilege of hearing Sudanese tell stories of how they came to Christ, how they endured the war, and the deep meaning of their faith to them now.

For instance, in one of the Episcopal Church of Sudan's newest dioceses, the Diocese of Aweil, I remember listening as the bishop, Abraham, and the cathedral dean, Santino, both men in their 30s, told me how they walked to refugee camps in Ethiopia as young boys in the 1980s. There, they first learned about the good news of Jesus Christ, were baptized, and began the life of faith. Their faith sustained them as they were expelled from Ethiopia and ended up in Kakuma, a refugee camp in Kenya. There, the church became the center of their lives as they struggled to survive in difficult conditions with shrinking rations. Their stories are echoed by Christians across the Episcopal Church of Sudan, particularly in the growing number of dioceses composed of Dinka people.

It was not always this way, however. During the mission era, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and others were continually frustrated by the Dinka. Although CMS was having success building an indigenous church elsewhere in Africa—and, indeed, elsewhere in southern Sudan—the Dinka seemed impervious to the good news the missionaries preached. Some Dinka children converted in mission schools, but for the most part, Christianity failed to penetrate the villages and cattle camps that were central to

Dinka life. When the missionaries were expelled in 1964, the future of the Dinka church looked bleak.

Now, of course, the story could hardly be more different. Dinka Christians, like Abraham and Santino, are at the heart of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. In retrospect, it is clear that the experience of civil war in Sudan, which drove many Dinka either into internal exile in Khartoum or abroad to places like Ethiopia and Kenya, brought about the conversion of vast numbers of Dinka in a way that had never happened before. But for anecdotal stories like that of Abraham and Santino, it is a process that has largely been undocumented.

I am now a doctoral student at Cambridge University, where my research is on precisely this process of Dinka conversion during the second civil war. Not only do I think it is important to document this history so future generations of Sudanese can learn from it, I think this history is important for all Christians around the world to know about. When we learn from the experience of our sisters and brothers in Christ around the world, we grow in our faith.

But, this is not a project that can be done alone. I am acutely aware of the support Sudanese have given me in this work. I have already begun to collect such papers and reports from this period. But, I also know that there are likely many readers of *Connections* who were involved with the church during the civil war and might have memories that would be helpful to me.

If you worked with or were involved with the Sudanese church—particularly the Dinka church—at any point between 1983 and 2005, I'd be interested in talking with you—on the phone, in person, or by e-mail or letter. Working together, I pray, this project can produce something of value both to Sudanese and to Christians everywhere.

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Ed. Note: Jesse Zink is a priest in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts who now serves as assistant chaplain at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He is a former Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) missionary. ✠

COMINGS & GOINGS, ETC.

O God, surround those who travel in Your service, with Your loving care; protect them from every danger; bring them safely to their journey's end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

AFRECS ANNOUNCES DATES FOR 2013 CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO

OCTOBER 18-20, 2013 SAVE THE DATES

January 12

Twenty-three seminarians graduated from Renk Theological College, one of five ECS accredited schools of theology. Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, founder of RTC, said, "This school stands for unity throughout the entire northern Upper Nile State. It gathers Christians, Muslims, and all the people in peace."

February 7-11

Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul led a delegation of ECS Bishops, Hilary Garang, Malakal, Joseph Garang Atem, Renk, and Fr. Abraham Chuti, Curate of St. Matthew Cathedral, Renk, on a mission to Yirol Diocese, Daniel Deng Abell, Bishop, to promote strong relationships and exchange visits between dioceses of the ECS, benefiting communities through internal partnerships; and to build unity among tribes and community leaders.

February 7-14

Bishop Alan Scarfe, his wife, Donna, The Rev. Kathleen Milligan and The Rev. Torey Lightcap traveled to the Diocese of Nzara, Samuel Peni, Bishop, for an initial visit to solidify their Companion Diocese Relationship, officially begun in Oct. 2012. They attended a meeting of Nzara Diocesan Synod and traveled throughout the diocese.

<http://missionminutes.blogspot.com>

<http://irreducibleminimums.blogspot.com>

February 13 - March 30 -- Lent

The Holy Season of Lent. The Diocese of Wau, Moses Deng Bol, Bishop, has developed a Lenten study, available on the diocesan website. www.wau.anglican.org

Dean of Student Affairs, RTC, Renk Diocese Studies at VTS

The Rev. Jacob Panchol Majok, Dean of Student Affairs, Renk Theological College, Renk Diocese, is in residence at Virginia Theological College (VTS), Alexandria, for one year of study. He writes...

"I am delighted to be at VTS. I understand English and the work I am doing much better now than six months ago, when I first arrived. It is my plan to equip myself to ensure a better future for RTC and the Diocese of Renk, as well as the Episcopal Church of Sudan. When our former diocesan bishop of Renk, Dr. Daniel Deng Bul, who is now our Archbishop of ECS, was trained here at VTS, people were looking at him to be trained only for the benefit of Renk, but now his training is benefiting the whole Sudan. It has been the same with Bishop of Malakal, Hilary Garang, Rev. Oliver Duku of Mundri Diocese, and Rev. Bartholomeo Bol Deng. These men are serving South Sudan now in different ways, not only spiritually, but also in development work. The ECS has huge benefits from the priests and bishops who were trained in the U.S.A., especially.

And, I am receiving a lot from the classes and, even more, from the experiences at churches I have visited in my field education. I am prepared and eager to go back to RTC when I finish to teach at the college, as well as serve in administrative work where necessary."

Vermont Medical Mission Visits S. Sudan

On Jan. 20, Dr. Deborah Jerard and Martha Holden, of Christ Church, Montpelier, VT., flew to Akobo, South Sudan, at the invitation of the Mother's Union of St. John's Episcopal Church, Akobo. They were greeted with songs, praises of Hallelujah, a foot washing that felt wonderful in the 100 degree heat, and many hugs from the mothers.



What a wonderful welcome! Go to <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2013/02/06/Vermont> for the rest of the story.

Bishop Andudu Elnail Urges African Leaders to Act

A panel of civil society leaders, including Bishop Andudu Elnail, Diocese of Kadugli in the Nuba Mountains, were joined Jan. 23 by the former UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Mukesh Kapila. He urged African political leaders to use the upcoming African Union Summit in Addis Ababa to end the humanitarian suffering in Sudan, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Having just returned from the region, Kapila called for an independent commission of enquiry into the conflict amongst warnings of ethnic cleansing. Bishop Andudu said, "I am here on behalf of my people. This is a war of horror where children are dying every day. There are no vaccinations, medicine, there is nothing. In

December there were over 230 bombings. We are calling for the AU leadership to take action at its summit. This is a rare opportunity that we must not miss." Go to <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2013/01/23/bishop-urges> Diocese of Kadugli website: www.kadugli.anglican.org

ECS House of Bishops Meeting, November 2012

The report of the ECS House of Bishops Meeting is on the website of the Diocese of Kadugli, www.kadugli.anglican.org.

RECOMMENDED READING

Sudan, South Sudan & Darfur, What Everyone Needs to Know, Andrew S. Natsios, Oxford University Press, 2012

Grace at the Garbage Dump, Making Sense of Mission in the Twenty-First Century, Jesse A. Zink, Cascade Books, 2012

A Long Walk to Water, Linda Sue Park, Clarion Books, 2010



"LET US NOT BECOME WEARY IN DOING GOOD, FOR AT THE PROPER TIME WE WILL REAP A HARVEST IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP." GALATIANS 6:9

ABYEI 2012



ECS staff member at Abyei School, January 2011



Same ECS staff member in same location, Oct 2012