

AFRECS E-Blast: May 15, 2013

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

In the church:

A Message from AFRECS Executive Director Richard Parkins

A FAITHFUL WITNESS

In the midst of sometimes discouraging news and difficult situations, we forget to be faithful or we lessen our zeal for positive engagement. Obviously, that is a reversal of what we are called to be as modern day apostles of Christ's call to servant ministry. It is the persistent and sometimes courageous work of the faithful that keeps reminding those in trying situations to have hope and remain faithful to Christ's promise of an ever caring God. For this reason, I ask your prayers for the mission trip of friends of Hope for Humanity as they travel to South Sudan to work with the Hope and Resurrection School near Rumbek founded by Jennifer and Darryl Ernst. Two back to back mission trips will bring the prayers and greetings of American friends to the pupils and teachers of this secondary school in an area where quality secondary education was virtually non-existent until the Hope and Humanity project took hold and where young women were not considered a priority student body until the Hope and Resurrection School made educating girls an essential part of its mission.

There are many such expressions of "hope" being offered by faithful Christians who believe that being the body of Christ in the world, most particularly in a part of the world where challenges seem formidable, is precisely what we are called to do. There are astonishing examples of projects that bring together Muslim and Christians in cooperative endeavors in a land where violent religious conflict has been a tragic theme of the country's history. Other projects focus on health services in remote and severely under served areas of South Sudan. Theological colleges continue to educate clergy for a challenging and uncertain future with a church that has accompanied its people through a bitter, war ravaged past. It is this collection of faithful witnesses that reminds us of the ongoing message of Easter – that hope can lead to transformation if prayer, faith, and courage nurtured by God's embrace can prevail. These witnesses also breakthrough the despair that may exist in places where war and poverty have been so prevalent. These witnesses are more than a service; they affirm for thousands that they are cared for and believed in by those who follow Christ's commandment to love one another and to express that love through service. Let us lift up the work of all those who labor to be 'A Faithful Witness'.

Richard Parkins

In South Sudan:

See this May 5th article in the Sudan Tribune about the transfer of leadership and documents to the newly appointed national reconciliation committee chaired by the Episcopal Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul with the Roman Catholic Bishop Paride Taban serving as deputy chairperson. ([See here.](#))

'Sorting out the mayhem in Jonglei State', is the subject of this week's analysis by [The Sudd Institute](#).

Appeal for cease fire by Bishop Paride Taban on the [Kuron Peace Village website](#). See full press release [here..](#) "Stop the bloodshed, we have lost enough lives!" writes the Bishop. "The people dying in this war between South Sudanese are not Dinka, Murle, Nuer, Toposa, Madi, Acholi or Bari; they are South Sudanese."

UN officials are very disturbed about the situation in Pibor town, also located in Jonglei State. Follow this [link](#) to see the press release from the UN Mission in South Sudan: 'UNMISS is deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in Pibor Town'.

In Sudan:

Amnesty International requests urgent action for advocacy regarding a female lawyer who is detained and at risk of torture. See [here](#) for the full story in the Sudan Tribune and [here](#) for instructions about advocacy action. Also see the allAfrica article [here](#) about 18 women detained without trial and the hunger strike they are staging to bring attention to their plight.

This [Reuter's article](#) details the recent developments in Sudan's South Kordofan civil war which threaten the progress made in March regarding the restart of oil production in South Sudan, flowing to market through Sudan. There are more reports about Sudan's civil war in South Kordofan and the mounting calls for Sudan's defense minister to resign. See this [Sudan Tribune article](#).

In Both Sudans:

"A growing body of evidence indicates that from 2009 until at least early 2013 the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group has periodically operated in the Kafia Kingi enclave, one of the disputed areas on the border between Sudan and South Sudan." See this full report published in late April by [The Resolve](#) an advocacy group dedicated to the 'LRA Crisis Initiative'.

This article from [NewVision](#), Uganda's leading daily, strengthens the above report, confirming that 'Kony could return to Sudan any time.' In another article, the Sudan Tribune reports that Sudan denies harboring the leader of the LRA. Finally, in this related story in the Sudan [Catholic](#)

[Radio](#) Network, read about the rescue of a twelve year old girl after she escaped from two years of captivity by the LRA.

The killing of Kuol Deng Kuol, the paramount chief of the Ngok Dinka in Abyei, among others, is strongly condemned by the African Union, South Sudan, the US and the UN. This [Sudan Tribune article](#) tells the in-depth story, including the background of the contested territory. South Sudan holds Sudan responsible and says that Abyei will be claimed at any cost. Meanwhile Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) calls for restraint in the wake of the Abyei killings. ([See here.](#)) Finally, Abyei's new paramount chief vows to follow in 'footsteps' of the late chief, Kuol. ([See here.](#))

For deeper understanding, read this book review by Alex de Waal, Director of the World Peace Foundation. The book, 'The Fate of Sudan: Origins and Consequences of a Flawed Peace Process', by John Young was published in London by Zed Books in 2012. The review was recently published in [allAfrica](#). Equally important is John [Young's response](#) to the review along with this quote from John Ashworth's Google Group:

John Young says, "The idea behind Alex's review and his request that I respond to it is that it will generate a much needed debate around the issues of peace in Sudan and anyone with any opinions is welcome to jump in by submitting responses to his blog." In conclusion, John Ashworth points out a striking final sentence from John Young's response: "unlike the SPLA, insurgents in neighbouring Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda built powerful mass based organizations able to militarily defeat their foes and were thus able – thankfully - to keep out liberal saviours from the West"!

AFRECS Editor's note: There is much food for thought in the above dialogue for those who need and want to understand the complexities of the whole picture in Sudan and South Sudan. Hopefully, deeper understanding of the historical aspects will bring us to more effective, confident action in the present. ejh

News from AFRECS:

The AFRECS National Conference is scheduled for October 18-20, 2013 in Chicago at Seabury Western seminary. Please save the dates of Friday, October 18th through Sunday October 20th and plan to join us in Chicago.

Reminder: Please check the AFRECS web site for the [Winter edition of SUDAN CONNECTIONS](#)

Pray

Pray for productive debate generated by the book, review, and response cited above in the section: In both Sudans.

Pray for the restraint necessary to refrain from war in the wake of the killings in Abyei.

Pray for the women incarcerated and at risk of torture in Sudan.

Give thanks for the restart of the Healing, Peace & Reconciliation Conference in South Sudan under the leadership of Episcopal Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul with the support of Roman Catholic Bishop Paride Taban. Pray for the strength of the leaders, the members and for this process to proceed towards healing, peace & reconciliation for all concerned in the new nation of South Sudan.

Pray for an overwhelming response to the advocacy efforts detailed in these E-Blasts. Pray especially for the cessation of indiscriminate bombing in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan and for the people of Yida, as well as other refugee camps, located in Unity State of South Sudan.

Urge

Prayerfully consider going to the [Enough Project Advocacy event](#) in DC, Monday, June 10. See [March 20th E-Blast](#) for more information.

Urge others to write letters to government representatives as outlined in the [March 7th E-Blast](#). It's not too late to do so.

Give

Give a modest amount today to further the work of AFRECS by becoming a member. ([See here for how to join.](#))

Learn

Learn more by reviewing the last [E-Blast: May 1st](#) and by going to the [AFRECS home page](#).

In Christ, with thanks for your efforts and prayers for peace,
Ellen J. Hanckel, Editor