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TWO Countries “ONE CHURCH”

The history of the Church is the long history of struggle with Christian identity in the old Sudan. The Church was affected by the Islamic government policy in the old Sudan that was framed in Islamic ideology – religion became the pivotal factor in our conflicts. People of other faiths, other than Islam, were not allowed to preach the Gospel openly or worship. Christians were persecuted because of their faith in Christ Jesus but the Church grew rapidly. Our people suffered at the hands of Islamic Government in the North Sudan since the slave trade era up to when they received their Independence July 9th, 2011.

On July 9th, the South Sudanese flag was raised in the air in Juba Capital City near Kujur Mountain as prophesied by the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 18:1-7). Also, the South Sudan National Anthem was sung during Independence Day which says, “Oh God! We praise and glorify you for your grace on South Sudan, land of great abundance upon us united in peace and harmony...” Without our loving God our freedom was not possible.

July 9th, was a historical day of ending fifty years of brutal Arab wars targeting Christians to submit to both Islamic religion and culture. I am a survivor of Sudan’s long civil war fought in the continent of Africa.

But as I speak to you today, I hope you are aware of the Church's situation in North Sudan, the Church continues to be faced with a lack of freedom of worship. The current situation is this: some churches have been burned down, and the pastors and church leaders have been put into jail and tortured without a trial. They have been told not to preach the Good News in Sudan any more.

The Islamic government in Khartoum continues to this day to not recognize the existence of Christian faith in the Sudan. Recently, the government publicly pronounced that Islam is the only religion in the Country and placed Sharia law as the means of running the government and the law of the land, undermining Christianity in the Sudan. The International Community is silent about this action in Sudan.

Challenges facing the new nation of South Sudan

There are many problems facing the new nation of South Sudan today including the continuation of tribal fighting (which is supported by Khartoum based militias), continue fighting at Kiir adeem

and Warguet in Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, cattle raiding, contesting of borders in the regions of Abyei, Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, Darfur, entrenched poverty, education, health care, unity, peace and our roads are still underdeveloped. These problems are a significant hindrance to the development we have been longing for in the new nation of South Sudan!

Despite all these problems, the Episcopal Church of Sudan has played and continues to play an important role in evangelization, humanitarian assistance, education, health care, peace building, reconciliation, advocacy and healing of war wounds in the new nation, so that people of God will live in peace and harmony with one another.

Please remember that we still need your support; both in prayers and financial provision, for there is a lot of work that needs to be done now in South Sudan in the area of those things I mentioned above.

Most importantly, the ECS and the Catholic Church have been working closely in South Sudan and Sudan for peace to be realized in both Countries. God has called all of us to be ambassadors of peace in South Sudan, Sudan and in the world as whole!

The hope of the people of South Sudan and Sudan is in The Church!

In conclusion, the ECS House of Bishops met in February 2011 to answer the question "What will the Church will do when Sudan becomes two countries?" The Bishops agreed to remain one Church under the vision "two Countries one Church".

This means that the Church of God should never be divided along political lines. The Bishops also agreed that the Gospel of Peace should be preached to all Sudanese. Therefore, the Church of God in Sudan and South Sudan is united under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Bul and committed for the work of peace and reconciliation.

Finally, my sincere thanks to our Partners for their stand with the South Sudan, their constant prayers, financial support, and advocacy rendered to the people of South Sudan in those difficult days of liberation, up to the day of our Independence; the day we declared ourselves a free people and continue to do so. We are one in Christ Jesus!

May Almighty God grant peace to the nation of South Sudan and continue to bless our donors.

WELCOME SUDANESE/AFRICANS IN ANIC

God wants His followers to treat strangers or foreigners better (Lev. 19:33-34, 23:22, 24:22, 25:35; Zech. 7:10), so that the foreigners can join God's people in worshipping God.

The problem, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church USA has failed to live according above the message in the book of Leviticus 19 and they not welcomed Sudanese/Africans in their Churches in most places. The majority of the Sudanese who have

come to America and Canada as refugee or immigrants are Anglican in faith. However, many Sudanese/Africans have joined other churches because they were not welcomed by their own.

What I want to share with this gathering of ANIC is for you not do what Episcopal Church USA and Anglican Church in Canada have done. The Africans/Sudanese and other groups God has brought among you are to be reached with the Gospel as Jesus has commanded His Church with a mission of reaching all nations with the good news (Matthew 28:16-20).

The following are some of the reasons Sudanese/Africans don't come to Church in North America:

1. They feel not welcome
2. The issue of liberalism
3. They are not invited to be involve in the leadership of the parish were they worship.
4. The older Sudanese/Africans need to worship in their language but sometimes they are not allowed by Church leadership.

Because our mission is to express love in Christ and service to one another, I encourage ANIC pastors and every Christians in ANIC to reach Sudanese/Africans by providing services to reach the physical and spiritual of these Christian brothers and sisters (Colossians 3:17).

Jesus says, "The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40).

Also, I want to assure the Sudanese/Africans that the ACNA (ANIC) is a member of the Anglican Communion and the leadership of the Episcopal Church of Sudan has recognized ACNA (ANIC). I encourage Sudanese/Africans in North America to join and make ACNA (ANIC) their church.

Finally, the following are my suggestions for ANIC to make Sudanese/Africans feel welcome in the Church:

1. Love them, extend friendship to one another.
2. Welcome and make them part of the Church community.
3. Help them to be able to get a good paying job or after school work for children.
4. Give them a chance to worship in their language (if they are many in numbers).
5. Involve them in the church leadership.

We (Anglicans) are uniting by the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Common Prayer came from the same root, even though every province translates it into their languages. Because of the Book of Common Prayer, the Anglican Church is built on Anglican's unity globally for the glory of God – and the transforming power of our Lord Jesus Christ. And above all, our connection with World-wide Anglican Communion is through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in Him, we are brothers and sisters. We are one in Christ!