

AFRECS E-Blast: June 15, 2016

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**Message from Executive Director, Richard Parkins**

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Dear Friends,

As I listened to a priest parse the story of Jesus and the stentorian at a recent Sunday service, my inclination to tie the story to the situation in South Sudan took over. My reflections brought me quickly to the conclusion that this New Testament account has a powerful message for those of us who are hoping and praying for peace in South Sudan.

Does not the stentorian, a Roman soldier, seem like an unlikely person to reach out to Christ for the healing of his child? Must it not have seemed strange to some of Christ's followers that Jesus so unabashedly extended his healing power to the family of a Roman soldier - a person whose role was to keep Jewish subjects in check? Possibly the seeming paradox that we see here is, in fact, what our faith in Jesus is all about - having unlikely folks reach across boundaries of division and hostility to find healing and new life.

It is the compelling truth of Christ's ministry that will hopefully take over public discourse in South Sudan, especially among those who have for more than two and a half years kept the embers of conflict burning. Must not those who have either suffered at the hands of "the other" or have themselves been perpetrators of violence unite as friends? It is the reconciliation between those seen as enemies or aliens that must be the kind of radical change that has to occur in South Sudan if a sustainable peace is to be achieved.

If we are a part of the Jesus Movement as our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calls us to be, we should live into this message from Jesus. Also let us hope that our Christian sisters and brothers in South Sudan will commit to the Jesus Movement as well. If so, peace and reconciliation have a chance.

In the peace of Christ,  
Richard

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**SAVE THE DATE** for the [2016 AFRECS CONFERENCE](#) October 21 - 23. Location: St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 1020-24th St., West Des Moines, IA.

Under the theme of 'Building Bridges of Reconciliation' the conference will

- 1) Explore opportunities for the Sudanese diaspora to contribute to peacemaking in the Sudans and
- 2) Explore ways the friendship of North Americans can contribute to peacemaking in the Sudans.

Distinguished Guest Speakers and workshop leaders: (Tentative)

- 1) Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul; The Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan.
- 2) Bishop Samuel Enosa Peni; Diocese of Nzara, South Sudan and Chairperson of the Joint Peace and Reconciliation Commission of The Episcopal Church in South Sudan and Sudan.

- 3) Congressman Jim Leach; Congressman from Iowa, 1977-2007, and Retired Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- 4) Dr. Dane Smith; Adjunct Professor, School of International Service, American University, Washington DC and Former Senior Advisor in the Office of the US Special Envoy for Darfur and Deputy Chief of Mission in Sudan as well as Ambassador to Guinea and Senegal.
- 5) The Rev. Canon Angela S. Ifill, Missioner, Black Ministries, The Episcopal Church (U.S.)

If you are interested in working on or contributing to this conference which is developing now, please contact Rich Jones, Chair of the Conference Planning Committee by replying to this email or by using our main contact email address: [info@afrecs.org](mailto:info@afrecs.org).

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### **South Sudan**

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[New York Times Op-ed](#): **South Sudan Needs Truth, Not Trials...** Article by-line: Salva Kiir and Riek Machar dated June 7th with an Editors' Note dated June 11th that states: *Four days after publication of this article, one of the authors, First Vice President Riek Machar, disavowed the contents, saying that he had not been consulted about the essay, which was submitted by representatives of the South Sudan president, Salva Kiir. The president's spokesman maintains that Mr. Machar had been consulted before the essay was written.* The article advocates for a mediated peace, truth and reconciliation process modeled after the ones in Northern Ireland and South Africa, not for disciplinary justice tried in a court, such as the planned international tribunal - the Hybrid Court for South Sudan. It is addressed to the international community, particularly the United States and Britain, making the case that justice under the law "would destabilize efforts to unite our nation by keeping alive anger and hatred among the people of South Sudan."

[allAfrica](#): South Sudan: Juba Officials to Serve Life in Jail for U.S.\$14 Million Theft.... On Monday, the South Sudanese High Court "sentenced at least 16 government officials to life in prison for embezzling public funds. Those jailed are former employees of the State High Office of President Salva Kiir."

[Sudan Tribune](#): At a recent meeting in Juba, the head of the U.N. peacekeeping operations, Herve Ladsous, urged South Sudanese leaders to prioritise peace and security. ..."South Sudan has opened a new page in its national life," he said, "with the coming into force of the newly-established Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU)."..."According to Ladsous, South Sudanese leaders should focus on, stability and security, the situation of internally displaced persons, building an institutional framework, the economy and humanitarian situation with focus on food insecurity."

[New York Times](#): Dispute over (Terekeka) area's status heightens suffering in South Sudan.

[Daily Messenger](#): Water for South Sudan founder pays Victor (NY) students surprise visit. "Victor Junior High students had a rare treat Monday when a man admired by the students — and many worldwide for his courage, leadership and humanitarianism — stopped in. [Salva Dut](#), who founded the Rochester-based nonprofit [Water for South Sudan, Inc.](#) in 2003, came by because of the students' exemplary efforts in helping Water for South Sudan. The junior high students raised more than \$1,500. The funds go toward providing people in the world's newest nation, and one of its poorest, with access to clean, safe drinking water."

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### **Both Sudans**

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### [ShanghaiDaily.com](#)

"More than 47,000 South Sudanese have fled into Sudan's East Darfur in Western region since January with about 500 households arriving per day until early April," two U.N. agencies reported on Monday. In a joint humanitarian report, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said new arrivals have since continued at a slower rate, and as of January to June 11, about 47,100 refugees had arrived in East Darfur." ..."(T)he influx of South Sudanese refugees is driven by deteriorating food insecurity and ongoing violence in South Sudan." ..."(They are) people who are driven from their homes in search of life-saving assistance in Sudan."

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### **Sudan**

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[Sudan Tribune](#): "Sudan Call" meeting shrouded in mystery and conflicting statements from its leaders.

[Sudan Tribune](#): The Sudanese government announced recently the official dissolution of Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) and Darfur Peace Office indicating the implementation of the peace agreement in the Darfur region.

[arabianbusiness.com](#) Recently published by Reuters: "Sudan's Bank of Khartoum has agreed to buy" the majority share in the Sudanese fixed line (telephone) operator, Canar. If the deal is approved by Sudanese authorities, it would enable the company to access the mobile phone market in Sudan that reportedly was 72% in 2014, placing the country 165th globally and indicating substantial growth potential.

[Celluar News](#) also carried a summary of the above story under the headline: Etisalat Forced to Sell Sudan Stake to Local Bank. A company based in Dubai (UAE), Etisalat, "has announced that it is selling its Sudanese landline operator, Canar, to the local Bank of Khartoum." The company "had previously agreed to sell Canar to Zain, but the Bank of Khartoum owned a blocking 3.7 percent stake in the landline operator and exercised its option to prevent the sale. The bank also exercised an option to buy the Etisalat's 92.3 percent stake, and is paying USD95.2 million, the same price that Zain had offered for the company." This deal "remains subject to certain conditions, including the approval of Sudanese authorities, Etisalat said."

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## The Region

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[Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#): **Statement by Ambassador Matthew Rycroft of the UK Mission to the U.N.**

*Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in the Context of Peace-keeping Operations*

"Weather in Syria or in South Sudan, it is clear that we are failing the most vulnerable when they need us the most."

[New York Times](#): More Time Needed to Send Somali Refugees Home, U.N. Tells Kenya.

"Kenya must relax its November deadline for sending some 350,000 Somalis home from the world's largest refugee complex as parts of their war-torn nation are unsafe, the United Nations refugee chief said on Monday. He called on donors to provide funding to create jobs and build infrastructure in Somalia to allow refugees in the Dabaab camp who wish to return home to nine areas regarded as safe by the U.N. to do so. 'The places of origin of many of the refugees in Dadaab are still very insecure,' the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, told a news conference in Nairobi on Monday."

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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

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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.afrecs.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@afrecs.org](mailto:info@afrecs.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.