

AFRECS E-Blast: September 11, 2013

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

**In the church:**

**Join Us in Chicago: A Message from AFRECS Executive Director Richard Parkins**

Dear Friends,

This year's Conference of the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS) will take place at a time when South Sudan and the African populations of peripheral areas of Sudan face daunting challenges. These include military attacks on civilian populations and cross-border conflicts affecting both countries. Inter-tribal cattle raiding and conflict as well as government corruption are major problems in South Sudan.

These challenges are being addressed by the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) and its friends in the international community. But it's an uphill and seesaw battle. These problems render the role and the work of the Episcopal Church of Sudan more crucial than ever because it and the Roman Catholic Church are the two most important civil society institutions in the South. They are important in the North as well. The churches' reach, their moral authority and their numerical weight are being used to promote peace and reconciliation and to stand up for public integrity and the public interest.

The Episcopal Church of Sudan is making a difference. AFRECS, its members and the ECS' other friends will be making a difference by redoubling our spiritual, moral and material support of its work and its capabilities.

This year's AFRECS conference will allow the friends of the ECS to examine our ongoing relationship with our Sudanese sisters and brothers and to probe ways that we can enrich our partnerships with the ECC dioceses and other bodies. Joining us for this conference will be several ECS bishops. They will witness to their achievements and to the difficulties they confront. American lay and ordained church leaders will also share their experiences and lessons learned in collaborating with and supporting the work of the ECS.

We will hold a session on the political and economic landscape of South Sudan and, to a lesser extent, of Sudan. This will feature a presentation by at least one expert with long, firsthand experience and be followed by a question and answer period.

Added to this will be presentations on the contributions by The (U.S.) Episcopal Church, Episcopal dioceses and parishes as well as AFRECS itself to ECS theological and skills training, social services, humanitarian and peace and reconciliation efforts in South Sudan.

Because advocacy remains a key aspect of the AFRECS mission, we shall hold a session on matters deserving U.S. policy interest and on the tools and strategies needed to enlist US policy makers in making more robust contributions to the peace and stability of South Sudan.

Please make plans now to add your thoughts, your voice, your prayers and your subsequent actions to those of us who will be gathering for this eighth AFRECS National Conference. Please [JOIN US](#).

Richard Parkins  
Executive Director

### **Wau Newsletter**

The ECS Diocese of Wau has published a [new issue](#) of its excellent newsletter.

### **Ecumenical Councils in the Sudans**

The [Sudan Council of Churches](#) has split into two separate organizations to reflect the boundary changes brought by South Sudanese independence.

### **Old Testament Translation Project**

A Sudanese ministry in Australia has begun translating the Old Testament into Dinka, as Anglican Communion News Service [reports](#).

### **In the two Sudans:**

#### **Presidential Summit**

[Reuters reports](#) that Presidents Kiir and Al-Bashir met Tuesday, September 3, in Khartoum and agreed to keep the pipeline open and oil flowing between South Sudan and Sudan. They also promised to honor all previously signed bilateral agreements.

#### **The UN on the Sudans**

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has published its [August newsletter](#), which includes information on flooding and returnees from Sudan to South Sudan.

The UN's humanitarian coordinators for the two countries also issued a [joint call](#) for resolution of issues of citizens of the two states living in the neighboring land.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon has called for a ministerial-level [consultation](#) on the Sudans in New York September 27th.

## **New US Special Envoy**

President Obama has appointed Donald Booth [US Special Envoy](#) for Sudan and South Sudan. Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Carti said his country would [cooperate](#) with Booth if he has a clear road map for addressing the issues important to Sudan.

## **Juba-Khartoum Flights**

In hopeful news, the [first commercial flight](#) of a South Sudanese carrier to Khartoum has occurred.

## **Reduction in Refugee Numbers**

A significantly [lower-than-expected number](#) of Sudanese refugees -- 500 -- entered South Sudan from South Kordofan and Blue Nile during the first half of 2013, according to the United Nations.

## **Abyei**

The UN-AU plan to carry out the Abyei referendum in October has met with refusal by the government of Sudan, but the [residents of the area](#) want it to go forward. Luka Biong Deng has some [analysis](#) for the *Sudan Tribune*. John Ashworth has also recently had editorial remarks on the topic; for a look at his coverage, see his main [Google Groups page](#).

## **In Sudan:**

### **Negotiations on Darfur**

The African Union-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator/Joint Special Representative held discussions on issues in Darfur with the delegations of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement in Arusha, Tanzania, 22-27 August, 2013. The AU-UN JCM/JSR presented findings on the current humanitarian and security situation in the region and the implementation of the Doha Agreement, while the movements detailed their concerns. For more information, the *Sudan Tribune* has published the [Outcome Statement](#).

### **Temporary Unilateral Truce**

The SPLM-N announced a unilateral one-month [cessation of hostilities](#) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states in response to the serious flooding in these areas. The Sudanese Army called the move cheap propaganda.

## In South Sudan:

### Last Key Government Officials Confirmed

As the Voice of America reports, the South Sudan Parliament has approved President Kiir's appointment of a [new Vice President](#), James Wani Igga and its own [new speaker](#), Manas Magok Rundial, and two deputy speakers, Jasmine Samuel and Mark Nyipouch.

In a related story, the website *The Niles* reports that President Kiir's new cabinet includes considerably [more women](#) than the old one did: 5 out of 21 instead of the previous 2.

Meanwhile, after consultations with President Kiir, the governor of Bahr al-Ghazal state has [dissolved his cabinet and dismissed his deputy](#).

### Development Matters

\* South Sudan has [banned](#) the licensing of **motorcycles** to foreigners and the operation of boda bodas (motorcycle taxis), by foreigners, prompting hundreds of Ugandans to leave the country.

\* [Higher education](#) in South Sudan is suffering from serious financial problems.

\* Along with its efforts to help South Sudan develop roads and utilities, [China](#) has pledged to invest \$43 million in a **mining survey** to assess the natural resources of the country.

### Population of South Sudan

World Population Review has [new information](#) about the population and demographics of South Sudan.

**PRAY:** Please keep the nations of Sudan and South Sudan in your prayers, that recent dialogue and efforts toward cooperation may prosper. Pray for the victims of floods in both countries and those who bring relief. Pray for higher education in South Sudan, for teachers and institutions, and for student access and success. Pray for the many civilians working for relief and development in South Sudan through international NGOs, governments, and the United Nations. Pray for the people of Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, and Jonglei and all other troubled areas of the two countries.

**TEACH:** Plan to attend the AFRECS conference in Chicago October 18-20. Share what you know, learn from others, and connect with fellow friends of and advocates for the people of Sudan and South Sudan. For more information and registration, visit the [AFRECS website](#).

**PARTNER:** If your organization has been considering a partnership with an entity in the Episcopal Church of Sudan, the upcoming AFRECS conference will be an excellent venue for gathering information, both formally and informally.

**URGE:** Likewise, if you have an interest in undertaking advocacy on behalf of the people of Sudan and South Sudan, you'll find excellent help at the upcoming AFRECS conference.

**GIVE:** To join AFRECS or donate to support its work, please [click here](#).

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