

AFRECS E-Blast: March 17, 2016

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

Message from Executive Director, Richard Parkins

A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY

Dear Friends,

Sometimes tragedy affords us an opportunity to commit good, and maybe even exceptional, acts. Possibly such an opportunity is before our sisters and brothers in South Sudan. Plans are going forward to implement a generous grant from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The grant is made to the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) to promote peace and reconciliation in South Sudan. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the grantee with the Council (SSCC) serving as the implementing partner.

It has been generally acknowledged that the faith communities of South Sudan have the responsibility to serve as key agents of peace making in this war ravaged nation. The churches presumably have the legitimacy and credibility to be the purveyors of peace building but lack the resources to carry out this daunting task on a nation wide basis. This USAID grant to the SSCC now provides the resources that allow the churches to be at the forefront of peace and reconciliation work at a time when peace is so urgently needed. Let us pray that this will happen.

History is replete with instances of heroic deeds emerging from tragic circumstances. Our Christian narrative abounds with such accounts. Wouldn't it, therefore, be wonderful if the church communities of South Sudan were to come together in a robust expression of ecumenical cooperation to reach out to their various constituencies to bring about a sustainable peace - a peace that would set South Sudan on a path toward becoming a unified and peaceful nation. Not only would such a move ameliorate the horrific suffering that has been inflicted on the country since December 2013, but it would enhance the credibility of the churches as sources of healing and reconciliation. Given the divisions that have plagued the country and the pain that these divisions have caused, the challenge of peace making is exceedingly formidable. Indeed, if the churches could bring healing at this time, it would be an especially powerful fulfillment of the Gospel mandate to forgive and be reconciled to one another. One might hope that the churches would emerge with even greater influence to guide and sustain their people in the years to come by nurturing the spirit of unity that South Sudan needs.

As we continue with our observance of Lent and deeply take in our Lord's commandment to love one another as Christ loves us, let us consider special prayers that the leaders of denominations and faith communities in South Sudan will grasp this opportunity to spread reconciliation and peace.

In suggested readings which lift up the theme of peace, our prayer book leads us to Psalm 85. Let us reflect on these words of the psalmist:

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good

and our land will yield its increase.

May this be our prayer and our hope for our brothers and sisters in South Sudan. Let us continue our prayers for peace in South Sudan, most especially in those areas most recently overtaken by violence.

Faithfully,
Richard

News from the Wau Diocese

Of special interest: Susan V. Meade is serving as a teacher at St. John's College in Wau. [Click here](#) to see the Renewal Newsletter from the Diocese of Wau, then turn to page 20 for the beginning of her article concerning her many surprising connections to this diocese. Susan is visiting from her home diocese of Southwestern VA where she is a professor of sociology at Ferrum College. Recently, she and others completed a solar training project. She concludes her article with these words: "(A diverse group of people from the Wau community) all learned basic solar principles, took practical tests, and learned life empowerment techniques. Forty-four people earned their basic solar certificates and Susan was one of them! The dream of working together in South Sudan, sprouted five years earlier but germinated from seeds planted decades before, finally came true!"

We Are Children in Lui

The website "[We Are Children in Lui.](#)", was created by partners from Lund, Sweden. Working with partners from Blackmore Vale, located in the diocese of Missouri, they put it online in English. It tells a lot about life in Lui through the eyes of children and makes connections to the UN Convention on the Rights of Children as well as to scripture. It may be used for Sunday school and the chapters are appropriate for a secular audience also. Photographs capture their life in community. Chapter headings include: home/ market/ school/ sports/ handicraft/ nature/ church. A sampling of three chapters follows:

Bukala, a 6 year old, says: Last week I had to go to the hospital. I felt sick; I had a high temperature, headache and pain in my whole body. I didn't feel well at all so it was hard to walk all the way to the hospital.

Nami, a 4 year old says: ...Today I am very happy because I am going to preschool and many of my friends will be there.

Taban, a 10 year old says: A year ago my relatives had a big party. ...(G)randad wanted to see his children and grandchildren.. ... (He) wanted all the cousins to meet so that we got to know each other.

News from Bishop Gwynne College

Periodically, Trevor Stubbs, the International Consultant for Bishop Gwynne College (BGC) located in Juba, will give an update to prayer partners. The following is an excerpt from the latest newsletter: "As always, I am impressed at the continued progress of the college (BGC) despite the many problems that South Sudan is facing. Juba is very full. So many people crowd into the houses in the suburbs - many of them tin corrugated iron shacks with little water and no electricity. The supply of fuel seems to have improved from October, the roads are teeming with traffic - with a huge number of boda-bodas

(motorbike taxis) skittering in all directions. However, the price of food has rocketed. In October you could get a piece of bread for one pound, now it is two. When I left there were 30 South Sudan Pounds to the US dollar - and the situation is worsening daily. You will be aware of the political situation. Please keep all that side of things in your prayers."

[Click here](#) to read the whole letter and [click here](#) to go to the BGC website.

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South Sudan

USAID funding for South Sudanese Reconciliation Project

[Radio Tamazuj](#) was among several news sources reporting recently that the US will fund a \$6 million South Sudanese reconciliation project. US Ambassador to South Sudan, Molly Phee, announced the program, which is described in this article and the above message from Richard Parkins.

Abuses and Atrocities in South Sudan Confirmed by the following reports:

[Human Rights Watch](#) report: South Sudan: Army Abuses Spread West: Hybrid Court, Arms Embargo Needed.

[PBS Newshour](#): UN: Women and girls are 'currency' in South Sudan's civil war. Interviewed by Hari Sreenivasan, UN official, David Marshall, describes war crimes in South Sudan.

[The New York Times](#): In South Sudan, City of Hope is now City of Fear.

[NPR Morning Edition](#): Nothing Is Going Right In The World's Newest Nation.

Other Reports and News from South Sudan:

[Sudd Institute report](#): Sporadic Fuel Crisis in South Sudan: Causes, Impacts, and Solutions.

[Sudan Tribune](#): South Sudan's wildlife and natural resources under threat: report.

[Sudan Tribune](#): Angelina Teny (wife of Riek Machar) urges South Sudanese women to participate in change, reforms.

[Sudan Tribune](#): Pope expresses interest to visit South Sudan: Catholic bishop.

[Deutsche Welle \(DW\)](#):A holiday in South Sudan? ...Strife-torn nations like South Sudan ...are also aiming to boost tourism...

Sudan

Sudanese Islamist figure al-Turabi dies at age of 84

[BBC News](#) and [AP The Big Story](#) were among other global news sources reporting on the recent death of this leader in Sudan.

[Foreign Policy](#) analysis of Turabi's influence and legacy: The Islamist Behind Sudan's Throne. Hassan al-Turabi remade his once cosmopolitan country into a strict Islamic state. But, for him, the revolution never stopped.

[International Crisis Group](#): Hassan al-Turabi's Islamist Legacy in Sudan: (His) death... marks the eclipse of a radical era of Sudanese Islamist politics. But Turabi's legacy is still keenly felt in the country's fractured domestic politics and isolated international position.

[Mada Masr](#), a Cairo-based news website released the following on its opinion page: Obituary: Hassan al-Turabi (1932-2016). Here are two brief excerpts from this in-depth article:

"The unified Islamic identity attracted some groups....But more often than not, Muslim & non-Muslim Sudanese resisted coercive Islamism while deepening their religious identities. Under Turabi's Islamic revolution, most of South Sudan was baptized."

"Turabi remained in very good health until the end of his 84 years. (Despite the past) President Bashir - 72 years old and with some cancer scares behind him - came to visit Turabi's deathbed and reportedly was visibly moved. The old guard is changing."

Update on President Bashir's Unenforced ICC Arrest Warrant for Genocide in Darfur

[Newsweek](#): World: South Africa Loses Appeal Over Sudan President Al-Bashir Arrest Warrant

[Quartz Africa](#): Sudan's president has made 74 trips across the world in the seven years he's been wanted for war crimes.

The Region, including Both Sudans

[Crisis Group Special Report](#): Exploiting Disorder: al Qaeda and the Islamic State

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

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

Ellen J. Hanckel

Editor

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

If you'd like to be doing more to help address the crisis in South Sudan, please consider the following:

*Pray for peace and deep healing of the conflicts and rivalries in South Sudan.

*Join AFRECS or renew your annual membership on line at <http://www.afreecs.org/getInvolved.htm>

* If you have contacts in South Sudan and are able to get news of various parts of the country and the church from them, keep AFRECS in the loop by replying to this email or using our main contact email address: info@afreecs.org.

* Be prepared to advocate for peacemaking with the US (or other) government, especially if attention to conflict resolution wanes.

*[Donate](#) to support the Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan's efforts to provide solace and encourage reconciliation.

*Urge others to support [AFRECS](#) as well.