

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIP TO ETHIOPIA

By Gatluak Thach, Clerk of Session of the Sudanese American Nuer in Gallatin, TN

*Written to the Rev. Jeff Ritchie of the Outreach Foundation
and RE David Paduil, Sudanese American Nuer.*

To Jeff et al.,

Thanks for sharing the information of your fruitful journey to Gambella, Ethiopia. We thank God for guiding you and Elder David to meet our people of God who live in such conditions due to a significant manmade catastrophe. It meant so much for these church representatives to receive and share their congregational plights in the camps with you. Although you might have not found time to visit either camp as your time did not allow, I believe the message you conveyed told most of all you may have seen had God allowed your visit to one of those camps.

Even though the fundamental priority is lifesaving now, many South Sudanese still believe their God has not left them. They know evils have invested in their leaders which has caused their lives to be in these ways, yet as it is in the Bible, there is time for everything. "A time for war and a time for peace." In this the process, it is who stood with you when you are in this trouble.

As Christians brothers and sisters, we have a daunting role to play. We need to pray for peace in South Sudan. It has to be collective responsibility for each one of us-- either here in US or in Africa -- to call upon our Father in Heaven to rescue His children from these terrible circumstances. God is more powerful than political dictators.

As we speak, the president of South Sudan has declared few days ago a totally war against the opposition forces. The war he declared has now begun in all corners of the Upper Nile regions, targeting areas of opposition armies and civilians which exonerates no single living person in the areas.

The distractions of properties and human lives had dreadful outcries of people of South Sudan for rescue which is falling to deaf ears. The war has so far perished lives of more than 50,000 South Sudanese people and displaced 2.5 millions from their homes. Another 4.2 millions are internally affected with looming famine while more than 50,000 children under 5 years are malnourished and faced deaths daily. The political crisis triggered by hatreds among South Sudanese leaders, who were supposed to lead as it was discussed in this African Union Commission on South Sudan report: <http://nyamile.com/2015/03/07/draft-report-of-the-au-commission-of-inquiry-on-south-sudan/>, was the cause of this manmade disaster.

People of Upper Nile who are more than 80% Presbyterians are severely affected by this catastrophe. I personally think it is within interest of our Presbytery Church to involve in whatever means possible to join other community partners in bring peace as well as addressing the immediate needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ such as providing Hymnals, Bibles, Mosquito Nets for sicked, disable, newborn, pregnant women, and more. We can as well advocate and write to our federal elected officials and human right institutions, including UN to bring to an end this crisis in South Sudan by addressing the root causes, as well as forge for compromises among the affected community.

It is also factual that people of South Sudan are God fearing people. It is their leaders who had forgotten what their God had done and has been doing to His people in South Sudan.

The civic society, included church institutions made it possible peace of 2005 to exist. United States, Norway, and Greater British had played a critical role in ensuring for a permanent peace to arrive in Sudan in 2005. But, if it were not the roles and prayers of church members in US and elsewhere, 2005 peace that brought to an end the conflict between North and South Sudanese that went on for more than 30 years would have not come to an end. The Independence of South Sudan in 2011 would have not been realized. Because our churches and other civic society organizations pressured the warring parties, international elected leaders, as well as local people, peace materialized.

We must need to do the same thing now for peace to come in South Sudan. In average, approximately more than 200 people are killed a day now in South Sudan due to the war. The new country population is roughly 11m. If 6,000 are killed in a month in addition to twice as much die a month for diseases and other war related causes, then who else do we have remained in the fertilized land of South Sudan?

My appeal to you brothers and sisters in the Christ to ask you to join uniting to face these challenges that are diminishing our people of South Sudan. As I mentioned above, South Sudanese need your prayers. They need your small assistance as what is already started by brother Jeff, David and members of California Presbytery. The needs now are outstanding as you might have imagined, but these needs could be addressed and overcame. All we want is to do our part of efforts as team in Christ to better His Kingdom here on Earth as it is in Heaven, and rest will be left to our Creator.

Again, I want to thank brother Jeff and David for taking their time to visit our people in their time of need.

May God bless you!



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