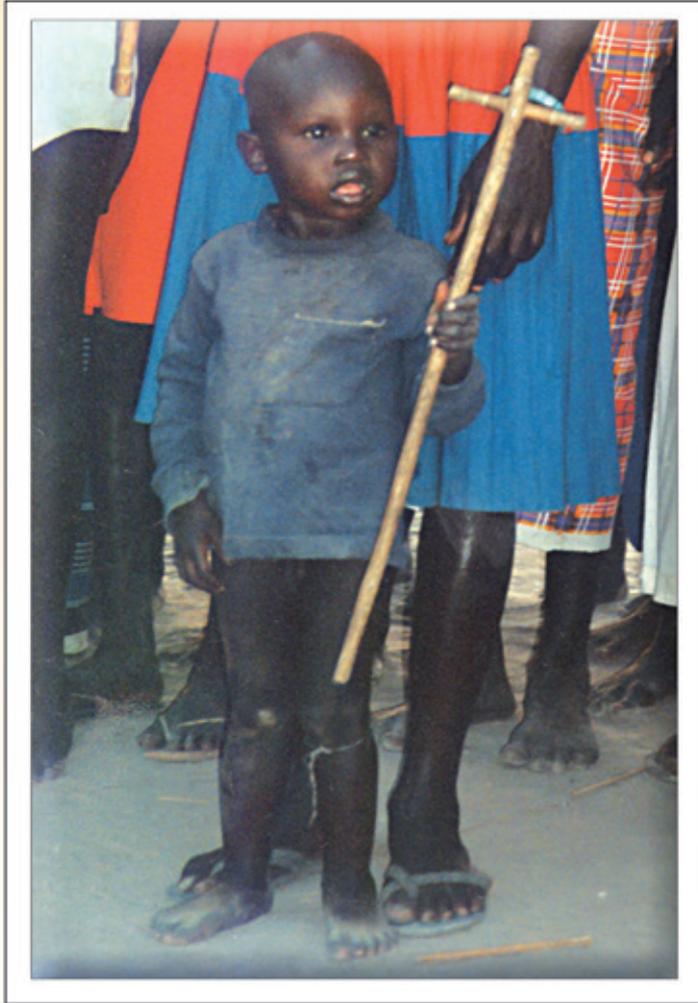


Hear My People's Cry!

*A Story of the Suffering of God's People and Witness of
Triumphant Faith in Sudan and Pakistan*



The Right Reverend Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min. D.D.
Missionary Bishop of Bor, South Sudan

Former Canon and Commissary to the Archbishop of Sudan in the USA
Hon. Canon All Saints Cathedral, Juba, South Sudan
Hon. Canon St. Johns Cathedral, Peseshawar, Pakistan

Sixth Edition



Above: Sudanese refugees at Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Front Cover: Young Sudanese boy holding simple wooded cross symbolizes the vitality and the challenges faced by the church in Sudan.

*Dedicated to my father, the Venerable Barkat Masih Augustine,
who taught me by the example of his life, compassion,
and love for all children of God.*

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Acknowledgements

This booklet was originally written with the intent of presentation as a report to my bishop and the church after my visit to Southern Sudan in February 1998. Later I added an account of my native country Pakistan. I also included sermons I delivered at Christ Church Cathedral and Holy Spirit Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Part of this document has also been published as a full-page Commentary on the Editorial Page of the Roanoke Times in Virginia. God can use any voice and any means to inform people about the suffering of God's people. I have added biblical reflections and prayers for possible use in local churches.

I am grateful to Archbishops George Carey and Rowan Williams, Presiding Bishops Browning and Griswold, Archbishop Joseph Marona of Sudan, Canon John Peterson, Bishop David Smith of Bradford, England, Bishop Frank Neff Powell of Southwestern Virginia, Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia, Bishop Mano Rumlshah of Pakistan, and Bishops Nathaniel Garang, Daniel Deng- Bul; Dr. Marc Nikkel of Sudan and Dr. Roy Enquist, Professor Emeritus at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, for their words of encouragement and prayers.

I am grateful to Mike Reno, a friend and brother in Christ, who gave me encouragement and technical support to publish this book in 1998. Later, during my study for the Doctor of Ministry at Virginia Theological Seminary, James Beck, Chris Cunningham and Susan Hazen who helped me to put the final touches to Hear My People's Cry. I took 800 copies to the United Kingdom and they were given to each Bishop of the Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference 1998.

Now in its 6th edition, and 26 years later, 37,000 copies have been printed to distribute. I am grateful to organizations such as Encourage Inc and Douglas W. Ell for their generous assistance for the printing of this book. It has been an effective tool to tell the story of the persecuted believers. But I reserve until last, my heartfelt thanks to Erika Crusan, who since 2003-2022 as graphic artist has worked with me to update this book over a period of twenty years. I am ever grateful for her helpfulness, patience and efficiency to improve it. Please read the following pages with all your heart and spirit. I pray you will join me in offering your prayers for those who suffer for Christ and remain steadfast to proclaim that JESUS IS LORD.







Episcopal Church Of South Sudan Diocese Of Bor

P.O Box Bor, Jonglei Internal Province

Email: bordiocese2011@gmail.com

March 3rd, 2019

The Very Rev. Canon Dr. Patrick P. Augustine
Rector and Dean
Christ Episcopal Church
P.O. Box 2908
La Crosse, WI 54601
USA

Dear Canon Augustine,

Ref: Invitation for your consecration new date

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior from the Diocese of Bor, Episcopal Church of South Sudan. I am writing this letter in addition to your appointment letter dated January 26th, 2018 and August 10th, 2018 as assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Bor and our Commissary in the Archdiocese of Jonglei Internal Province. The Primate of South Sudan, The Most Rev. Justin Badi and I have received letter of support from the Primate of the Episcopal Church in USA for your appointment. We have discussed this matter further with the Primate. Our Diocesan Council and the Jonglei Internal Province has also fully approved your Episcopal appointment. Now we are happy to inform you that you are being called among us as Assistant Bishop and our voice to represent in North America and in the Anglican Communion.

Our people in South Sudan know about your work as our brother advocate in the Anglican Communion and on the Global scene. You have represented us as Canon Commissary to the late Most Rev. Joseph H. B Marona, the Archbishop of Sudan for a decade. You served as the Chair of the Link Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia as a partner with the Episcopal Church of Sudan. You were part of conversation of our Church in bringing peace and liberation of South Sudan as an independent nation. You have been advocating voice of the voiceless of Sudan. Your help over twenty-eight years has helped to educate hundreds of boys and girls in the Refugee camps like Kakuma in Kenya and empowered members of the Mother's Union. Some of them are now leaders back in South Sudan helping us in our communities. You remain committed to serve our people till today.

After prayerful discernment and in consultation with the Primate of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan in Juba, we have decided to consecrate and ordain you as brother Bishop on 9th June, 2019 in the Episcopal Church of Sudan, a member of the Anglican Communion.

I welcome you to come to South Sudan and join us that we can lay hands on you to be consecrated as Bishop in the Apostolic tradition. You shall assist us as my Commissary Bishop to represent us in North America and in the Anglican Communion. Our people are suffering because of war and internal conflicts. We lack resources and our people are hungry, suffering from diseases and many are living in refugee camps and internal displace camps.

We need world community to stand in solidarity with us to help God's children who are suffering. Your role will be to be our voice and representative to the world to seek help in the continuing work of peace and resources for development to empower our people to live in harmony. We shall also ask you to help us in theological education of our clergy, laity and members of Mother's Union. We shall assure you of our prayers and support for you to carry your ministry among us and in the Anglican Communion.

With prayers and best wishes.

Yours brother in Christ,

The Most Rev. Ruben Akurdid Ngong Archbishop of Jonglei Internal Province And Bishop for the Diocese of Bor



Bishop Patrick Augustine, Archbishop Justin Badi (Primate of South Sudan), Bishop Heath Light



Bishop Patrick Augustine, Bishop Nataniel Garang, Archbishop Ruben Akurdid

A Note from Bishop William Jay Lambert



June 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

It gives me great pleasure to write this short introduction for my priest and colleague in ordained ministry. The Reverend Patrick Augustine now has been called by the Church of God to be an Assistant Bishop in Diocese of Bor, South Sudan. I'm accompanying him to Bor to be a witness to his call to the episcopate and to lay hands with other Bishops of the Church of South Sudan.

I commend this booklet to you that you may in some small way journey with Patrick and see the world he saw through his eyes. Through his eyes, may our hearts be open to the plight of our sisters and brothers in that desperately poor and ravaged country. And may our faith be strengthened and may we grow in courage from the faithful and courageous response to our Christian neighbors in the South Sudan.

Please join me in praying daily for the South Sudan and God's people.

William Jay Lambert
Bishop of Eau Claire, Wisconsin



DIOCESE of LA CROSSE

Office of the Bishop

24 May 2019

His Excellency Salva Kir Mayardt
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Office of the President
Juba, South Sudan

Your Excellency:

May the Lord give you peace.

I am honored to write to Your Excellency as the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of La Crosse in the State of Wisconsin (USA).

On Wednesday 22 May, I had the pleasure of meeting Canon Patrick Augustine, the Auxiliary Bishop-elect of South Sudan. What a joy and honor to spend time with the Bishop-elect and share a common vision of peace and dignity for the people of South Sudan and the surrounding area.

I write further to inform Your Excellency of my sincere prayers and thoughts of peace for South Sudan. I am confident that Your Excellency and the new Bishop will breathe new life into the population of your country. Be assured of the prayers and support of the people of La Crosse for the success of your efforts. God be with you.

In the blessings of peace, I am

William Patrick Callahan, OFM Conv.
Bishop of La Crosse

مجمع الكنيسة الاسقفية السودانية

PROVINCE OF EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE SUDAN

P. O. Box 110, JUBA (SUDAN) Tel. 0851 20040 - 20065

P. O. Box 12749 KHARTOUM Tel. 011 782478



APPOINTMENT OF CANON TO THE CHURCH OF SUDAN

We, the Primate and Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Sudan pleased to appoint The Rev. Canon Patrick Pervez Augustine, as my commissary and Canon to represent me, and the Church of Sudan in the United States of America.

Canon Augustine is recognised for his ministry of advocacy before the world for the persecuted Churches in the Anglican Communion in particular for the Church of Sudan. His Book "Hear my people's cry" has been very effective to tell the story of the suffering and the triumphant faith of our people. It has brought many around the globe to stand in solidarity in our struggle for Peace in Sudan. He is known as a friend of our people.

Thus by the divine authority bestowed upon me, we invoke God's blessings upon him to serve as God's instrument to work for justice, peace and reconciliation for the people of Sudan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Joseph Biringi Marona".

**The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Biringi Marona
Archbishop and Primate
Episcopal Church of the Sudan**

February 14, 2001





Citation for the Award of the Cross of St. Augustine

The Very Reverend Canon Dr Patrick Augustine

16 December 2012

Patrick Augustine's journey of faith began in Pakistan as a third generation Anglican cleric in a primarily Muslim society. Having studied political science and English literature at Punjab University, he then took a Diploma in Theology at Lahore Divinity School. For two years, he served as General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Pakistan and subsequently became an Army Chaplain.

His interest in ecumenism took its roots during the 1970s when he attended the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, to be followed within twelve months by the World Student Christian Federation General Assembly in Sri Lanka. Shortly afterwards, he participated at an International Retreat in Taizé, France, and, subsequently, at Ecumenical Seminars in Geneva. His attendance at these gatherings underlined his commitment to the search for unity amongst Christians and, importantly, gave rise to a lifelong commitment to defend the free exercise of faith in countries where believers are marginalized and persecuted.

His move to the United States in 1983 opened up other opportunities for priestly service at parochial, diocesan and national levels within a new and diverse cultural environment. He continued to travel extensively, promoting

evangelism and world mission, fostering inter-faith dialogue and ecumenical endeavour. Described by fellow Christians in Sudan as an "Ambassador of Peace" and a "Voice for the Voiceless", he has brought hope and reconciliation to communities far and wide which have endured decades of conflict, violence, poverty and persecution. His care, compassion and concern, rooted firmly in his own faith and belief, remind us powerfully of our common humanity.

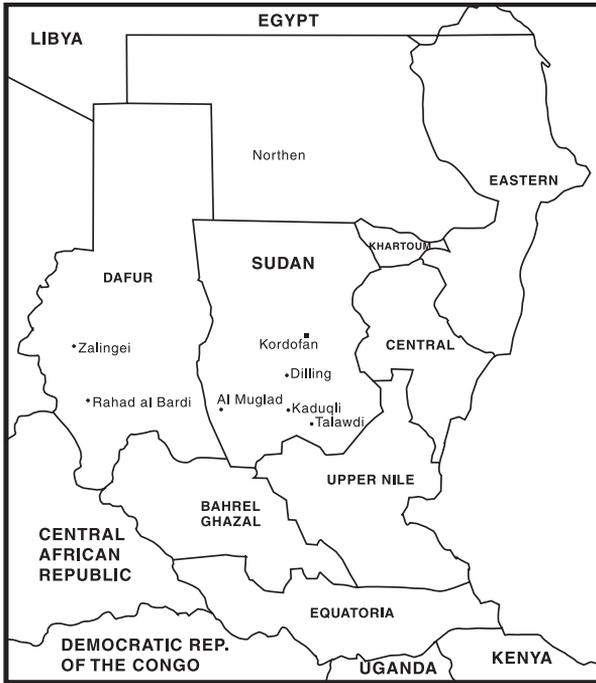
I am delighted to make this award to Patrick Augustine in recognition of his contribution at national and international level to the promotion of evangelism, ecumenism and the free exercise of faith.

+Rowan Cantuar
Archbishop of Canterbury



Voice for the Voiceless. Case for the People of Sudan.

“Too many people killed for no reason” (Amnesty International)



Sudan geographically is Africa's largest country, which is located on the Red Sea and is dominated by the Nile and its tributaries. It gained its independence from Egypt and the United Kingdom on January 1, 1956. Modern Sudan is Muslim Arab north and animist and Christian African in South. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) has its strong presence in Sudan since 1905. The first church was planted in the South in 1905 by Bishop L.G. Gwynne. The British government was quite hostile to the work of the church and did not allow Christian missionaries to enter into Muslim areas.

Today there are 16.7% Christians among the total population of 30 million.

Sudanese government is dominated by the National Islamic Front, a fundamentalist political organization formed from the Muslim Brotherhood in 1983.

It has endured civil war for four decades fueled by a jihad by the regime in Khartoum against all in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains who oppose the imposition of Shari'a (Islamic) law.

The NIF is killing, displacing, and enslaving the black African population in genocidal proportions. Christians are special targets. Over 2.5 million civilians have died, and another 4.5 million have been forced to flee their homes since 1983.

In an unlikely alliance the Episcopal Church, Lutheran Church, Presbyterian church in the USA, Anglican Church in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the religious right and the Congressional Black Caucus in the USA have particularly worked to bring an end to war in Sudan. President Bush's appointed former Missouri Senator John Danforth, an Episcopal ordained Priest, as a special peace envoy to Sudan.

Through Church's plea for peace and Senator Danforth's diplomatic mission to bring peace to this troubled area of more than twenty years. The government of Sudan and the Sudanese Liberation Movement signed a peace agreement in May 2004 at Naivasha, Kenya on the cessation of hostilities.

But the ink on the peace agreement was hardly dry that conflict in Darfur exploded. The conflict in Darfur is literally rooted in the soil. There are six million people who are farmers and herders live in this region. Most of the Darfur farmers are black Africans and herders are Arab nomads. In the last twenty years this whole region has been under the curse of persistent drought and it has forced the Arabs to move to more arable lands. In the late 1980s, competition for turf began to turn violent. Light arms poured into the region from neighboring Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo, leading to occasional massacres. But the spark for war came in April last year, when, following two months of occasional raids on villages, African rebels from a group calling itself Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) swept into the tumbledown airport in the town of al-Fashir, killed 75 Sudanese government soldiers, shot up four military aircraft and kidnapped the air force chief, Major General Ibrahim Bushra. The rebel group claimed that the raid was a protest against both the government's neglect of Darfur and an increasing Arab militancy. In response, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir called on local tribes to crush the rebellion. The most eager recruits came from

small groups of Arab nomads who saw an opportunity to grab land and livestock under the banner of state sanctioned military operation.¹

These Arab nomad fighters are known as Janjaweed, a name that loosely means "devil on the horseback." Janjaweed did not limit their attacks on SLA in Darfur region but expanded its policy of ethnic cleansing, genocide, rape and pillaging against the black African Muslims in this region of Sudan. Melka Musa Haroun a Darfurian woman fled to refugee camp to save her life with her four children. Last year she witnessed a Janjaweed fighter tossed a one year old boy into the air as another took aim and shot him. The fighter said that they were getting rid of a future enemy.

The United Nations has described Sudan's Darfur region as one of the world's worst humanitarian crisis. It is home to about 6 million people from nearly 100 tribes. In the ongoing genocide, African farmers and others in Darfur are being systematically displaced and murdered. The genocide in Darfur has claimed 400,000 lives and displaced over 2,500,000 people. The Sudanese government appears unwilling to address the human rights crisis in the region. In June 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) took the first step in ending impunity in Darfur by launching investigations into human rights violations in Darfur. However, the government of Sudan refused to cooperate with the investigations.

¹ Zach Vertin, *A Rope From the Sky*, Pegasus Books, 2019. Pp.1-97

On March 4, 2009 Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, became the first sitting president to be indicted by ICC for directing a campaign of mass killing, rape, and pillage against civilians in Darfur. The arrest warrant for Bashir follows arrest warrants issued by the ICC for former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Harun and Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb. The government of Sudan has not surrendered either suspect to the ICC. (United Human Rights Council)

New found prosperity in this world's most poorest area has become a curse to the people of this land. Intense clashes between two Arab tribes fighting over a gold mine in a remote corner of Darfur have displaced around 100,000 people. The fighting broke out in January 2013 in the Jebel Amir gold mining area. The fight is between the Beni Hussein, who are largely cattle herders, and the northern Rizeigat, a powerful tribe known for its camel herding. Scores of people have been killed and dozens of villages burned. Members of Beni Hussein tribe accused government forces of helping the Rizeigat and giving them powerful weaponry. This conflict is getting worse as several heavily armed allies of both tribes are getting involved from various corners of Darfur.

"It's bigger than the Balkans, and it's bigger than Afghanistan," David Nabarro, the World Health Organization's top emergencies expert said after his visit to Darfur.

On July 4, 2004 the United States Secretary of State, General Colin Powell visited the Darfur area. He personally heard the stories of the killing of innocent people, widespread looting, water supply being poisoned and burning of homes, and agriculture tools and crops.

Arab Militia men have also destroyed the livestock, homes, grain stocks of black population of Darfur. There are much sinister stories coming out of this region. John Prendergast who is an advisor to the International Crisis Group in his visit of July 15, 2004 reports: "I was not prepared for the far more sinister scene I encountered in a ravine deep in the Darfur desert. Bodies of young men were lined up in ditches, eerily preserved by the 130 degree desert heat. The story the rebels told us seemed plausible: the dead were civilians who had been marched up a hill and executed by the Arab-led government before its troops abandoned the area the previous month.

Samantha Power, the author of "A problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide" heard stories from refugees in Chad. They told her that their loved ones had been stuffed into wells by the Janjaweed to poison the water supply. She went back in Darfur and looked for these wells. She found them covered in sand, an effort by the Sudanese government to cover its tracks.

In Chad in a refugee camp of Iridimi, a woman named Aza Jamaa Tegel said that her village of Janga had been attacked the previous October. "The Janjaweed came," She said, "and they burned everything in the village. Then the helicopters came and dropped bombs. They

killed my brother, my husband and four of my six children.” Aza and her two children and the other surviving villagers rode on donkeys for 13 days before reaching the border. All over Darfur women who were caught by the Janjaweed were raped.² Amnesty International UK in their report has said that the government of Sudan is responsible for the majority of these abuses, either directly or through its support for the Janjaweed militia.

After few days of visit to Darfur by the American Secretary of State, General Colin L. Powell. In Nyala, the desert region of Darfur several gunmen stormed a girl’s school. They chained a group of students together and set the building on fire. When later this place was visited by military observers from the African Union they found charred remains of eight girls still in shackles.

General Powell was asked by a reporter if he would call it genocide. He replied, “What we are seeing is a disaster, catastrophe. We can find the label for it later. We’ve got to deal with it now.” I am surprised that he expressed his reluctance to call it genocide. If it is not a modern holocaust, if it is not a modern genocide, what is it? It is currently the biggest humanitarian crisis on earth. It is the worst case of human rights violations and it exceeds the combined deaths from recent wars in Chechnya, Kosovo, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia.

What’s in a name? Plenty, when the topic is genocide. The word *genocide* is from Greek *geno* (race or tribe) and the Latin *cide* (from *caedere, killing*). In 1948 after the second world war the United Nations endorsed the Genocide Convention called by Raphael Lemkin, a polish Jewish and survivor of the holocaust. This was the first U.N’s human rights treaty. Applying the term to Darfur would give the Bush administration little choice but to put the matter before the U.N. Security Council again, and would probably mean sending in U.N. troops. The United States is among the 135 parties to a 1948 U.N. convention denouncing genocide as “an odious scourge” and requiring the participating nations to punish and prevent “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.”³

One wonders why so far there is no international cry for peace in the world’s hellhole. In the case of another ethnic cleansing in Kosovo NATO went on bombing campaign for 78 days and forced Milosevic’s paramilitary to withdraw. But so far United Nations Security Council nor any other international body has come forward to stop crimes against humanity in Sudan. It is a modern holocaust.

Sudanese Archbishop Daniel Deng sums up the story of the suffering church in these words. “Amidst persecution and death in Sudan, the Church has continued to grow. Church of Sudan is the fastest growing church in the Anglican Communion. God is with us, and God is not defeated.”

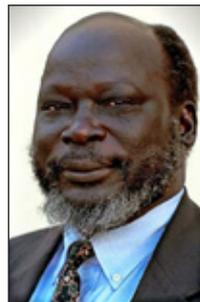
The world witnessed a miracle birth of a new nation of The Republic of Southern Sudan on July 9, 2011. The new country's flag was raised and Salva Kir signed the constitution and took his oath of the office of the President at the mausoleum of the late rebel leader Dr. John Garang in the capital, Juba. In his speech President Slava Kir said, "Our martyrs did not die in vain... We have waited for more than 56 years for this day. It is a day that will be forever engraved on our hearts and minds." There were 30 African heads of State, high level Western officials and one leader who fought for years to prevent this all from happening-Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir.

Dreams, hopes and sacrifices of millions gave a birth to a new nation but conflict in Darfur and southern Sudan continues. The attacks on Christians in southern Sudan through aerial bombings, forced starvation and targeted massacres have reportedly intensified since the territory seceded from Sudan.

Of all the long and terrible wars on the continent of Africa, the war between North and South Sudan is the longest and most terrible. More than two million lives are believed to have been lost in the space of a generation.

After years of lobbying and testifying before Congressional International and Human Rights Committees. On September 6, 2001, after the terrible 9/11 attacks President Bush appointed Senator Jack Danforth as his "Special Envoy to Sudan. We sense lot of us working for peace saw a ray of hope.

Dr. John Garang, the charismatic leader of the South and Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on January 2005. I was present in Khartoum with Archbishop of Sudan in the House of British Ambassador for dinner. After dinner we gave thanks to God for CPA. It established a regional government in Juba and slated a referendum on Southern Independence for 2011. President George W. Bush's government had helped to end a war the Southerners could not win on their own, establish a Southern regional government, and pave a path to independence. Dr. Garang was inaugurated as First Vice President of Sudan, and President of the regional government of the South.



Dr. John Garang had studied for his Doctoral studies at the university in Ames, Iowa. During his study in the United States in America would also plant the seed of his grand vision for a "New Sudan." Garang would ask himself, "If the

United States could fashion a free, secular, democratic, and United Society" from its own multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural society, "why not Sudan?" A sad event happened on July 30, 2005; Sudanese history changed forever. John Garang, the South's most powerful man, was killed in a helicopter crash.



Most of the SPLA brass believed succession should follow the military hierarchy—

Salva Kiir Mayardit was No. 2 to command. His Gogrial sub-klan is part of the largest and most influential ethno-regional bloc in South Sudan. Dinka's of Bahr al Ghazal (those of Salva) and the Dinka of Bor (those of Garang) aligned when it suited them. Slava has been a capable commander, and his practical skills helped the SPLA win early military success. Mr. Salva Kiir Succeeded Dr. Garang as the President of Republic of South Sudan.

When South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011 after years of war, the people were filled with hope. Too many of them have died or been forced from their homes or face starvation because of five years of civil war. Rival factions from South Sudan's two dominant ethnic groups—Dinka and Nuer—had turned their guns on each other. The conflict between Riek Machar and President Salva has killed and displaced more than 400,000 of their own people internally. It has hurt government's capacity to function and represent on the global scene. Recently, the Most Rev. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis invited the rival factions to Vatican for a retreat. It is reported:

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- At the end of a highly unusual spiritual retreat for the political leaders of warring factions, Pope Francis knelt at the feet of the leaders of

South Sudan, begging them to give peace a chance and to be worthy "fathers of the nation."

"As a brother, I ask you to remain in peace. I ask you from my heart, let's go forward. There will be many problems, but do not be afraid," he told the leaders, speaking without a text at the end of the meeting.

"You have begun a process, may it end well," he said. "There will be disagreements among you, but may they take place 'in the office' while, in front of your people, you hold hands; in this way, you will be transformed from simple citizens to fathers of the nation."

"The purpose of this retreat is for us to stand together before God and to discern his will," he said in his formal remarks April 11, closing the two-day retreat in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, the Vatican guesthouse where he lives.

Pope Francis told the politicians and members of the Council of Churches that "peace" was the first word Jesus said to his disciples after the resurrection.

"Peace is the first gift that the Lord brought us, and the first commitment that leaders of nations must pursue," he told them. "Peace is the fundamental condition for ensuring the rights of each individual and the integral development of an entire people."

After "so much death, hunger, hurt and tears," the pope said, the retreat participants "have clearly heard the cry of the poor and the needy; it rises up to heaven, to the very heart

of God our father, who desires to grant them justice and peace.”

“Peace is possible,” the pope told the leaders. They must tap into “a spirit that is noble, upright, strong and courageous to build peace through dialogue, negotiation and forgiveness.”

As leaders of a people, he said, those who govern will have to stand before God and give an account of their actions, especially what they did or didn’t do for the poor and the marginalized.

Pope Francis asked the leaders to linger a moment in the mood of the retreat and sense that “we stand before the gaze of the Lord, who is able to see the truth in us and to lead us fully to that truth.”

The leaders, he said, should recognize how God loves them, wants to forgive them and calls them to build a country at peace.

Jesus, he said, calls all believers to repentance. “We may well have made mistakes, some rather small, others much greater,” but Jesus always is ready to forgive those who repent and return to serving their people.

“Dear brothers and sisters,” he said, “Jesus is also gazing, here and now, upon each one of us. He looks at us with love, he asks something, he forgives something, and he gives us a mission. He has put great trust in

us by choosing us to be his co-workers in the creation of a more just world.”

Pope Francis expressed his hope that “hostilities will finally cease -- please, may they cease -- that the armistice will be respected, and that political and ethnic divisions will be surmounted.”

Closing his prepared remarks with a prayer, he asked God “to touch with the power of the Spirit the depths of every human heart, so that enemies will be open to dialogue, adversaries will join hands and peoples will meet in harmony.”

“By your gift, Father, may the whole-hearted search for peace resolve disputes, may love conquer hatred and may revenge be disarmed by forgiveness, so that, relying solely on your mercy, we may find our way back to you,” he prayed.

I call upon people of goodwill to keep their concerted and coordinated efforts for peace in the troubled areas of our world for the sake of those who are systematically slaughtered, tortured and forced to live in exile away from their homes. Pray and work for peace!



Pope Francis kisses the feet of South Sudan President Salva Kiir April 11, 2019, at the conclusion of a two-day retreat at the Vatican for the African nation's political leaders. The pope begged the leaders to give peace a chance. At right is Vice President Riek Machar.

(Credit: CNS photo/Vatican Media via Reuters.)

Update on the Situation in South Sudan in January 2022

Efforts to bring peace and stability in South Sudan are still not come to fruition. Political tensions between President Salva Kir Mayardit and first Vice President erupted into widespread violence which led to Machar's fleeing the county. In 2016 Vice President Riek Machar returned to Juba from exile and under the terms of the ARCSS, participated in the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. Progress on implementation of the Agreement has been slow, and on July 8, 2016, fighting broke out between forces loyal to President Kir and forces loyal to Vice President Machar. The number of people killed in the fighting in the post independent period is estimated to be 400,000 as of early 2021, and approximately 8.3 million people required humanitarian assistance in 2021, an 11 percent increase compared to 2020. Relief agencies project that up to 7.9 million people – more than 65 percent of the country's population – may need emergency food assistance from October 2021 to May 2022, making South Sudan one of the most food-insecure countries in the world. South Sudan is one of the most dangerous places in the world for aid workers, with more than 130 killed between 2013 and 2021. In February 2020, the parties formed the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU), and Machar returned to Juba. The South Sudanese government has shown limited political will to implement all chapters of the peace agreement. Late 2021 saw several milestones,

including the formation of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and partial screening of the Necessary Unified Forces, and President Salva Kir and other political elites stated publicly that South Sudan would hold national elections in 2023. President Kir and First Vice President Machar, however remain deadlocked over the command structure of the unified forces – a major piece of the 2018 peace agreement and a necessary component to holding national elections.

South Sudan population is suffering all over their country. They need humanitarian assistance such as food , nutrition, protection, clean water, and sanitation, as well essential services such as food, nutrition support, emergency water and sanitation interventions, health care, and education to millions of South Sudanese citizens displaced or otherwise affected since the start of the crisis in December 2013. In Fiscal year 2021, the United States provided more than \$612 million in humanitarian assistance and \$73.1 million in development aid to South Sudan. The US government also supports civil society and independent media to ensure that diverse voices are heard and supports activities in conflict mitigation, trauma awareness, and reconciliation. Restoring stability in South Sudan will require ending conflicts and addressing the grievances behind them, strengthening core institutions and improving governance transparency process to make them more inclusive;

fighting corruption; and responding to the expectations of the population for essential service and improved livelihood.¹

Bishop's Appeal to the Faithful

During the civil war of North and South we have been eye witness to many heart-rending accounts. 2.1 million were killed and four million displaced. I have been speaking of atrocities and sufferings of communities in Sudan and South Sudan. It is a journey of faith for me to be “voice of the voiceless” for 35 years. We hoped that liberation of South Sudan will bring hope and release from suffering and to restore dignity of people. Many of us have worked tirelessly and dedicated our lives for more than three decades to stand in solidarity with the suffering people in South Sudan. We want to see end to this crisis. Now at present dilemma of food shortages, displacement of large size population, tribal conflicts are not happening happening because of some foreign government and other religion. It is because of widespread corruption, power struggles and lack of will to bring change to the lives of people by their own leaders in this new nation.

The Church in South Sudan has witnessed the vibrancy of living faith during time of war and persecution. Church provided leadership through persons like Bishop Nathaniel Garang, Archbishop Joseph Marona, Roman Catholic Bishops, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Pentecostal pastors. Their members remained faithful to acknowledge “Jesus Christ is Lord” in face of persecution from the North. Now the same Episcopal Church in South Sudan is

facing crisis, conflict within its own body. We are praying for unity, peace and reconciliation within the hierarchy of the church. I believe it is an attack by the dark forces of Satan to hurt the living witness of this vibrant community of faith. Having said this, I remain hopeful as we are community of resurrection.

I remain dedicated to support my brothers and sister in the Church of South Sudan. It is my prayer that let hatred, political and ecclesiastical wrangling may not divide and hurt our faith communities. May we not further divide and labor each other with hatred and violence. We want divisions, war and violence to cease. People of South Sudan may live in peace. I invite people of good will and faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, to raise our prayer to God for peace and stability. Government and religious leaders need a vision to bring people together, a commitment to justice with the capacity also for reconciliation, equality and respect for the dignity of human lives. We are children of God, created in His image from one essence. Jesus Christ binds us together as “One body and one Spirit.” To acknowledge him as “One Lord.” Witness to “One faith, one Baptism; one God and father of all.” Our capacity to construct such communities of hope depends on the quality and vitality of our imagination. We have to step out with faith and hope to pray, “Lord, make us agents of peace to create a community in South Sudan of beautiful people of different tribal races, cultures and languages, so that it will be a country where there is justice, compassion, caring and sharing. Let us allow our common humanity

¹ *U.S. Relations With South Sudan, Bilateral Relations With South Sudan. Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet, Bureau of African Affairs. January 21, 2022. State Department.*

to lead us to find new ways of fostering co-operation, understanding and above all peace.

The enlightened words of the Persian poet Saadi describes so well the spirit of the common task set before us to work as peacemaker:

All men are members of the same body'

Created from one essence.

If fate brings suffering to one member

The others cannot stay at rest.

**You who remain indifferent to the burden
of pain of others**

Do not serve to be called human.

The God of the Bible and Lord of the Church Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace and Hope. Our God is still in control and the source of our hope. Hope is the energy of change and transformation. With this hope we can plan and sow the seeds of hope to cultivate culture of peace. I invite government and church leaders to engage with each other to wage not war and live in constant disagreements, but reconciliation, and offer the balm of healing for the wounded and love to embrace each other. *"May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15: 13.

An Eyewitness Account February, 1998

I was invited to accompany a national delegation of six from the Episcopal Church to visit Southern Sudan on the invitation of Bishop Nathaniel Garang and The Rev. Marc Nikkel of the Bor Diocese. During this visit I had an opportunity to visit with nine Sudanese Bishops and many of the 54,000 residents of the Kakuma Refugee Camp, and to fly into Bor County, Southern Sudan. We drove from Nairobi in two cars for 16 hours and covered 1,000 kilometers through heat, wind, thunder, lightning and torrential rain to reach Kakuma Refugee Camp.

On February 19, 1998 at 9:00 p.m. we arrived at the gate of the UN refugee compound, were allowed through to the refugee camp, and drove through rutted lanes into an Episcopal Church compound. A line of singing, clapping and undulating women, clusters of children, pastors, lay leaders and students greeted us. They were all eager to see and touch us and help us carry luggage. We were shared among three of the seven Episcopal Church compounds.

During our four days' stay at Kakuma we visited several refugee communities of Dinka Sudanese, Equatorian Sudanese, Ethiopians and Somali Muslims. We visited the Presbyterian Church Compound, where on New Year's Eve a hand grenade had been thrown at a crowd of people gathering for worship, killing one and injuring 45. Last August, two gunmen also attacked the

compound where the Episcopal Rural Dean of Kakuma Camp resides, and several were injured.

We visited Daniel, a young Episcopal Evangelist, who was paralyzed from the waist down because of the gunmen's shooting. The bullet went through his stomach and broke his spine. Though a rudimentary hospital and health system exists in the camp, people say medicines are utterly insufficient. Daniel spent three months in the hospital in Lokichokkio but was at home by the time of our visit.

For the last month he had received no attention from UNCHR medical or social services. His condition was rapidly deteriorating and we managed to send him by car to Nairobi. Please keep him in your prayers. These were just three of the numerous "incidents" that have occurred, which Christians believe are harassment from the Khartoum government intended to intimidate and destabilize the Christian community.

We visited a Mobile Bible School, which has students from various denominations, including Episcopal. This is another example of church people improvising to teach the faith under seemingly impossible conditions. On Saturday, February 21, we set out early in the morning to travel to Kakuma. This was our first full day of visits to the whole Kakuma community of different races, tribes and countries.

Our group met first with several young men from the Nuba Mountains, along with their elder. Since 1985 they have been cut off, experiencing a steady assault from the Khartoum Government that is determined to wipe out their steadily growing Christian presence. There are 12 parishes with a total of 147 congregations. Where once there were 7,000 in each parish, now there are only 3,000, and they are beleaguered in the mountains.

There have been allegations of widespread human rights abuses in the Nuba Mountains. Kakuma people have expressed their sense of isolation and remoteness from the rest of the world. They have very poor communications by air, road or telephone and are totally cut off from telling their story of suffering to the community of nations. We visited the Equatorian Sudanese community and their young Chaplain Duku. Various young men told us about the very bad conditions in the camp and we saw the proof ourselves.

The UN gives a ration of only six kilograms of white flour per household every 15 days. This amount is barely sufficient for ten days. Moreover, the required food supplement as prescribed by the world food program is 1900 kilocalories daily without regard for nutritional content. There is no supply of meat, milk, vegetable, yeast, oil, salt, and sugar in their ration. Our team observed that there was widespread malnutrition throughout the camp. Upon further inquiry by Richard Parkins, Director of The Episcopal Migration Ministry, the WFP and UNCHR officials confirmed our observation.

We were told that extraordinary pressure on the relief efforts of the WFP and UNHCR had contributed to these food ration and distribution difficulties. The refugees at Kakuma are starving and are in dire need of food. Teachers in the primary schools are paid at different monthly rates--1,800 Kenya shillings (\$30) for a refugee teacher; 5,000 (\$90) for a Kenyan teacher. There are no books, no school supplies and no libraries for the students.

The Equatorian young men told us: "This lack of education is killing our future." We met one young woman who has a secondary diploma and was in college studying home economics when she was jailed for refusing to convert to Islam. When she got out of jail she found her parents had been jailed also, and she hasn't seen them since. We met with a man suffering from leprosy. He is receiving no treatment whatsoever.

We were told by many at Kakuma, "It's high time you've come." And truly, we asked people's forgiveness everywhere for not having come sooner. We were outraged, appalled and heartsick at the conditions under which these brave faithful survivors are living. At the same time, we were struck by the vibrant faith the Sudanese Christians expressed to us through songs, dance, and prayer, holding crosses in their hands; and their deep, deep faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We sense God is raising a new Church with a new Sudanese community. In this time of breakdown of the social network, the Church has become "the new family". Mothers, sisters, brothers and fathers in Christ have become the new support to each other. The

Sudanese people witness to the wider church that despite their deep suffering, God is sustaining them. Many of them have given up their old ways and have turned to Christ.

The living faith of the persecuted church has grown from the Cross of Christ. The Cross has become their proud symbol of the strength to live and die for Jesus Christ.

The followers of Jesus in this land of oppression and killing fields have adopted the Cross to symbolize the only life they want to live. In the sign of the Cross they conquer the forces of darkness, oppression, hatred and evil. To them, the Cross represents their daily struggle, the pain of betrayal, suffering, affliction and the triumphant faith to follow Christ. *“For the message about the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the POWER OF GOD.”* (1 Corinthians 1:17)

Let me share with you the words of one of the songs written by Bartholomayo Bol-Mawat Deng (known as Bol), a 26-year-old evangelist:

We call upon you, O God, to visit us with peace. The world afflicts us continually.

Hear the moaning of humankind, the souls crying out, looking toward eternal life.

Let us grasp the Cross with two hands so your salvation will arrive as we wait.

Open the windows of eternal life for us.

I will not depart from the Lord Jesus for I have found my wei; (In Dinka the word wei describes both breath and life)

There is nothing more satisfying than the Bible.

If I should grasp all the meaning I could say that would surpass it.

Don't allow me any deficiency, O Lord, for in your Kingdom there is nothing lacking.

What a profound expression of faith affirmed amidst illness, destitution and hunger that God alone is our salvation!

I found a unique opportunity to visit a Somali Muslim refugee community at Kakuma. Somalia is almost entirely a Muslim country and has very little contact with Christian faith. I felt called to visit these Muslim refugees, as they were going through the same suffering as the displaced Sudanese Christians at Kakuma Camp. I felt our visit would be incomplete if we ignored the 15,000 Somali refugees. It took me three hours to negotiate with their community leaders in a small Ethiopian restaurant. Finally the Imam came to meet with me.

These people had never met a Christian priest and were very suspicious that I was coming to convert them to Christianity. For centuries there has been no contact and no faith dialogue between these two faith communities. I assured them that my purpose was not to proselytize them, but to share the human concern on behalf of the Christian community. We wanted to learn the story of their suffering, and to feel their pain, as we are all God's children of Abrahamic faith.

Once we were able to establish trust, the Imam invited me to visit the mosque, and I met for an hour and half with him and elders of the Somali community. I assured them that

we would remember Somalia in our prayers as we pray in our churches for peace in Sudan. At the close of our dialogue the Imam Jama Mahamed Alle presented me with a book, *The True Religion*, about the Islamic faith. I intend to correspond with him and will send him an Arabic Bible as my gift. I hope it is the beginning of a new relationship of two faith communities, although on a very small scale.

When I later visited Bradford, England, I also visited the Secretary General of Mosques in Great Britain. He is a good friend of Anglican Bishop David Smith of Bradford. We shared our thoughts that both faith communities should work together on the issues of peace and justice in our world community.

It was a hot dusty day, and we spent most of it listening to the stories of the suffering of the refugee community. We were all emotionally and physically exhausted, and our host Marc Nikkel decided to take us to a small Ethiopian restaurant. It was located in a small mud and thatch and run by a very pleasant Ethiopian Christian refugee who had named this restaurant after his son, Sami. We gathered there after 6 p.m..

As we started our meal one of the members of our team fainted because of too much heat and too little water to drink. Karin Lindsey, who is a priest and a nurse, provided first aid and I laid hands to pray for God's healing. Praise God, our friend was revived, although he looked pale and weak. Later in the night we all met together as a team in an African hut for two hours with Marc Nikkel and prayed together for healing.



Sudanese mother preparing evening meal in Bor County, Southern Sudan.

We asked God to strengthen our bodies and spirits in the next twenty-four hours when we were going to fly into Southern Sudan.

Marc explained that inside Sudan we would have no contact with the rest of the world. There would be no telephones, faxes, e-mails, hospitals, cars or airports in the event of an emergency. We would be only 14 miles away from the government-held town of Bor. He reminded us that it was a serious commitment and we needed to express our feelings. Were we ready to take risk for the sake of the persecuted body of Christ? We cried and

sobbed for the suffering of the people and shared our commitment to enter into Southern Sudan to visit our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. God truly took care of us during our time inside Sudan.

On February 22, we attended a Sunday service in an open-air Church with a gathering of 6,861 people. It was wonderful, with singing, dancing and drumming by different groups. Bishop Nathaniel gave a powerful sermon with the theme: “This Kakuma is the school of God. Here is the place where we find God. Even though we are suffering, God is with us.” Many carried handmade wooden crosses, raising them high and singing songs of praise and hope. Several groups of Sunday School children, Youth and Mothers Union members presented Sudanese liturgical dance to describe the story of their faith. It was truly a powerful experience to be part of such an alive and moving service.

Later that day, we spent many hours talking and listening to the stories of young men. We heard their longing for their future. Whether in refugee camps or on the run for the last 12 years, they were tested, they have faith, they have seen each other through their adversity. They never stop grieving for the homes they’ve lost, the brothers, sisters and parents who are scattered, or dead. The loss of connection with of parents is especially



Waiting to receive a can of water in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

painful. Now they are desperate for education and they have no one to help them.

Scholarship money is desperately needed. One can send a refugee child to a Northern Kenya boarding school for secondary education for \$450 per year. These thousands of young men already are fine leaders but must be nurtured to reach full potential. Information on how to help can be found at the end of this report.

Marc Nikkel expresses the physical and spiritual pain and the homelessness of mind in these words: “People from isolated cattle-herding communities who, for centuries, have seldom strayed beyond time honored routes of seasonal migration, have, within a few years, become seasonal travelers-by foot, by lorry, by bus, by matau, and, when possible, by air across the frontiers of four countries and more.

Only 13 years ago most Dinka youth in Southern Sudan were being instructed,

disciplined, and prepared for life, in the rarefied proving ground of cattle camps. Today, with the cattle culture eradicated or diminishing, many youngsters fall between two schools, having neither the social formation of their ancestors, nor anything but shreds of formal schooling.” In his poem “Ten years away from My Parents”, Bol the songwriter writes:

Because of the war I am like a son who has no parent.

Because of the war our country has become a land of orphans.

Because of the war a child is no longer instructed by his father.

Turn your ear to us, O God of peace;

Our minds are confused with the things we suffer.

We are roaming about in the bush enduring the life of homeless people, and we keep our hearts turned toward the word once spoken through the mouth of Isaiah concerning our land.

We know that the entire world exists through the power of the word and ultimately it will be removed by the word alone;

Therefore we know salvation will finally come according to the word you have spoken.

On February 23, we flew from Lokichokio by a small privately chartered

plane into the village of Yomciir, Southern Sudan. The Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) controls this area. A joyful crowd of Christians singing, clapping, drumming, and bearing their crosses high welcomed us. During our five days there we visited the community of Wuningor. To get there we walked for two hours, and crossing the River Waak, a tributary of the Nile, in dugout canoes.

Marc Nikkel explained to us the meaning of “Wuningor”, as the “Wut’cattle camps, of `Ngor’, the man who first established it as a dry-season cattle camp in 1970’s. As we crossed the river, on the other side there were hundreds of people singing songs and raising high their crosses, and we received a warm welcome by the faithful flock of Wuningor. We were taken into the village in a procession with songs of “Alleluia, Yasu Christo. We welcome you in the name of the Lord.” The woman of the Mothers’ Union brought warm water in a bowl and washed our tired feet with soap and water. They dried them with such



Community of Wuningor caught a fish from the Nile for our dinner.

tender love and care! To the western mind it is subservient act of female suppression. In the Sudanese culture it is honoring the guest. It is mothers who provide tender care to the family, and fathers who go to the cattle camps and till the land for food.

These were our mothers and sisters who touched us with their highest form of love. Our hearts were full of gratitude, and I shared the yearning inside me with another fellow team member. I said, "I pray to God to give us in the west an opportunity to be servants of Christ to this Sudanese community."

It was a beautiful night at Wuningor, with a clear sky lit with bright stars. In the cool of the night Richard, Drew and I shared a small round African mud and thatch hut, called a tukhl. Soon we discovered that all three of us snored at different frequencies and kept each other awake. Community living could be a joyful experience, but that night we could have killed each other! Richard kept calling both Drew and me to stop snoring. Finally, at 2:00 a.m. Drew went into sound sleep. I was already feeling guilty about keeping my other two team members awake. As Drew was enjoying the comfort of sound sleep, the music of snoring became louder and louder. Richard finally got up and started calling, "Drew, Drew, Drew" and turned his flashlight on Drew's face to stop his snoring.

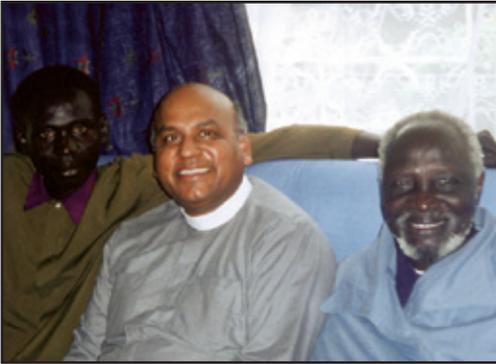
It was so funny that I could not stop laughing in the middle of the night, and soon others joined us. I must confess that I was the worst offender. I asked forgiveness from my other team members. The common suffering further strengthened the bonds of friendship. I love Richard and Drew, my brothers in Christ.

As none of us could go to sleep, I got up very early in the morning and as an act of penitence I decided to polish my shoes. One of our Sudanese team members happened to walk in the room and asked if he could borrow my polish to shine his shoes. I immediately recognized the opportunity to be servant of God to my dear Sudanese brother. His shoes were lying next to my bed and I took his shoes in my hands as he left the room. As I was shining his shoes, the prayer in my heart was: "Thank you, Lord, for providing me an opportunity to blacken the shoes of my Sudanese brother."

In the afternoon we had a great service with 2,400 people present in the local church. All of the team members had gathered gifts for the Bishop, clergy, evangelists and members of the Mothers' Union from our churches in the USA. Margaret Larom, Karin Lindsey and Nancy Frank had sorted those gifts at Kakuma and made packets for all the places we visited. During the service each one of us presented the gifts of stoles, surplices and clergy shirts to two Archdeacons and to several parish priests.

The gifts of scarves and other female accessories were presented to the leaders of the Mothers' Union to share with the ladies of the village.

Bishop Nathaniel Garang was presented with a very beautiful set of purple Eucharistic vestments, which had been given to Drew Klatte by his mother-in-law. It was our joyful expression of gratitude for the warm hospitality we had received and for faithful ministry of the leaders of the Bor Diocese. Bishop Nathaniel confirmed 80 individuals



Bishop Nathaniel Garang and Father Patrick at Kakuma Refugee Camp.

during the two-and-a-half -hour service. After the service it took us another hour to shake hands with hundreds and hundreds of worshippers. Hand shaking and human touch is an expression of love, and it is a very important gesture to express friendship.

On February 26, we crossed the River Waak back to Yomciir. In the afternoon we attended a meeting organized by the Commissioner of Bor County of the New Sudan. The Hon. Ms Setuna, Minister of Women's Affairs of SPLA, as well as the Area Commander and Chiefs of this area were also present in this meeting. The Commissioner explained that his civil government of Bor County represents Upper New Sudan of Nile, which has five regions. In his opening speech he said that Bor County covers 1,400 square miles, with a population of 369,000.

The lives of his people have been totally disrupted by war because of continuous raids by the Sudan National Islamic Front. People of this area have scattered to Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Many children and woman have been abducted and taken by force by the enemy and their properties have been looted.

Over two million cattle have been stolen. The entire population depends on agriculture, fishing and raising cattle. They lost all of these livelihoods. The displacement has serious impact on the lives of his people. An estimated 90,000 people are longing to come home.

This displacement has affected traditions, customs and the way of life Sudanese people have lived for hundreds of years. There are no food supplies available in this area. People are starving everywhere and they depend on wild fruit and river fish. One positive sign the Commissioner has noticed during these tragic circumstances, is that people have abandoned their local gods and all of them have accepted Christ. "We want the international bodies of churches to pay attention to our sufferings. We all belong to one Body of Christ." He thanked us for visiting Bor County.

The Hon. Ms Setuna also addressed the several hundred assembled under a tamarind tree and said, "Because of suffering, women have become strong and have a voice in the SPLA. Women have become breadwinners and a breadwinner has a voice." The people want their women to receive education and training. They ask for help with raising poultry, sewing machines, soap making, simple machinery, raw materials and a supply of educational books and stationary. Ms Setuna appeals for help to train woman in administration. She said, "Many of us are asking, where are other Christians in the world today?"

She thanked particularly the woman who was part of our team. A woman leader, Roda Akum, matron of Mothers' Union said,

“Our children and women need food and medicines.” Mabior Bul, a wounded war hero, said, “We are crying for our land. We are suffering for our land. When I see the suffering, I say let the earth open its mouth and swallow the whole world. Let God create a new world. Why are we suffering when God has created us in his image? We are looking and praying for peace so people can enjoy the fruit of their land. I have lost one leg but I am still standing. I can work, but many are crippled in this war. I am wounded in the body, but my hands and heart are saying I am willing to build my country.”

The SPLA Commander greeted us and said that in the name of God “We shall have victory.” He questioned why the western world is silent to their plight. Everything has been looted from these poor Christians. He said, “Should we go to Arabs who are our enemies for help? Where should we go?”

Chief Joseph Mawan said, “Our enemies took our cattle. Our women have stopped giving birth because there is not proper nutrition. We are suffering. We are crying. You have seen the nakedness of our people. We hope our brothers and sisters shall feel our pain. When you go back, tell your people, ‘let us see your Christianity in action.’ We have no seeds, no tools to grow crops. Please give us SEEDS.”

On February 27, we visited a cattle camp where we truly felt the culture of the Dinka people. They are such proud, brave, and open people. In an effort to destroy this culture in 1992, their cattle areas were raided by the enemy and two million cattle were taken from them, removing the very basis of the Dinka people’s economy and culture. We saw

beautiful young people and many children all around us. In the villages, they have no food, no clothes, no tools to cultivate and no seeds to grow vegetables or any crop. People are naked or wearing rags. There is no medicine. We observed that there were no professional beggars and people were extremely honest with a great sense of integrity.

A Pastor’s Course was about to begin, but the pastors were trickling in slowly from far parts of the country, because of a lack of dependable transportation. There are no books, no paper, no pens, although these were en route via the next available plane. A grant from Trinity, New York helps to make the course possible at all. We slept in small mud and thatch tukhls or under the stars. We shared food with people who gave from what little they had.

We had been chastened, and yet inspired. We have seen the miracle of this explosion of Christianity here and praise God for the Sudanese Church. We give thanks to God for Marc Nikkel, the Sudanese Bishops, priests and evangelists who are serving faithfully under such difficult circumstances.

On the eve of February 25, Ash Wednesday, we had a memorable experience of the Ash Wednesday Liturgy. All our team members, Marc Nikkel, Bishop Garang and the two Archdeacons of Bor Diocese, gathered at the end of the day in a pitchblack, small African hut at Yomciir. We sat on the floor very close to each other, and we had only two copies of The Book Of Common Prayer. Marc Nikkel gathered the ashes from the land where people’s homes, cattle and lives have been turned into ashes because of the human sins of greed and hatred.

Marc led the liturgy of Ash Wednesday by the dim light of a flashlight. The words of the liturgy penetrated in my soul in a new and special way. The words of the opening collect were so alive and meaningful to hear: *“Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness.”*

While saying together the words of Psalm 51: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me,”* I prayed in my heart for God’s forgiveness for the perpetrators of violence, slavery and killing of innocent people. I asked for God’s mercy for persecutors and slanderers, to turn their hearts into clean hearts of mercy and peace, so all the people of Sudan may live in peace and harmony. I asked for true repentance, to forgive us all our sins of negligence and ignorance of the suffering of all God’s people.

Marc asked me to impose the ashes on all present. I did it with fear and trembling praying Kyrie Pantokrator within my spirit: *“And now, O Lord, I bend the knee of my heart and make my appeal to forgive us Lord- - forgive us.”*

On February 28, with heavy hearts, we said goodbye to our newfound family in Christ inside Sudan. We brought with us images now planted forever in our minds, of joyful faces singing songs of hope and painful sights of hunger, nakedness and human suffering. It was a difficult goodbye since we were leaving them in such miserable conditions of helplessness.

A small Trackmark plane picked us up and flew us back to Lokichokio. We stayed there in a guesthouse. For the first time in 12 days, we had running showers and cold water to drink. We rested all afternoon in our individual rooms, and I was not worried about making my fellow team members’ lives miserable because of my horrible snoring. After dinner we met for debriefing and continued it until the next day, March 1.

In our findings we all agreed that following are the primary needs for the Sudanese Church:

- Provide scholarships for young men and woman for secondary school education.
- Help to repair the guesthouses for international guests to stay during their visits.
- Support the Theological Training Program.
- Provide agricultural tools and seeds for cultivation.
- Provide transportation (i.e. bicycles) for clergy and evangelists.
- Provide money for charter flights (a single flight averages about \$2,500) for Marc and the Bishop’s visits inside Sudan to take Christian materials for conducting theological courses and food supplies for the attendees.

- Provide funds for the training of women leaders.
- Provide funds for theological books and stationary.
- Perform advocacy work inside the USA to UN and NGO'S about lack of sufficient food, clean water, medical supplies and shelter materials.
- Help to build bridges between Islamic and Christian communities.

At 11:30 a.m. we stopped the debriefing session and came together to celebrate the experiences and insight we had gained into the life of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. Our Eucharistic community met around our worktables and I celebrated the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It was a very moving service, and in the breaking of the bread and sharing of the Common Cup, we experienced the presence of the RISEN LORD.

I flew back to Nairobi at 2:00 p.m. in a very small plane from Lokichokio. I was the most miserable passenger on this flight. I believed this plane was going to fall at any time. I kept my eyes closed for most of the two-and-a-half-hour flight. During my stay at CPK guesthouse I met Bishop Gabriel Roric Jur of Rumbek Diocese and Bishop Levi Hassan Nzakara of Ibba Diocese. It was a total surprise, as I was not planning to meet with them in Nairobi. I accepted it as God's gift to me. I spent lot of time together with them to learn about their ministry and the conditions of their dioceses.

Bishop Gabriel Roric is 46 years old and a graduate of American University of Beirut. His diocese is partly in the government-held area in the north, with the rest under SPLA control. He has an intriguing personality. He also serves as a government minister in the cabinet of Khartoum government. I asked him how he could justify his presence in the cabinet of President Omar el-Beshir, who has a record of persecuting the Christian Church in Sudan. He answered that he represents the view of the church in the government.

He acknowledged that this war was started in 1956 as a political war. Then in 1972 the war ended, and Southern Sudan gained limited autonomy under President Nimeiri's government. Nimeiri found Southern Sudan was growing strong and he decided to divide it into several small states. The discovery of oil in the south made him fear that Southern Sudan might become strong and wealthy. He wanted to re-draw the map and annex the oil area to Bentiu State.

In 1984 Islamic Law was introduced. It brought the present war, as the SPLA began fighting in earnest. Bishop Roric said that Christians are being oppressed politically. Bishop Levi Hassan Nzakara was recuperating in Nairobi after his eye surgery. His diocese, Ibba, has come out of the former Yambio Diocese. At present he cares for Yambio, Maridi and Ibba Dioceses as his people are displaced both in the North and South. He lives in the North in the government-held area. His dioceses have been particularly hard hit by the sleeping sickness.

He appeals for medical help for Rangu Hospital in his Diocese. He fears that if timely medical help is not provided by the international community, hundreds of thousands of people will die of sleeping sickness. His diocese is also in dire need of clothing and food.

After my meeting with the two bishops I went to the Anglican Cathedral for evensong. The Rev. Anthony Smith of the Church Missionary Society was the officiant and he brought me back to the CPK guesthouse. Later, his driver drove me to the airport and I left Nairobi at 10:55 p.m. for London.

On March 2, on my way back to the USA, I visited the Diocese of Bradford, England for three days. Bishop David Smith of Bradford had just returned from visiting the North and South of Sudan. He was the Chaplain of the House of Sudanese Bishops as they met in Nairobi last February. The Dioceses of Southwestern Virginia and Bradford are partners in the Anglican Communion to work with the Church in Sudan. We shared our thoughts, learning's and hopes of how we could work together to assist the Church in Sudan.

My life was deeply touched by the faith, prayers and commitment of my fellow team members: Margaret Larom, Karin Lindsey, Nancy Frank, Drew Klatte and Richard Parkins. It was a joy to pray together, to drink all day from the same bottle of water, to break bread (injera) and to dip together in one bowl in the Sudanese manner of community eating. It was truly an experience of a Eucharistic community.

I hope and pray that our global community will move immediately, on all fronts, to relieve the suffering and to stand in solidarity with the people and churches in Sudan.

We have set up an account to receive donations to assist our brothers and sisters in the Sudan. I appeal to you as Archbishop of Sudan's Canon and Commissary in the USA to send your gifts and generous donations to:

Help With Compassion
427 14th St South
La Crosse, WI 54601

I assure you that not a penny shall be kept locally but promptly given to the Episcopal Church in Sudan. Can we do something before it is too late? Please act now! Remember the sufferings of those who lack the freedom to speak and worship freely. I beg you to share their story and remember them in your prayers daily.

"I say that we should visit Christ while there is opportunity, take care of him and feed him. We should clothe Christ and welcome him. We should honor him, not at our table, like some; not only with ointments, like Mary; not only with a sepulcher, like Joseph of Arimathea; nor with things which have to do with his burial, like Nicodemus, who loved Christ only by half, nor finally with gold, incense and myrrh, like the Magi, who came before all those whom we have mentioned."

“But, as the Lord of all desires mercy and not sacrifice, and as compassion is better than tens of thousands of fat rams, let us offer him this mercy through the needy and those who are at present cast down on the ground.”

- Gregory of Nazianzus, in the fourth century

“I am convinced that neither death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Romans 8:38-39)

The Lost Boys of Sudan

*When I was young/my country was peaceful like a dove
But now that I'm grown up
My country is bleeding everyday there is dropping of bombs
Danger is everywhere
The promised land of my ancestors is being taken by strangers
When will I enjoy this precious land?*

(THE PROMISED LAND, Justin Angelo Arona, Comboni Secondary School, Yambio, Sudan)

At Kakuma Refugee Camp I met thousands of swarm of fleeing teen age boys are victims of war in Sudan. Kakuma refugee camp was organized to protect and shelter the “Lost Boys.” Our host at Kakuma was our Episcopal missionary Rev. Marc Nikkel, who embraced these orphan young men and opened study centers for them to learn to read and write. Bartholomayo Bol-Mawat Deng (known as Bol), a 24-year-old evangelist provided them charismatic leadership to teach them Christian faith. Let me share with you their painful story and why they are called “Lost Boys of Sudan.”

Since 1983, nearly five million people have been displaced by the civil war in Sudan. In the beginning of the war, Sudanese adults and children sought safety in Ethiopia. In 1987 Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) of the Southern Sudan rounded up thousands of Southern boys and took them into their camps. The girls were not taken as they do not fight in the army. They were taken to be trained as child soldiers but the SPLA commanders would say that the boys would have been killed or taken as slaves by the Khartoum forces if they had stayed in their villages. They say they

wanted to keep the boys safe and to educate them so there will be young men ready to govern southern Sudan when it is free.

In the late 1980’s, there were about 66,000 boys between the ages of six and eighteen among the 300,000 refugees in the Itung camp in Ethiopia. Then in May 1990, the Ethiopian leader was overthrown. The new leader gave the Sudanese army permission to invade the refugee camps, so they were no longer safe.⁴ Following the change in May 1991 these young people were forced to flee again.

Sudanese Southern rebel army let these boys go as they could not provide them shelter and food any more. The government of Sudan army began to attack and kidnapping young males to use them as cannon fodder in battle zones or to walk through minefields. More than 26,000 thousands young boys left the refugee camps in Ethiopia. They roughly covered 1,000 mile journey on foot. Some of them were as old as four to five years old boys.

On their journey of thousand miles in search of peace they ate leaves or wild berries. Others were malnourished so weakened by

hunger and lack of sleep that they could go no further and sat down by the roadside, prey for lions and other wild animals. Many boys were drowned or were eaten by crocodiles by way of a perilous river crossing. Those that crossed successfully faced an uncertain future in Sudan, where they were again without food and water. These boys heard that they might find safety in Kenya. They across the Kenyan border and about 10,000 survived this painful journey and finally reached at a place now called Kakuma refugee camp in the northwest desert area of Kenya. I call Kakuma refugee camp as the hellhole of the world for a very large mass of humanity without proper living conditions, medicines and food.

After our visit we joined organizations like Church World Service and UNHCR and referred our case for the suffering people of Sudan to U.S. Department of States. 3,400 of these youth have been brought into United States for resettlement. The community of faith in churches in the United States, Australia and several European nations has also given refuge to these orphan young adults from Sudan. I personally helped our community in Waynesboro, Virginia to bring two Sudanese “Lost Boys” for settlement there. Despite their happiness to have new opportunities in the U.S. these young men expressed their deep felt concern for peace in the homeland in Sudan. These young men from Sudan are of deep faith in Jesus Christ. They often say that the world calls them “Lost Boys of Sudan”, but they are not lost but found by Jesus Christ.



**Lost Boys of Sudan Kakuma Refugee Camp.
February 1998.**

Jihad at Omdurman University

Why hate? – Embrace love!

On February 9, 1999 we received a fax from Sudan with a plea for the international community to use its pressure to stop Islamic Holy War against Christians in the North. A open letter had been distributed among the students at Omdurman University near Khartoum by the Islamic University Student Union and the Association Islamic Thought. A fight broke out and Christians were attacked. Following is the true copy of the open letter:

Dear Citizens,

The suspicious movement of Christianity in the Sudan has become dangerous to Muslims and the Islamic Faith and to keep quiet is a crime against Muslims and their religion and is threatening Muslims' existence: their entity, present and the future.

It has become a concrete fact that the missionary activity which is in the county for many years is a plan, supported by foreign Christian powers outside and inside the country.

Despite the fact that the 1962 missionary act completely prohibited any missionary activity unless on certain conditions in which any violation of this law was punishable. We found that the missionaries and the bishops in the Sudan continued to work in a broad day light and are behaving with disregard to the existing authority; not caring about consequences of their serious provocation of Muslim

feeling, who are very worried about this challenge which will force them to stand up in defense of their religion, the result of which will not be good for the country if the government did move quickly, to stop this destructive act against the Islamic religion.

Dear Citizens,

The disregard of this missionary work and its challenge to the authority and Muslim has reached the extent of opening Youth Center Khartoum Branch in January 1977 and has opened a mail box No 6163 in its name and has been equipped with publication: books, biographies, posters, and studies through correspondence according to their plan and has distributed leaflets in Khartoum on 15/1/1997 signed by Abdul Messiah and brothers.

The Security forces have last month uncovered a dangerous Clandestine Organization in Khartoum, working against Islam and is calling for resilience and were found in possession of thousands of different books against Islam and prophet Mohamed. Others were a number of tape-recorded cassettes with speeches against Islam and the Quranic Teaching.

This Christian Missionary nest which has been the base of the Clandestine, is one of so many small nests but it is performing the same dangerous roles against the Islam

Muslims are now feeling that they face a dangerous work and this work might go hand in hand with a Christian military training and this face has been revealed during the procession of the Cross marching through the streets in a clear challenge to the Muslims feeling.

Before this problem could aggravate where its solution will require a high price, the government asked today, not tomorrow, to take effective steps to face this danger on the national level and to monitor the organs and the money which is moving in the field of missionary by taking the following steps:

- 1. The strict application of the 1962 missionary act.*
- 2. To control and monitor the buying of houses and land by the church in different areas.*
- 3. To control the organized migration of Christians to the Sudan; especially from Egypt.*
- 4. To renew the Nationality Certificate issued during the last few years.*
- 5. To know the sources of funding for buying some houses and shops in the residential areas.*

6. Review of the land ownership law.

7. The state should use its rights to organize the Churches in the Sudan.

8. Monitoring the Church missionary movement in the residential area and on road sides, and stop all propaganda means of preaching, such as bulletin and printed material.

Dear Citizens,

These are dangerous facts we putting in your hand and the hands of the responsible officials. As it is said "The fire is about to burn; if wise men of this society did not put off its fuel will be dead bodies."

- Students Union

Omburdan University

It is a very dangerous move of the Islamic regimes which has already caused death to over two million Christians and animists. There are at least 2.3 million who are diseased, starved and displaced. Four million are refugees. We pray that such propaganda would further fracture the ailing nation of Sudan. Christianity is not first time present in this land. It goes back to the first and second century.

This "new" movement of Christian faith in Sudan started over hundred and fifty years ago. Islam and Christianity are both missionary faiths. The adherents of both 1 Wing faith communities are required to share the good news and the teaching of their beliefs. And we can do it without harming and antagonizing each other. We have lot of common sacred stories and values to share.

Both faiths have been present on the global scene for the last 2000/1500 years. We must grow up and respect each other. Are we not after all sons and daughters of Abrahamic faith? In my own church in Virginia I have invited Muslims for a dialogue. During these dialogues we let Muslims pray right inside the church building. The Muslim Scholar brought copies of the holy Quran and Islamic literature and I let him distribute them to the Christian members of my faith community.

I have a copy of the Holy Qu'ran and several Islamic books in my own study. I want to learn about Islam. Most of our Seminaries invite Muslim scholars to teach us Islamic faith here in the West. I have yet to discover that there actually is a plot being hatched to destroy Islam. On the contrary, Christians have been heard to extend their hands to work hand in hand as People of The Book and Abrahamic tradition to build the common bond of respect and harmony between both faith communities. I cannot comprehend the narrow vision of an Islamic nation which would feel so threatened by a minority church. I pray and hope that Muslim leaders, who have an opportunity to know the Church in the West, would help the Islamic Umma to know that there is no such conspiracy to destroy Islam.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the message of love and respect for all human beings. In the Washington D.C. Area, the Islamic community has recently purchased 1,000 acres of prized real estate. I am excited to know that we shall have the rich resources of Islamic University to learn about the faith of Islam. Many churches in the United States

have offered their church buildings to be used for Friday Islamic prayers. Both Christians and Muslims need to learn to live in peace in our present world. Why hate? Embrace love!

Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revered George L. Carey, during his visit to Damascus-Syria, spoke in the Abu Nour Mosque on February 1, 1999, saying:

“Christians and Muslims need to repent of a ‘culture of distrust.’ When we look at the history of the world, all too often will we find it littered with the remains of conflicts between Christians and Muslims. This has led to a culture of distrust and to the tendency for each of us to demonize the other. Such demonizing has generally ignored the great contribution that both faiths have made, and are making to our world.”

“But such an attitude, and the suspicion it engendered, called for repentance. Problems could not be solved by violence and aggression. Our faithfulness to God demands that we follow peacefully paths. Great problems can only be solved by honest encounter and creative dialogue. Jesus Christ had called his followers to love others, and similar sentiments were found in the Qur’an.”

“We must learn from history and not be slaves to it. Both faiths are missionary religions and that should not lead towards conflict nor to aggressive proselytism, but to mutual respect. Respect for the integrity of the other, reciprocity in our relationships, and active support for the minorities living within our communities are a part of the service that we owe to God and our fellow human beings.”

“There was substantial common ground between Christians and Muslims. The challenge to us today is to find that common ground, and to confront the insidious pressures which are undermining family life today and destroying the stability of our communities. When Christian and Muslim demonize each other, it meant that they had listened too much to a world which sees itself in terms of divisions and barriers between peoples and religions, rather than a world in which we all share, and for which we all have to take a common responsibility.”

“We pray that the Khartoum government may come to know the truth that Christians around the world are praying for peace and have no wish for this war to continue. It is our prayer before Almighty God that peace, unity, and prosperity may return to Sudan and all God’s children may live in harmony.

The Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders United Nations, New York

August 28, 2000

Appeal of the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph N. Marona, DD
Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Province of Sudan

Your Excellencies
UN Secretary General
Heads of States and Government
Most Prominent Religious and Spiritual
Leaders

Please Do Not Forget Us

1. The Conflict in Sudan: The conflict in Sudan is manifested by existence of war in our country. Since 1940s, South Sudan has opposed to the policies of central government in the North of Sudan. Most of the opposition is deep rooted in abuse of power, inequality, economic marginalization of the South, political and cultural differences, ethnicity problems and recently religious conflict to a larger degree of tension. Forceful implementation of Islamic Sharia Law in 1983 brought conflict into surface and present jihad war in the South diverted the conflict from its political and economic factors to religious problems. For Christians in the South and Christian communities in the North are among this religious conflict though most of the ministers from Southerners with government are forced to convert to Islamic faith. Christians are not excepting conflict to be religious act of war between Christian and Muslims because Christianity preaches love, repentance, reconciliation and oneness in Christ. This is the area where I ask Christians

to forgive Muslim neighbors and work justly and respect the dignity of our common humanity. I pray that Muslim neighbors would also extend hand of friendship and the problem of inequality in power sharing economic imbalance in the Sudanese State will be resolved and the result is peace. Love, harmony, stability and justice and this is what God Almighty requires us to do. Politicization of religion exploits its usefulness and it creates problems for humankind.

The main area affected by war in Sudan is Southern Sudan. It is a region consisting of 10 states with a population of about six million according to 1983 census. The war has greatly reduced the prosperity of the country even in areas where fighting does not exist. The victims are the Sudanese who wanted to avoid war migrated to neighboring countries, i.e. Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Congo, Egypt and some went as far as USA, Australia, Canada and Europe. Many Sudanese are displaced internally and they are currently residing in Jebel Aulia camp, Rass Shetan, and shanty towns around El Haj Yousaf.

The need for peace in Sudan is great. The war has caused economic and social hardship in the country and now turned into racial, Arab and black and from a civil war to a religious

war. More than two million Sudanese have been killed and it has caused great misery and famine in our land. In Southern Sudan very basic services like health and education are lacking. There are no opportunities for trade and economic development. I support the efforts of IGAD peace initiative to reduce human suffering and deprivation in Sudan.

There are 4.5 million internally displaced people (the largest number in the world) and half a million refugees in other countries. I appeal to the international community to intervene to bring peace in Sudan. Can this Millennium World Peace summit forum would reach out to help us to restore peace in our land? We feel as if our cries for peace have been forgotten by the rest of the world. I ask you to stand in solidarity with us to bring an end to this war in Sudan.



Archbishop Joseph Marona and Father Patrick in Kampala, Uganda, August 2002

Celebration of 100 Years Witness of Episcopal Church in Sudan

December 2000

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S LETTER TO EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SUDAN
To the Bishops, Clergy & People of the Episcopal Church of Sudan

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today Anglicans will be gathering from every part of your region of Sudan to celebrate 100 years of faithful witness to the Gospel of Christ. As we look back across a turbulent century, not only in Sudan, but also in many other parts of the world, I thank God for the extraordinary courage and faithfulness of those early missionaries who carried the message of Jesus Christ across the world, in some cases to preach the Christian faith for the first time, and in others to resurrect a Church which had lived and died in earlier times.

Such was the case in Sudan. The late 19th Century saw the arrival of missionaries from a number of different Christian traditions in Sudan, and as we celebrate particularly at this time the establishment of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, we should not forget that the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterians also mark 100 years of mission at much the same time. So, together, without regard for the differences which still divide us, let us praise God for the wonderful growth and development of his people in this land. The witness of those first missionaries, many of whom gave their lives for the faith, remain an inspiration to us all today.

How, I wonder, would those figures of the past see the Church of today in Sudan? I believe they would rejoice. They would rejoice because it is so clear that the Gospel has taken root in this land; that it is preached and lived faithfully by millions of people. They would rejoice because they would see the people of God living and working together to relieve the suffering and to bring peace and justice to the people. They would rejoice because God is glorified by the witness of the Sudanese people.

But I believe they would weep also. They would weep at poverty and the suffering of the people. They would weep that for 30 years and more Sudanese people have been at war with one another. They would weep because Christians and Muslims seem unable to live together in mutual love and respect. They would weep to see the oppression of God's people by the men of war.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in just two weeks' time we will be celebrating Christmas on the eve of the 2,000th anniversary of the coming of the Prince of Peace. Jesus Christ reveals for us, as he did 2,000 years ago, the way, the truth, and the life. The way is peace and love for all God's people. The truth is that in him, God's people are assured of salvation. The life is Christ himself,

crucified, risen and with his people always, even to the end of time. That is our hope. That is our inspiration. That is the faith which has sustained you through all your trials and tribulations, and will continue to uplift you.

I believe that the rest of the world is now focusing on the continuing problems in Sudan with much greater seriousness. I assure you that your fellow Christians continue to stand with you in prayer and action. We long that you may live in peace and justice. We continue to hope and pray that your leaders will respond to the demands for an end to war, and I know of the very significant initiatives which have been led by the Churches in Sudan, to bring the desires of ordinary people to the notice of the Government and the leaders of the opposition movements. I want to encourage you in that process and assure you of my continuing active support and that of Anglican leaders all over the world; and in this, I know that we are united with Pope John Paul II and other leaders in the Roman Catholic Church and leaders of the Protestant Churches as well.

On this, the centenary of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, and on the eve of the third Millennium, I pray that God will richly bless this land and all its people. May we all hear and respond to the message of the angels. 'Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on Earth.'

Yours ever in Christ

+George Cantuar

***Letter to the President of the United States of America
Regarding the Desecration of All Saints Cathedral, Khartoum:***

St. John's Episcopal Church

BOYDEN PARISH – 1837

473 S. WAYNE AVENUE (AT I STREET) P.O. BOX 945 WAYNESBORO, VA 22980
THE REV. CANON PATRICK P. AUGUSTINE, RECTOR

Good Friday in Holy Week

April 13, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

“There is perhaps no greater tragedy on the face of the Earth today,” Secretary of State Colin Powell told the House International Relations Committee during testimony on Sudan early last month. Let me share with you the latest systematic oppression of the Christian Church in Sudan by the National Islamic Front government of Sudan.

On April 11, Church leaders were forced to cancel Holy Week services to be held at Green Square in Khartoum due to government pressure. Then Christians gathered for prayer at All Saints Cathedral Khartoum of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan on Wednesday. While people were in the Cathedral, riot police led by three Brigadiers arrived on the site. It upset few individuals who were gathered outside the All Saints Cathedral. They demanded police to quit and leave the holy ground of the Cathedral. The police reacted with full force by firing tear gas and high explosive hand grenades inside the Cathedral building. The windows, doors and chairs in the Cathedral were smashed and broken. The altar was overturned and the carpets on the floor smeared with blood and littered with empty cartridges of the tear gas. Live bullets were used which left marks on the Cathedral walls. Four people were seriously wounded, and 55 were arrested inside the Cathedral and the Provost house. Several of them were sentenced to flogging 15 lashes each including two boys under the age of 18 and six girls. Abel Alier the former vice president of Sudan, Rev. Ezekiel Kondo, Provincial Secretary of the Church of Sudan, The Very Rev. Silvastre Thomas, BBC reporter Alfred Taban and reporter from an Arabic news paper (Alraya alakhar) are those among who were arrested.

The Most Rev. Joseph B. Marona, Archbishop of Sudan has issued an appeal to the world community to remember his people in Sudan in prayers as they are finding life for the Christians in Sudan becoming increasingly very difficult. The Muslim government of Sudan has been attacking with the weapons of destruction the Southern Sudanese Christians for the last several decades. Over 2.5 million Southern Sudanese lives have been annihilated in this modern genocide. Four million have been forced to become refugees in Kenya, Uganda and other parts of East and North Africa. Disease, starvation, and malnutrition are on the rise. Christian children and women are regularly forcibly taken and sold in the slave markets. Some two million Southerners are thought to have been taken north as slaves during the last several decades. It is a modern holocaust. The international community has abandoned these members of the human family, and it should not be so.

Rep. Frank Wolf, United States Congressman from Virginia visited southern Sudan last January. In his report he mentions the horrors of the suffering of Sudanese Christians. He wrote, "The actions of the Khartoum government cannot be tolerated any longer. It is a brutal repressive regime. Government sponsored militias torch houses, loot property, and rape and murder with impunity. Women live in fear. I heard horrific stories of rape, abuse, and torture. Women are raped in front of their husbands and children. Civilians food and production and supply lines are attacked. Livestock is destroyed. Government planes just fly overhead to play mind games with the residents of the southern Sudan. Other times, homemade bombs are rolled out the back of the plane, randomly falling from the sky. They have hit homes, churches and hospitals. Some of the bombs are fifty five gallon oil drums packed with dynamite and nails. International relief is obstructed. In 1998, this strategy caused a famine in southern Sudan that endangered millions and killed ten of thousands."

New found oil wealth in the southern Sudan is further worsening the problem for the Christians in the South. The new trade brings over \$500 million in revenue for Khartoum government. The Islamic government is conducting a "scorched earth" campaign covering tens of thousands of acres around each drilling site and forcing by bombing and raiding civilian targets in the region to force its inhabitants to flee further south. Last year there were 152 air attacks on the human targets to destroy villages, hospitals, schools and churches. Oil companies like Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) and Canadian Talisman Energy, Inc., are the largest participants in Sudan's fledgling oil trade. It is a well thought program of ethnic cleansing by the Arab northern Sudan to get rid of southern black Africans. Archbishop Joseph Marona of Sudan has said that "Khartoum government wants land of the southern people but not the inhabitants of the land."

Mr. President, Sudan is a living hellhole on earth. I appeal to you on behalf of the people of Sudan to bring to an end to the bombings of civilians, slavery of Christian girls and boys, kidnapping, mutilation and child soldiery. No Fly Zones should be established where civilian population can live in peace. United States government should provide adequate food supplies

and funds should be made available directly to the church in Sudan to provide food and other human needs to its people. United States government should invite United Nations, and European governments to bring an end to this worst human tragedy on the face of the earth. Our government should divest assets from the following companies, who prefer gains over human lives, and are engaged in oil drilling in southern Sudan:

Talishman Energy of Canada
Petronas of Malaysia
China National Petroleum
Lundin Oil of Sweden
OMV of Austria

Islamic governments friends of the United States like Egypt and Saudi Arabia should be asked to help to end the genocide of the southern Sudanese. Islam does not teach violence against other faiths. Religious plurality is a fact in the world of today and tomorrow. Religion is to be proposed, not imposed. As the Qur'an asserts, "There is no compulsion in religion." (Q 2,256). Those who engage in violence in the name of religion insult both God and religion. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt can be a great diplomatic channel to bring an end to war in Sudan.

Sir, I know you are a man of faith and compassion, and I pray that you will be the instrument of God's peace *to pursue justice and champion the oppressed, to give the orphan his rights, to plead the widow's cause, to loose the fetters of injustice and to set free those who have been crushed.* (Isaiah 1: 58). May God bless you and your government now and always.

I hope to hear from you, Mr. President and I am available to assist you in bringing to resolve to the suffering of the Sudanese people. You remain in my prayers and we publicly pray for you during each Sunday services.

Yours respectfully,

The Rev Canon Patrick P. Augustine
Canon and Commissary to the Archbishop of Sudan in the United States

HIV/AIDS in Southern Sudan

- 1 in 38 adults live with HIV/AIDS.
- 63 people a day died of AIDS in 2001
- 62,000 children have lost one or both parents in AIDS

(Mennonite Central Committee)

In August 2002 during my visit to Southern Sudan my first meeting was with a group of young people who had recently returned to their homeland from refugee camps. The Episcopal Church in Sudan was conducting a HIV /AIDS awareness workshop. “Southern Sudan has recently experienced an increase in traffic of military personnel, commercial transporters, commercial sex workers, and other at risk groups. In addition, the region is at high risk of an AIDS pandemic due to cultural practices such as tattooing, scarification and polygamy.

Throwing HIV/AIDS into this mix would be a “disaster – like an atomic bomb” said Dr. Richard Oleko, a medical doctor working with the NGO Norwegian Church AID in the remote Nuba mountains of Southern Kordofan Province, in southern central Sudan. Civil war of 21 years has led to almost no health services and lack of HIV/AIDS education. War has destroyed much of the social and economic infrastructure and has produced the highest displaced persons in the world. The ongoing conflict has made southern Sudan particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS which has already infected more than 40 million people in more than 90 countries.

Awareness of HIV/AIDS is relatively new in this region. Because of more than two decades of war it restricted labor, migration,

trade and travel, and contained the virus.

Now with the prospect of peace in Sudan people may be able to have free movement. It is believed that there will be surge in HIV infection, particularly in the undeveloped area of Southern Sudan.

There is very little educational programs exist to help people to learn about the prevention of AIDS. Mary Biba, the only female country secretary in Southern Sudan says it is difficult to change people’s behavior without active campaign to create awareness about this dreadful disease. Condoms are not freely available and at the price of twenty five cents for a packet of three is a luxury many cannot afford. People can not spend that money on condoms. There are lots of people who are HIV positive. We just know by symptoms and reactions that this is AIDS, because they cannot be tested. There are signs of diarrhea, getting sick, vomiting, opportunistic diseases - so when all these appear, people know that it is HIV/AIDS. People are just passing away, because there is nothing to control it.

In my recent correspondence with Helen Wavis Weleya of the Episcopal Church Sudan, in Kampala-Uganda I received the following report:

I have been to Southern Sudan just 2 weeks ago for an HIV/AIDS awareness program for the Province of Episcopal Church of Sudan

and things seem not to be okay. Even though peace is already coming to Sudan, it's like we shall have to rise again and fight a much more difficult war. After 3 to 5 years from now, I do not know what will happen in Southern Sudan. Very few people know about HIV/AIDS, others say it is a Uganda and Kenya problem because both countries are small and are already getting filled up and majority think AIDS can never come to their homes because they have really suffered that even God knows.

I have lost one of my patients to HIV/AIDS just early June 2004. He was a pastor in Yambio diocese. So far two pastors from ECS have died and have left sick families who are helpless. So many have died without people knowing and many are still going to die if efforts are not exerted.

There is no antiretroviral (ARV) treatment not even in the hospital. When I talked to the senior medical officer of Yei Civil Hospital, he said they have no ARV treatment for the infected. The New Sudan government in the South has no revenue to help the AIDS victims. We beg the world to come to help us from further misery and suffering.

UN commissioned report by Mary Anne Fitzgerald warns: "Southern Sudan cannot afford the luxury of delay. HIV infection and AIDS awareness must be taken very, very seriously today – not tomorrow."

Peace Pilgrimage to Yei and Lainya, August 2002

Reported by Chris Graham, Augusta Free Press, Virginia

They are returning to their homeland, slowly, quietly.

It is a ruins, this land that would otherwise be so fertile, so lush, so beautiful.

Decades of civil war has turned southern Sudan into a hellhole.

There is no other way to describe it.

Those who are returning are finding it difficult - if not impossible - to begin to rebuild.

The roads have been destroyed by the northern armies; unexploded bombs line the countryside; as do thousands upon thousands of land mines.

And yet the southern Sudanese do not give up.

They do not lament their fates.

They do not complain.

They, instead, smile, give thanks to God, pray for His benevolence.

They have been the victims of a modern-day holocaust - millions slaughtered and sold into slavery, millions more sent into exile.

All because of their religious beliefs.

The south of Sudan is a Christian territory.

The north is run by Muslim extremists whom many believe are using civil war as a cover for an ethnic cleansing campaign in the south.

But God is not defeated.

Deliverance

“It is a miracle what is starting to happen there,” said Patrick Augustine, the rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Waynesboro, who visited Sudan for two weeks in August.

Augustine visited church groups in Yei, Lainya, Kenyi, Mundo and points in between.

What he saw was not pretty.



In remote areas of southern Sudan, Christians who have returned spend hours hiding in the bushes and tall grass that line roadsides - because they are afraid to show their faces in the daylight.

Roads are near impassable - trips of even 20 or 30 miles take four to five hours to complete, if they can be completed.

Churches and schools that dated to the 19th century are now rubble.

There is no infrastructure to speak of.

It would be easy to give up.

Giving up, apparently, isn't in their vocabulary.

"They are rebuilding, one building at a time," Augustine told The Augusta Free Press.

The church - so long the uniting force in Christian Sudan - is leading the efforts.

Christian ministers covering the countryside on bicycles - which are a more effective means of transportation given the general condition of roadways - tend to more than their parishioner's spiritual needs.

They are reopening the churches, the schools ... offering classes aimed at preventing the spread of AIDS ...

Open arms

For a people with so little to look forward to, with so few blessings to count, the Sudanese Christians that Augustine visited were as giving as any people he has ever met.

The group that was traveling with went to a primary school one morning and were serenaded by 398 students singing "We Welcome You in the Name of Jesus."

Another group had a feast and ceremonial dance that lasted into the wee hours of the morning.

"For this group, which had so little, to treat us this way ... It says a lot about them, about their faith," Augustine said.

It's a small world after all

"They sang and danced with such emotion. They seemed so thankful that we were there. They asked us to pray for them, and to ask

their brothers and sisters in the United States to pray for them, and to help them, by the grace of God, help them rebuild their church that was destroyed by the evil powers of war and hatred," Augustine said.

He had traveled all the way to Sudan - by plane from the States, by Land Cruiser over the Sudanese border, on roads that limited movement to vehicles moving over them to speeds of 10 miles per hour on the good stretches.

Coming up on a bombed-out school building, he and the group that he was traveling with got out of the Land Cruiser - because they wanted to see for themselves the evidence of what they had been hearing about, that there was an attempt under way by a Christian aid group to try to rebuild the school and at the same time rebuild a community that had been ravaged by decades of civil war.

Patrick Augustine - the rector at St. John's Episcopal Church in Waynesboro - marveled at the sight, amazed at what was being done in God's name.

Then Augustine heard a voice in the distance, saw a hand waving frantically at him.

"You are Patrick Augustine from Waynesboro, Virginia."

Augustine said he thought he was seeing a ghost - because nobody should know him where he was, in southern Sudan, in the middle of nowhere, literally.



John Peterson with Father Patrick in Laniya, Southern Sudan.

It turned out that the voice belonged to Johnson Peterson, an Augusta County resident who volunteers for a Christian relief organization called Hellfighters International.

Peterson joined Hellfighters after chatting with Augustine a couple of years ago about Augustine's annual trips to Sudan - and being touched at hearing the story of the struggle of Sudanese Christians.

"He told me that I had planted a seed of peace, and he was helping it grow," Augustine said.

"I was able to see the seed growing myself," Augustine said.

The chance meeting was more evidence that the world isn't as big as we think it is.

What happens in Sudan affects us here in Waynesboro, Staunton and Augusta County - and what happens here in Waynesboro, Staunton and Augusta County can affect Christians in Sudan as well.

Sudanese Christians are returning to their homeland again - starting over in the wake of a 30-year-plus civil war with Muslim extremists in the north that still rages on.

A liberation army has pushed the northern forces back, opening the door for the repatriation of southern Sudan natives who had left the country in a steady stream to escape the war.

We can help them return to some sense of normalcy. Augustine, who returned from Sudan in August, is trying to organize Greater Augusta County-area churches in a mission drive to collect bicycles (which provide the most effective means of transportation, given the poor condition of the Sudanese road system), building materials, books, writing implements and money.

"Let us do what we can do in the name of the Lord to help them rebuild their homeland and help them rebuild the church of Sudan," Augustine said.

Hope for Sudan and the Church

Visit to Khartoum and Cairo. November 9-18, 2004

By Patrick Augustine, Canon and Commissary of the Archbishop of the Sudan to the church in the U.S.

Leaders of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan held a roundtable meeting from November 9-12, 2004 in the capital city of Khartoum to discuss the ministry of the church and issues affecting their country. I was privileged to attend as a guest from the U.S.

Geographically, Sudan is Africa's largest country. Its population of 30 million includes a primarily Muslim Arab northern region and an animist and Christian African community in the south. Christians represent 16.7% of the total population. The Sudanese government is dominated by the National Islamic Front, a fundamentalist political organization formed from the Muslim Brotherhood in 1983.

It has endured civil war for four decades, with rebels in southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains who oppose imposition of Shari'a (Islamic) law fighting against the government and their military agencies. There have been numerous by-products of the war, including refugees, the wounded and traumatized, deep poverty, deep hatred and anger, illiteracy and lack of education, and disease. The war has displaced more than four million people and 2.5 million civilians have died since 1983.

In the midst of the conflict, the Episcopal Church of the Sudan (ECS), based in the Christian south, has been growing. Some have seen it as the fastest growing church province in the Anglican Communion.

The western area of Darfur has recently come to the world's attention. The conflict in Darfur, as in the nation's south, is rooted in the soil. Six million people who are farmers and herders live in the Darfur region. Most of Darfur's farmers are black Africans and herders are Arab nomads. In the last 20 years, this whole region has been under the curse of persistent drought, which has forced the Arab nomads to move to more arable lands. In the late 1980's, the competition for land began to turn violent. African rebels from a group calling itself the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) began attacking Sudan military targets as a protest against both the government's neglect of Darfur and an increasing Arab militancy. The Sudanese government called on local Arab tribes to crush the rebellion. The most eager recruits came from small groups of Arab nomads who saw an opportunity to grab land and livestock under the banner of a state-sanctioned military operation. These Arab nomad fighters are known as Janjaweed, a name that loosely means "devils on horseback." So far, 50,000 Darfurians are dead and over one million people have become internally displaced.

The memorandum of understanding demands that the government, rebel forces and other armed groups immediately cease all violence and attacks. It was an historic time to be in Sudan and the church leaders are now preparing themselves for peacetime.

The international community has been putting pressure on the Sudan government and various rebel groups to resolve the wars through peaceful mediation and dialogue. In May 2004 at Naivash, Kenya, the Sudan government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed a peace agreement for the cessation of hostilities. During my visit to Khartoum, we were invited to meet William Patey, the British Ambassador to Sudan. He briefed our delegation about the peace talks, which a few days later led to the signing of a Nov. 18-19 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Sudanese government and southern rebels, pledging to end two decades of war by December 31, 2004. The MOU demands that the government, rebel forces and other armed groups immediately cease all violence and attacks. It was an historic time to be in Sudan and the church leaders are now preparing themselves for peacetime.

The roundtable meeting gave an opportunity for Sudanese church leaders and Western partners to have frank, open and honest sharing. It was decided that ECS should forward all their projects through the Sudanese Development and Relief Agency (SUDRA). I stated, "Partners need to work through a central channel of the ECS as there are many churches who are individually funding projects from USA. In February 2005 we will form a 'Friends of the Church of Sudan organization.'" We discussed the Church of the Sudan being specific in presenting its needs to Western partners. I said, "There are many other areas in the world where we are being asked to help. In order to get your fair market share for the work of the

Church of the Sudan, you need to be clear in your goals and be transparent in providing accountability."

In this meeting I noticed the Sudanese partners from ECS were talking about peace-building, reconciliation and development of the church's work throughout the Sudan. It was an amazing experience for me to see the transformation coming from the culture of war to a culture of peace.



Canon Augustine talking with Bilquis Ali at roundtable conference.

One personal story touched me during the roundtable meeting. I met Bilquis, a young mother with five children. She told me that she was born in a Muslim family and is the first convert to Christianity from the Moro tribe. 10 years ago, she and her husband were visiting Christian friends. The family invited them to attend a church service. During the worship she noticed that when Christians prayed to God they had more freedom to address God as Abba/Father and could offer their prayers in their own words. In Islam she had been taught to offer the same prayers every time. She became curious to know about the Christian faith. She was given a copy of the New Testament, and after a time she asked to be baptized. It

was a serious step as she was disowned by her husband and family. She has raised her children by herself. Receiving Christ in her life filled her heart with the peace of God. She has gone through many hard times but she has never felt abandoned by the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Now she serves as an honorary treasurer of El-Obeid diocese and as a volunteer evangelist to spread the gospel message among her people. Her testimony was truly inspiring and I promised to pray for her and her family.

Following the partners meeting, I visited several areas in and around Khartoum with Bishop Ezekiel Kondo. The Diocese of Khartoum is one of 24 dioceses in the ECS. Situated in the capital city, it hosts a wide diversity of people who originally are from other parts of the country. Out of Khartoum's population of eight million, 1.5 million are displaced and many live in camps. Religiously, 60% of the population are Muslim, 38% are Christian, and 2% other. The diocese is seeking support for two projects, a computer training center and a leadership training project. (I am happy to provide details of these projects.)

While visiting Mayo you can actually smell poverty, see the human suffering, hunger and lack of sanitation. There are many children of war who are orphans and are on the street. . . There are no job opportunities. It is not a safe place to live.

One of our visits was to a Mayo camp of displaced people from Darfur, eastern, western and southern Sudan. There are 20,000 displaced people who live in this camp. 60%



Bishop Ezekiel conducting confirmation service at Mayo displaced camp outside Khartoum.

of them are Christians and ECS has a very strong and visible presence in this community. While visiting Mayo you can actually smell poverty, see the human suffering, hunger and lack of sanitation. There are many children of war who are orphans and are on the street. They are gang members who abuse drugs and have no place to go. Many young mothers have lost husbands in war and are forced to sell their bodies to support their families. There are no job opportunities. It is not a safe place to live.

At a four-hour worship service attended by 2,500 people, the bishop confirmed 170 people and licensed 20 members of the Mothers Union as lay eucharistic ministers. After the service, I met a young American named Marie "Merriam" McClintock. She is originally from Boston and has been working in Africa for the last several years. She is fluent in Arabic, and arrived in Sudan two months ago from Mozambique. In her prayers she felt that the Lord was calling her to minister to the orphans of war in Sudan. She said the Holy Spirit led her to Mayo.

When Merriam arrived, she learned that ECS had a small orphanage that had been abandoned as there was no one to run it. The bishop asked Merriam to provide that ministry. She is a spirit-filled person who loves these children and is bringing them back into this orphanage. Her mission is to provide these children a safe home and experience the love of Jesus and sense of security and community. There are five little rooms made of mud and straw. She has no money, books, food or other supplies. She has tremendous faith that God is going to provide her to support the ministry to the orphans of war in Mayo. My parish before I left for Sudan had filled three suitcases with medicine, soap, body lotions, stationary, clothes, candy, and pairs of used prescription glasses.



Canon Patrick visiting Merriam McClintock at orphanage at Mayo displaced camp.

I offered these gifts to the church for these children in Mayo. I admire Merriam's courage. She is a dedicated servant of Christ in this hellhole of the world. I ask your prayers and financial support for this new ministry.

In Mayo I was told:

1. Children lack basic needs like shelter and medical care. Health services are very poor.
2. School fees are imposed and so children have no option but to go to "Islamic Kalwas" where the curriculum is Islamized and Arabized.



Canon Patrick (left) Archdeacon Malcom Grundy of Bradford-UK, Senior priest of Khartoum diocese and Rev. Mousa, Principal of Shouki Bible School at Church of the Savior at Peace-building conference in Khartoum.

3. It is the churches rather than the government paying more attention to the education of many of the children in the camps.

The following three days I met with 100 clergy and lay delegates for a training of trainers for peace-building in Sudan. Three trainers from the Sudan Council of Churches led the process, which was prepared in anticipation for the coming peacetime. Church leaders are being trained and are being given tools for peace-building and transforming culture of war into culture of peace. Several issues were mentioned:

1. The civil society in Sudan is extremely weak.
2. No political party is democratic at the moment.
3. Generations have lived through war and violence, and it is a great challenge to nurture peace in that context.
4. There are undemocratic processes in the church to tackle, especially in the ethnic-based congregations, before the church can be an agent of democratization. The church must be seen to be setting a good example and pace.
5. Some of the traditional cultures contradict democratization. Working towards change of attitude is a challenge.
6. The role of the church during the anticipated interim period of government must be systematically thought out.
7. The church should advocate for women's active involvement in leadership.

It was mentioned that the attitude of Islamic leaders towards the church has been very discouraging. . . [I said] "It is our call, even in the face of hatred, to mend our relationships so as to minimize hatred, bitterness, and revenge. The challenge today for the Church of the Sudan is to put feet on the gospel and to plant seeds of love. . ."

The challenge of Islam was also discussed. It was mentioned that the attitude of Islamic leaders towards the church has been very discouraging. They believe the Prophet

Muhammad is the last seal of prophets and Christians are just wasting their time in believing in Jesus Christ. There is not much spirit of tolerance and reconciliation. In response, I said, "We live in a new reality in our world today. The Islamic community is also living outside the Islamic world and they are learning this new reality as they are now a minority in the West. The church, even in the face of severe persecution, should not give up hope as we are called by Christ to be agents of peace and reconciliation. Reconciliation is difficult but not impossible to achieve. We are the harbingers of hope to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose message is of forgiveness, not revenge, and to love our fellow human beings without conditions. It is our call, even in the face of hatred, to mend our relationships so as to minimize hatred, bitterness, and revenge. The challenge today for the Church of the Sudan is to put feet on the gospel and to plant seeds of love in the hearts of the people who have been separated by tribal, religious and ethnic divisions. It is Christ's call to us to bring healing of broken relationships and forgiving one another to drive towards achieving peace in Sudan. Reconciliation is a process that needs time and space and therefore it requires preparation."

After the clergy conference I went out of the compound of the Church of the Saviour, Omdurman-Khartoum, to get a bottle of water. I met there a very interesting gentleman named Jean Beliveau of Canada sitting on the ground outside a general store. He was talking with three Islamic evangelists who were well versed in French, English and to my surprise in Urdu language (my

mother tongue) too. Jean left Montreal, Canada on August 18th, 2000. His goal is to walk around the planet to promote “Peace and non-violence to the profit of the children of the world”. He is travelling alone with a three wheeled stroller to carry a bit of food, his clothing, a First Aid kit, a small tent and a sleeping bag. Jean plans to walk across all the continents, from North America to South America, then



The Canon Patrick, Bishop Ezekiel and Jean Beliveau at the Church of Saviour-Khartoum

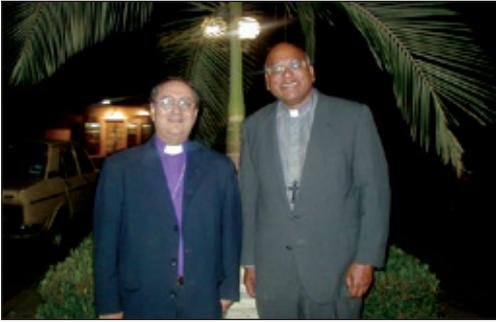
across to South Africa, up to Europe, then the Middle East, South and Eastern Asia, Australia, New Zealand and finally back to Canada. This journey will take 12 years to complete which is in accordance with the United Nations proclamation: 2001-2010 - International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. I assured Jean Beliveau of my prayers and solidarity in his walk for peace.



Canon Patrick's visit with His Holiness Pope Shenouda 111, Patriarch of the Coptic Church, Cairo-Egypt.

On my last day in Khartoum, Bishop Ezekiel and I visited with the Coptic Bishop of Khartoum. I was amazed to know that there were several Coptic churches in Khartoum well-run and well-attended. Coptics have been in Khartoum for many centuries. I encouraged Bishop Ezekiel to form a formal covenant relationship with the Coptic Church to work together to build the body of Christ in Sudan's capital city.

I also spent two days in Cairo, Egypt, which included a visit to the Sudanese refugee community at All Saint's Episcopal Cathedral. There are 25,000 Sudanese refugees in Cairo. The Anglican Diocese of Egypt has a permanent office for Sudanese ministry at the cathedral and a Sudanese pastor, evidence of its deep commitment to support the Sudanese church in the diaspora. I also visited with Pope Shenouda III of the Coptic Church while in Cairo. The Pope and I exchanged our thoughts on the ministry of churches in Islamic countries and how to build bridges to live in peace as faith communities. Afterward, we went to St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral, where he gave his weekly address to 10,000



Bishop Mouneer Hanna, Episcopal Bishop of Egypt at All Saint Cathedral, Cairo with Canon Patrick.

people. It was the Feast of St. George's and a great day to be with the Coptic community.

The following morning I met with Bishop Mouneer Hanna Anis, the Anglican Bishop of Cairo. He expressed his concerns about the decisions of the U.S. church's General Convention of 2003. He mentioned that after ECUSA's General Convention it created difficulty both for Anglicans and Coptic churches in their interfaith relationship with the Al-Azhar. Al-Azhar is the oldest (1,000 years old) and largest university in the Islamic world. Bishop Mouneer mentioned that the church in the West must realize that their decisions on human sexuality do impact the witness of the church in the Islamic world.

He asked me to convey a message that we should not create more complications for the churches in the Islamic world. He appreciates the help of the church in the USA for the churches in the developing world.



Canon Patrick visiting Mufti Ali Gomma Mohamed Abdel Wahab at the Secretariat of the Grand Mufti of Al-Azhar.

Later I met Mufti Ali Gomma Mohamed Abdel Wahab, minister of justice and senior scholar of Al-Azhar, and Dr. Tayseir Muhammad Mandour, member of Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs at the Secretariat of Grand Mufti of Al-Azhar. We discussed how our Abrahamic faiths in the 21st century can make an impact towards work towards peace and reconciliation. We agreed that religion in the 21st century must play an important role for restoring moral values, strengthening family structure in the society and working together to create better understanding among faith communities. As dwellers of this fragile planet we should also work towards the preservation of better environment for the health of the wholesome society.

I thank God for these opportunities. It was my pilgrimage of peace to deepen my faith to work as Christ's instrument of peace. I have information about 16 projects selected by the SUDRA of the Province of the Episcopal Church in the Sudan, and would be happy to send you a copy of these projects if your diocese or church would like to help in the development of the Sudanese church.

** This article was originally printed in Witness magazine. www.thewitness.org/agw/augustine120204.html.*

Police force eviction from Archbishop's Khartoum office

*News Release by the Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan
Khartoum, Sudan - May 21, 2004*

Riot police were positioned yesterday by order of the Sudanese Government to enforce eviction from ECS Church properties in Khartoum by Court Order of a Sudanese Sharia Court. Police arrived at 9.00 a.m. yesterday at the ECS Guest House in Khartoum which houses the Office of the Archbishop of Sudan as well as diocesan and other Church offices. They ordered the eviction and threatened to use force to obtain compliance.

The ECS Guesthouse accommodated the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, during his much-acclaimed visit to Sudan and serves as an important meeting place for Christians in the predominantly Muslim capital. At the time of the police eviction, a church consultation was being conducted in the Guest House by CORAT Africa, and preparations were being made for a 4-day workshop on Peace and Reconstruction in Sudan, organized by SUDRA, the church's development and relief agency which was due to start today.

Speaking from Juba, the ECS Archbishop, the Most Revd Dr Joseph Marona, called for the Sudan Government to take decisive action to restore the property to the Church:

"This is a serious day for all the people of Sudan. I call on the Government to restore the Church's property to its rightful owner - the Church." He also urged restraint in the face of provocation: "As Scripture says, it is not by might that one prevails."

The police arrived at the ECS Guest House without any prior warning, declaring that the Guest House had been sold by former Government Minister, Gabriel Roric to an Arab businessman. Roric, who had also been a bishop in ECS until dismissed in 2003, had sold the property claiming himself to be the "Archbishop of ECS". The Court Order had then been made to obtain vacant possession because of Roric's failure to hand over the property.

Many questions remain unanswered, in particular why the Court accepted Roric to be "Archbishop of ECS" in relation to the supposed "sale" when the story of his dismissal and subsequent attempts to undermine the Church is well known in Khartoum. The Church has long recognized Roric to be acting as the agent of Government security, even since losing his ministerial position in the Government in 2001. He continues to hold a senior position in the ruling Islamic party and his recent actions in consecrating rogue bishops has had the tacit support of the Khartoum Government.

The Bishop of Renk, Bishop Daniel Deng, whose diocesan office was also evicted from the Guest House compound, expressed his dismay at what had taken place:

"How can police trample through the Church's property and dismantle the Archbishop's office before our eyes? This is an attempt to humiliate the Church. This cannot be allowed to happen. The Anglican Communion and the whole international community must speak out against what is being done to the Church."

Protest letter from the Episcopal Church of Sudan to the Sudanese Government

22 May 2004

His Excellency Dr Issam Ahmed al Bashir
The Minister of Religious Guidance and Endowments Government of Sudan

Your Excellency,

We are writing to protest against recent action of Federal and State Authorities in Khartoum against the Episcopal Church of the Sudan (ECS).

Without any notice or warning, armed police arrived at the ECS Guest House (Sharia Baladia, al Mugran) at 9 a.m. on Thursday 20 May 2004. The police ordered the immediate eviction of ECS personnel and properties from the building. Staff were warned that if the order was not complied with, force would be used to ensure compliance. Three truckloads of armed riot police were threateningly positioned at the gate for this purpose.

The police then entered the guest house and ordered clearance of all furniture, carpets and effects. Additional trucks and labourers had been brought for this purpose and everything was removed to the trucks.

We wish to make a serious protest at this provocative action against the Church. The police treated the premises and staff as if we were criminals. The court order was made in such a way as to cause maximum disruption to church activities:

Following are our concerns for your government to take into consideration:

- Giving no advance notice of the eviction
- Authorising the use of force
- Being served a notice on a Thursday in such a way that no appeal was possible to stay the action
- When ECS lawyers requested the court for details of the court order, they were refused.
- This is the fourth time that ECS principal church properties in Khartoum have been acted against by the police:

- First, the confiscation of the old Cathedral in 1971
- Then attempts to seize the Diocese of Khartoum's headquarters in Omdurman in 1997
- Then the Easter incident in April 2001 when riot police stormed All Saints' Cathedral
- And now, on 20 May 2004, the forced eviction from the ECS Guest House

The ECS Guest House houses the Office of the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan as well as the Office of the Diocese of Renk and other church offices. The action against the guest house is therefore directed against the top leadership of the Episcopal Church. As the fourth major police action, the eviction appears to be part of a systematic attempt to undermine the work of the Church. The eviction was clearly well planned - the presence of large numbers of armed riot police, and the removal trucks and labourers ready to clear the property. We hold the Government of Sudan accountable for this action.

This event serves to highlight the vulnerability of Christians in Northern Sudan under Sudanese Sharia law. It raises serious questions over the unity of the country if the Government is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens and if Christians are to be deliberately targeted in the national capital. We challenge the Government of Sudan to give a clear indication that it is serious about peace. We call upon the Government of Sudan:

- Immediately to restore the ECS Guest House to its rightful owner - the Episcopal Church of the Sudan
- To ensure the protection of religious freedom for all citizens
- To recognize and respect the legitimate authorities of the Church
- To explain why the Ministry of Religious Guidance misled the Court to believe that Mr. Gabriel Roric Jur, who was dismissed from his position as bishop in 2003, was "Archbishop of ECS"
- To cease using Mr. Gabriel Roric Jur to attempt to destroy the Episcopal Church of the Sudan

We look forward to hearing from you and to seeing action on these important points.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Revd Daniel Deng
 Secretary to the Episcopal Council and Bishop of Renk
 Rt Revd Ezekiel Kondo
 Bishop of Khartoum
 Revd Enock Tombe
 Interim Provincial Secretary



Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold's Statement on Seizure of Church Property in Sudan

May 20, 2004

As the world continues to grieve the unending cycle of violence in the Sudan, my attention is sadly drawn to the actions of the Sudanese government in once again carrying out an act of aggression against the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS).

This morning, armed police of the Government of Sudan entered the guesthouse of the ECS in Khartoum--which also serves the Provincial Office--and ordered the eviction of Church personnel and property from the building. The police were acting on a court-issued eviction order in which the judge authorized the use of force to ensure eviction. To avoid the use of force, Church staff had no choice but to vacate the building peacefully while trying to follow the legal process. They have since taken refuge in the Cathedral in Khartoum.

Today's actions follow a long history of Government aggression toward the Church and interference in Church properties that has included the confiscation of the old Khartoum Cathedral, attempts to confiscate the headquarters of the Diocese of Khartoum in Omduran, and efforts to demolish Church-run schools in the Diocese of Renk.

These events only add to the historic tragedy of Sudan, where--throughout 20 years of

civil conflict--the ruling power relentlessly has carried out acts of violence against its own people. Like the ongoing Government-sponsored ethnic cleansing in Darfur in western Sudan, today's actions serve as a somber reminder that, even at a time when many had hoped and prayed that peace was on the horizon for the Sudan, violence remains a tragic reality. It is of particular irony that earlier this week, the U.S. State Department removed Sudan from its list of countries not cooperating with the War on Terror.

I call upon the State Department and the U.S. Congress to join me in condemning today's aggression against the Episcopal Church of Sudan, and to demand that the Sudanese government immediately and safely return ECS property and refrain from future acts of aggression against the Church.

My prayers are with the bishops, clergy, and people of the ECS--and all of the people of the Sudan--that peace and order might finally emerge from decades of violence and turmoil. May Christ's transforming love continue to remain our hope in the midst of so much despair and brokenness.

The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church, USA

Road to Peace; A Ray of Hope

Since 1983 efforts have been made to bring an end to war in Sudan. On June 20, 2002, the government of Sudan and the Sudanese People Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed the Machakos protocol, followed by the October 15, 2002 Memorandum of the understanding on the cessation of hostilities. The peace process is an opportunity to improve the human rights situation in Sudan. The talks have continued and another signing of peace agreement took place in May, 2004 at Naivasha, Kenya. Rev. Canon Clement Janda, a member of the back-up team during the peace process described what happened in Naivasha.

“I saw it happen! People are excited about what happened. Both sides were tired of the war and wanted it to end, although the process was a bit slow. There were moments of anxiety. We waited for 14 hours for the actual signing on Wednesday. There were last-minute hurdles. The government party wanted to renege on some of the undertakings that were given and started coming up with new conditions. That was what created the anxiety. At one point it seemed that they wanted to walk away from it all. When it was finally signed everyone was relieved. There were hundreds of people, ordinary Sudanese, the African Union, World Bank, and other international organizations, “ he said.

Stephen Leni, in the office of Sudan Relief & Rehabilitation in Kampala shared his hope for peace. “My response is total excitement.

Some of us never went to sleep until after midnight because we really expected something to come out.”

Many had lost hope for peace in Sudan. Helen Wavis Weleya, the liaison officer at the Episcopal Church Support Office (ECS) in Kampala said, “None of us expected it to happen.”

Rev. Pauline Walker, Regional Manager of Church Missionary Society in Kampala said, “Our big prayer is that the peace spreads throughout the whole of Sudan, that those areas that are still in unrest can also find peace. It is now that the hard work is going to begin.”

The Archbishop issued the following statement on this occasion:

STATEMENT OF HIS GRACE, THE MOST REVD DR JOSEPH MARONA, ARCHBISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE SUDAN ON THE SIGNING OF PROTOCOLS AT THE SUDAN PEACE TALKS AT NAIVASHA, KENYA, May 31, 2004

Together with all the people of Sudan, I give thanks and praise to Almighty God for the signing which took place in Naivasha, Kenya, of Protocols to lead to a peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army. This is a very encouraging day for the Sudanese people, and I warmly congratulate

the President of Sudan, His Excellency Lt. General Omer El Bashir, and the leader of the SPLA, Dr John Garang on reaching this important moment.

We have been praying for all those involved in the negotiations during the 101 days of talks and we know that the issues have been difficult and highly complex. We therefore congratulate the negotiators, in particular the First Vice President, His Excellency Ali Osman Taha, and SPLA Leader Dr John Garang on achieving important agreements on the issues of power sharing and the three areas of Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile and Abyei. We also thank and congratulate the Special Envoy of the IGAD Sudan Peace Process, Lt. Gen. Lazaro K. Sumbeiywo, and the international community who have been supporting the process.

We now call upon all the people of Sudan to take hold of this opportunity to achieve peace in Sudan. The seeds for peace have been planted and now must be given the opportunity to grow. We all have a responsibility to protect what has been achieved and nurture it towards achieving a just and lasting peace. God has given us a new opportunity to stop the fighting in the whole of Sudan. None of our Sudanese people should be denied the opportunity see their children grow up in peace. In particular: we call for the situation to be resolved in Dafur and the fighting to be brought to an immediate end; we appeal to all armed groups still holding guns in different parts of the country to lay down their weapons and work together to create peace in Sudan. The time for peace has come. Let us commit ourselves and

our country into the hands of God so that a comprehensive peace agreement may come to fruition. Let us commit ourselves to working at every level towards full implementation of this peace agreement.

Let us commit ourselves to work together towards our vision of all the Sudanese people reconciled before God. May the blessing of Almighty God be upon our country Sudan.



Blessed are the Peacemakers.

The Hardening of Heart-Pharaoh in Sudan

The Sudanese Church Leaders' statement on the current situation in Sudan

We, the Sudanese church leaders of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) met at the SCC Headquarters in Khartoum on 30 August 2004 to reflect on the current political situation in the country, in particular the issue of war and peace. We met at the time by which a full peace accord was due to have been signed by the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLM/A, and when the UN Representative was to report to the UN Security Council on the situation in Darfur. We shared and discussed information that seems to indicate that the road to a just and comprehensive peace in the Sudan is still long.

We are deeply concerned that the progress in the Sudan IGAD Peace Process is slowing down. The parties to the IGAD peace process have been out of session since the last adjournment in July and despite the shuttle diplomacy being carried out by the IGAD Secretariat, the parties are no longer experiencing the sustained pressure from the international community, in particular the IGAD Partners, due to the new and equally devastating conflict that emerged in Western Sudan, the Darfur region early last year.

While the Sudanese people have been and are still earnestly waiting for the completion of the IGAD peace process, the situation on the ground is discouraging. The Government of Sudan seems to be preparing for war as indicated in the Upper Nile region. Early this year, the government militias in Upper Nile, assisted by the Sudanese regular forces attacked and burned down over 22 Shilluk

villages. This resulted in killings, loss of property and the displacement of about 26,000 civilians to Malakal town.

Last month, in Western Upper Nile, the same militias attacked the SPLA, and during the combat the area was also devastated. Further, other activities such as the digging of trenches in towns like Juba and the instigation of the southern militias by the GoS to claim inclusion in the ongoing IGAD peace process as an independent force, show clearly that there is lack of commitment by the GoS to the IGAD peace process which has already dealt with the most contentious issues between the Sudanese warring parties.

In Darfur the GoS is involved in a brutal war that knows no ethics and international regulations of war. Although humanitarian access to the needy in the region has improved, the situation on the ground leaves a lot to be desired. The government intransigence has led to the continued insecurity. Government backed militias known as Janjaweed are still operational. The influx of civilians to the displaced camps continues. The number of the displaced has recently risen to over one million and is expected to rise in the period ahead unless the Janjaweed who are still posing a security threat to the civilian population are contained and the hostilities by both sides brought to end. The Sudanese Church leaders therefore call upon the international community to exert sustained pressure on the Sudanese

warring parties, and in particular the GoS to commit itself to the ongoing peace initiatives in Naivasha (Kenya) and Abuja (Nigeria) that aim at ending the armed conflicts in the Sudan peacefully as soon as possible so that the Sudanese people live a dignified life. The Naivasha Protocols have raised the hope of the Sudanese people and provided a unique opportunity for the achievement of peace. We call upon the Sudanese people and the international community to ensure that this opportunity is not lost. We further call for intensified efforts to restore security and bring humanitarian assistance to the people in urgent need in both Darfur and Upper Nile region.

Signed

The Rt Revd Daniel Deng Bul
Bishop of Renk
Episcopal Church of Sudan

The Revd James Par Tap
Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church

The Revd Fermo Ogilla Utong
Sudan Pentecostal Church

The Revd Mahgoub Kago Artloke
Sudanese Church of Christ

The Revd Daniel Oballa Okony
Presbyterian Church of Sudan

Fr Antonious Fakious
Coptic Orthodox Church Omdurman

The Revd Samuel G El Sadik
Ethiopian Orthodox Church

The Revd James Lagos Alexander
Africa Inland Church

The Revd John El Sir
Sudan Interior Church

The Revd John Tong Puk
SCC Chairman

The Revd Paul Chol Deng
SCC General Secretary

Republic of South Sudan



A 'Miracle' is born

BBC News reporter Jim Ross on July 9, 2011 wrote "South Sudanese celebrate their divorce with thrilling roar of joy, at the stroke of midnight" as a new nation a 'miracle' is born. After 56 years of struggle under the heavy oppressive regime of Sudan streets of the capital 'Juba' were filled with people waving flags, honking horns in celebration:

"Congratulations, free at last, South Sudan," the sign read.

Alfred Tut, lifting his head back screamed at the top of his voice, "It is a shout of freedom." The air was filled with hope and freedom. They finally arrived in this 'promised land' John Garang and freedom seekers fought for 56 years. Women were heard ululating with voices singing, "We are going to the promised land." Church bells rang at midnight hour in central Juba. Groups of people ran down roads, dancing to drum beats. Alice Ajak, a mother, who lost two children during the long years of war was heard saying, "I light candles in church when I say a prayer. My candle here therefore is my prayer that my new country is one of peace, and where we can live without problems for now and in the future always to come."

Statements recognizing South Sudan's nationhood flowed from the US, UK, Russia and others as tens of thousands watched an independence and flag-raising ceremony in the capital, Juba. The United States of America's President Barack Obama said in a statement he was "proud to declare that the United States formally recognizes the Republic of South Sudan as sovereign and independent state upon, July 9 2011. A proud flag over Juba and the map of the world has been redrawn. These symbols speak to the blood that has been spilled, the tears that have been shed, the ballots that have been cast, and the hopes that have been realized by so many millions of people."

South African President Jacob Zuma said, "We have always aspired to witness the dawn of peace, security and stability prevailing in the whole of the Sudan. That dream is coming to fruition."

How long this spirit of jubilation will survive? South Sudan is one of the poorest and undeveloped countries on the face of this earth. The following statistics are shocking to know that ahead of this new nations they face daunting challenges:

- One out of every seven children dies before their fifth birthday.

- South Sudan has one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world.
- One out of seven women who become pregnant will probably die from pregnancy-related causes.
- More than half of children between the ages of six and 13 are not in formal education.
- 84% of woman cannot read or write. Only 6% of girls who start school ever finish.

The question is how long the smiles will last?

South Sudan is rich with natural resources a land of expensive grassland with tropical rain forest. Fifty years of war has destroyed its agricultural based economy. Now their economy is oil dependent. 75% oil reserves are in Southern Sudan and the refineries and pipeline to the Red Sea are in Sudan. In order to benefit from the oil wealth both Sudan and South Sudan need to work together to benefit from oil wealth. Since independence several disputes have developed over border region of Abyei where oil is found. The other area of conflict is the Nuba Mountains region of Sudan's South Kordofan state, where violence continues between the largely Christian and pro-SPLA Nuba people and northern government forces. The government of South Sudan blames Sudan for funding these forces to disrupt peace for this new nation. This young country faces the huge challenge to bring peace in this beleaguered nation and to deliver basic needs such as education, health services, water and electricity to its more than 8 million citizens.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams has expressed his fear for the growing violence affecting lives of more than 850,000 people displaced by fighting in the two areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Muslims and Christians both are affected in this conflict. He has met with the displaced Bishop of Kadugli, Andudu Adam Elnail, of the Nuba Mountains and issued the following statement

“Food and basic essentials are urgently needed by the displaced population. The international community needs to wake up to the gravity of the situation. All parties need to work together to find practical ways to get help to those most in need.”

The Archbishop of the Sudan, Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak has issued the following statement on the violence in Southern Sudan:

Statement from the Episcopal Church of the Sudan on the violence in Southern Kordofan 14-6-2012

On behalf of all the Christians of Southern Kordofan and the Nuba people, I wish to condemn the violence and bombardment of civilian settlements since June 5, which has resulted in widespread suffering and destruction. From the time the initial fighting began, it has been reported that the number of civilians requiring immediate relief has increased to over 53,000 and is set to rise, bombing and looting has continued, 75,000 people have been displaced, and houses and other buildings have been torched and deliberately destroyed.

The Episcopal Church of the Sudan has not escaped the effects of violence and destruction. Some of our pastors have been arrested and tortured without reason or charge. The windows and doors of the ECS Guest House and All Saints Cathedral Kadugli have been broken. The altar, vestments, church documents in the cathedral and the official residence of the Bishop have been destroyed by fire. Our solar panels, gifted to us by generous partners and three motorcycles have been stolen. Secular buildings have also been damaged and indeed all people, both Christian and Muslim have been impacted by the fighting. However, the church and its personnel have clearly been a target for the Northern army since the fighting began. The calculated damage to our church buildings and the threats to, and arrest and torture of, pastors and known Christians because of their faith is indisputable.

Without a doubt then, the most worrying aspect of this recent conflict is the way in which fighting that originated between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) has now transformed into what can only be described as a deliberate strategy to rid Kadugli of its indigenous African and Christian population by the SAF, in short a policy of ethnic cleansing. This is not the first time a government policy of ethnic cleansing has been applied in Sudan; the genocide in Western Darfur is very well known. Moreover, activities of a similar nature occurred just a few weeks ago when the Dinka Ngok, indigenous to Abyei, were slaughtered and displaced from their homes within Abyei Town in mass numbers.

We categorically condemn the use of force by the Government of Sudan towards its own people. We condemn the use of aerial bombardments on civilians and the arbitrary arrest of citizens in Southern Kordofan. No one is willing to return to war, therefore, we insist that the Government of Sudan releases those who have been arbitrarily arrested and return to the negotiating table with the Government of South Sudan on its consultation framework.

We appeal to the international community, particularly the signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to unite and do everything in their power to intervene quickly to stop the fighting and the killing of innocent people, and to protect those residents of Southern Kordofan and Abyei who are Christian and African and, as a result, are suffering persecution. Genocide is highly likely without international mediation. Therefore, we implore you all, especially the Troika (the United States of America, The United Kingdom and Norway), the African Union and the United Nations to endeavour to prevent genocide and the deliberate killing of certain groups by others before it is too late.

We appeal to both indigenous and international Non-Government Organisations who can assist with aid and relief to coordinate their efforts and work together with local and trusted organisations such as the churches, to address the physical needs of the sick and needy in Southern Kordofan. The ECS is ready to facilitate in the distribution of medicines, food and non-food items using our extensive network in Southern Kordofan and Abyei. We request for food and non-items as

well as donations to support their purchase. We strongly urge the United Nations Mission In Sudan and NGOs within Sudan to make use of the ECS as a well-placed partner to help with efficient distribution of relief items.

Finally, we appeal to members of the Anglican Communion around the world and those of other denominations to intercede on our behalf to Almighty God so that the people of Southern Kordofan and Abyei may be delivered from this trauma and distress.

As the Archbishop for all of Sudan, I write this statement with great sorrow and commiseration for my brothers and sisters in Southern Kordofan. Despite the country's divide, the clergy and laity of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan believe they serve a living God unimpeded by political boundaries. We strive to remain one church, united in the Body of Christ and steadfast in the midst of this current tribulation.

In this season of Pentecost and beyond, may those who mourn and suffer take respite in the Holy Spirit our Comforter. May He also touch the hearts and minds of the compassionate and the able and guide them in their defence of the oppressed.

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The Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak
Archbishop, Primate and Metropolitan of the
Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan and
Bishop of the Diocese of Juba

Congratulatory letter to the Archbishop of South Sudan on the independence of South Sudan

January 9, 2010

Dear His Grace the Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul Yak,

Greetings to you from Christ Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin. We have been keeping vigil and praying for a peaceful referendum and God's blessings on the people of Sudan. As I look back on my own involvement from 1994 onward with the Province of the Church of Sudan, it started in 1992 when I read an article in the YES magazine of CMS with a picture of Bishop Nathaniel Garang on the cover. From that time I have committed my efforts and voice to speak for the persecuted church in Sudan. We have been praying for this day for God to set the people of Southern Sudan free from the oppression of the Northern Sudanese government. Finally, God has brought this moment, a day for the people of Sudan to decide their future and enter into the Promised Land.

I am your brother who has stood in solidarity with the suffering people of Sudan. God opened doors for me to be the voice of the people of Sudan in the USA, at the Lambeth Conference 1998 "Hear My People's Cry", around the Anglican Communion, before the US Congressional Hearing on the Capital Hill in Washington D.C. and to President George Bush. It has been a great honor for me to serve as the chair of the Link committee in the Episcopal Church in the USA to ECS and Canon and Commissary to the Archbishop of Sudan. With deep humility, I give thanks to God for allowing me to be a servant of Christ to serve my people in Sudan.

This morning I join many around the world on my knees in prayer and fasting for a peaceful separation between North and South. Tomorrow will be a new day when we shall celebrate your freedom on the Altar of Christ Episcopal Church as we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany. For this truly is a new Epiphany that, once again, God has set His people free from the tyranny of Pharaoh to let His people go free. We give thanks to the risen Christ who has suffered with his people in Sudan, and now in the power of resurrection we are about to celebrate new life. ALLELUIA!

Even yet, a free Southern Sudan shall present many challenges. Although President Salva Kiir Mayardit in a speech last January said, “This is the final part of our journey,” in reality tomorrow morning you begin a new journey in the family of the world community. It shall now be your responsibility to turn the page from decades of civil war to learn to walk on the road toward being a peaceful community. In just a few hours we shall find Southern Sudan as the world’s newest country on the map with new challenges to build, to heal and to establish law and order in an area recovering from the longest war of Africa. New challenges can also be opportunities for your people to work together with the world community to build a prosperous and peaceful Southern Sudan as they cannot do it alone. Our world is in desperate need of such models. The world community needs to stand in solidarity with you, so I pledge to continue to work for peace and stability for my people in Sudan. Please let me know if a celebration for freedom service is organized at All Saints in Juba. I would like to join you in celebration to give thanks to God. I continually pray for God’s blessings on your ministry and the people of Sudan.

Salaam, Shanti, Shalom!

Your brother in Christ,

The Rev. Canon Dr. Patrick P. Augustine, Honorary Canon, All Saints Cathedral

Juba

Rector

Christ Episcopal Church

111 N. 9th St, La Crosse, WI 54601

Build the Broken Walls

Mundokooro-Mundakooro children were shouting with alarm as they saw me approach the first primary school for children in the diocese of Juba. I asked my host, Rev. Enoch Tombe, the reason for the children's reaction. Rev. Tombe is the Secretary General of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. He told me that the children think you are an Arab. People in the Southern Sudan have been terrorized by the Arabs during twenty five years of war. For them, "Arab" is a derogatory term, meaning "one who can not be trusted."

I see a great challenge facing this church which has been persecuted by the extremist Islamic Sudanese government. It faces the question of how to build bridges of peace and reconciliation with their aggressors. The gospel is about forgiveness, love and reconciliation. Sudan has lost 2.5 million Christians and animists and four million have been displaced in Southern Sudan. A multi-task mission faces the church. Hundreds of thousands of citizens are beginning to return from refugee camps and they need welcome centers to incorporate them back in their own communities.

For years these refugees have lived in remote camps as displaced communities. They have been uprooted from their homes and their home communities. The Church needs to help young people to return to schools. This young generation has grown up in refugee camps and has not received proper schooling. I sense that these young people are keen

to learn. Schools buildings were destroyed during the war. Southern Sudan has the largest number of schools meeting under mango trees. Children need books, school supplies and money to pay fees to attend schools. Education is the key to their future.

As people get re-settled in their communities, they need clean water to drink and cook and wash with. There is a great shortage of clean water all over Southern Sudan. Wells need to be dug and water pumps installed for each community to have clean drinking water.

Church centers have no electricity or other resources, but these centers are the main gathering places for communities. There people get their basic education, religious instruction, HIV/AIDS prevention classes. Sudanese people for centuries were well protected as they lived within their own tribes. Their world was limited. Now because of being displaced for 25 years of war, they have been exposed to many other cultures and communities. Some young women have been forced to move to big cities, where they lived as refugees, selling their bodies to support their families. HIV AIDS is spreading inside Southern Sudan as people return from displaced camps to their homes.

The last two years have been relatively peaceful, but tribal tension can grow even within Southern Sudan. Dinka are the dominant ethnic group in the government in Southern or New Sudan. The New Sudan leadership in the south will have to learn to

share leadership and resources to develop Southern Sudan. Inter-tribal tension can hurt progress and the Khartoum government of Sudan benefits from this. After another four years, there will be a referendum to determine if the South shall stay as part of whole Sudan or become an independent New Sudan with self-rule. We need to pray for peace and unity within Southern Sudan.

The Church in Southern Sudan is in the same position as when Nehemiah was called by God to build the broken walls of Jerusalem. I find that the Church leadership has the resolve and deep faith in Christ to be the witnesses of the Risen Christ. The total infrastructure has been destroyed during 25 years of war.

Partners in Mission in the West needs to stand in solidarity to build the broken walls of the church in Sudan. I recommend four key areas where we can help:

1. Education for Children. Provide scholarships and help to build schools.
2. Help to train Church leaders. Provide resources for education, transport and building churches and houses for Pastors. Church is seen as the most trusted and faithful partner which has stayed with her people in exile and now is there to welcome them back home.

3. Provide education for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.
4. Provide revolving loans for cottage industry. There is a need for poultry, cows, seeds and agricultural tools for farming communities to generate income.

Hope is in the air in Southern Sudan, but the needs are great. Christians in the U.S. can do much good with their gifts, prayers and continuing attention to the many needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ in Southern Sudan.

The Cost of Discipleship

A story of The Rev. Dr. Marc Randall Nikkel
Episcopal Church USA and CMS UK Missionary to Sudan

June 9, 1950-September 3, 2000

“After he has been following Christ for a long time, the disciple of Jesus will be asked, ‘Lack ye anything?’ and he will answer ‘Nothing Lord’. How could he when he knows that despite hunger and nakedness, persecution and danger, the Lord is always at his side?”¹

Marc Randall Nikkel was born to Reuben and Rosie Nikkel on June 9, 1950 in Reedley, California. Reedley is a town of 20,000 people and is called the Fruit Capital of the World. Marc was raised in a Mennonite community with conservative family values. His grandmother, a devout Mennonite, used to encourage him to consider serving as a missionary.

Marc always replied, “It would be the last thing I would think to do.” It was the prayers of his grandmother and the seeds she had sown into Marc’s spirit that in the prime of his youth he went to serve as missionary teacher and priest in the most difficult part of the world in Sudan. Marc loved his grandmother and while he went to Sudan he took with him a patchwork quilt Grandma had made for him.

Marc remained in Reedley through his high school years. Higher education had taken him to Fresno Pacific University, Long Beach State, the School of Visual Arts in New York, and Capenray Bible School, both in England and Norway. In 1971 he spent ten months in Zaire, Africa (now the Republic of Congo) with his sister Marvis and brother-in-law Sam Bergen, who served there for ten years as missionaries.

Marc found joy in illustrating books and drawing the beautiful African people during the village trips he took with missionaries. He then attended the Ife University in Nigeria for a Master’s degree.



In 1977, he enrolled in the School of World Missions at the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. During his four years there, he moved from the Missions department to the Theology department graduating with a Master of Divinity degree.

Marc was in search for God’s call to serve God’s people somewhere in Africa. In 1980 he went to Episcopal Church Center in New York to meet with David Birney. He heard Birney say, “What you want is a suffering church. You should work in Sudan.” Somehow, Marc picked up on that unfamiliar name. Like the messengers of whom the Prophet Isaiah spoke, he went in 1981 to “a people tall and smooth-skinned, to a people dreaded near and far, a nation strong and proud, whose land

¹ Bonhoeffer, Dietrick. *The Cost of Discipleship* SCM Press 1959. p161

is scoured by rivers.” In a joint effort of the Episcopal Church of USA and the Anglican Church of England, Marc was sent to Sudan.

In 1985 Marc returned to the U.S. to study at General Seminary in New York in preparation for ordination. After his studies at General he was ordained to the sacred order Deaconate at Grace Church, Lynchburg on September 20, 1985, under the hands of the Rt. Rev. A. Heath Light, the seventh Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Marc was recognized as a missionary of the diocese of Southwestern Virginia and the diocese pledged continued prayers and support to his ministry in the Sudan.

He served as professor of Biblical studies in the Bishop Gwynne College in Mundri, Sudan. His teaching experience was enlarged tremendously as he was able to spend blocks of time in the cattle camps of the Dinka people, learning their language as well as their culture. He became fluent in Dinka, one of the Nilotic languages spoken in Southern Sudan. He enjoyed community living with his brothers and sisters in Sudan. Marc wrote letters regularly to his partners in mission in Europe and the United States to share his experiences of ministry among Sudanese people. In his letter of December 27, 1985 from Gwynne College, Mundri he wrote:

“Christmas in Mundri, Sudan, found us last evening around a fire under a perfect full moon. Violet, our College secretary, cooked a couple of hens in savory peanut butter sauce, and some wild pig. We ate with our hands, using the paper-thin kissera, rather like crepes, made of sorghum flour. Elisama, the college driver and mechanic, told stories in

“koinio-koinio Arabic”, the homespun pidgin Arabic of the South that kept us laughing. “

“One plump, sprited Moru woman told, giggling, how the sun and the moon were once close friends and worked and played together. Then the moon became proud because she was so beautiful and refused to work. The sun became angry and threw madida--sorghum porridge--in her face. Though the moon moved away, she still has the porridge splattered across her once lovely countenance. Our new tutor, Oxford-read Richard, even told a 16th Century story about Queen Elizabeth who was, in truth, a man.”

Then the old fires of war began to blaze again, ending an 11-year lull. Marc wrote in his Christmas letter of 1985:

“In these recent weeks at Bishop Gwynne College we’ve experienced a new eruption of spontaneous, uninhibited, deep-down, God-glorifying Sudanese celebration. It has been the toughest year since the College’s resurrection after the war nine years ago. There have been constant rumors of impending rebel invasion. At one point in February all expatriates were evacuated on a heart-wrenching, tearful day. At other times the entire community ran for cover in the forest.--- Security for our students has been a particular concern with the edginess of civil war in neighboring regions and the substantial army unit now established in Mundri.”

“In my four years in Sudan I’ve been closest to the Dinka peoples. It is they, the predominant group behind the rebel movement, who are everywhere suspect in our region. It was in the late October that I walked

in the suuk with my friend Akurdit. He helped me as I struggled with speaking Dinka and in the shops interpreted my requests to the Arab traders. As we returned there was shouting from behind us. We walked on.”

“A drunken soldier strode after us and demanded that Akurdit, a Dinka, go with him at rifle point. Without Arabic I felt helpless, my eyes darting round the suuk. A local trader implored a second soldier to rescue our student. He was released. In those few heart-racing moments I reconnected in Sudan. The pain here became my pain as a friend I love was taken away at gunpoint. The suffering and confusion is not simply something I observe. I share it and wrestle with it alongside my Sudanese kinfolk. It is mine.”

“Amidst the tension this term of teaching has had a new vitality for me. Class discussion has often been impassioned and creative as we’ve struggled with such diverse issues as the baptism of polygamists, the meanings of traditional rituals for physical healing, the values implied in remembering the ancestors, and the spiritual and psychological sides of witchcraft. These are hard issues which are not easily or often discussed openly, but which are of profound importance to Christians here. “

“I find a new maturity in our students to look honestly at their own traditions as well as the inadequacies of the Church in their tribal areas. Why do so many Zande Christians resort to the ancient healing rituals when they are sick? Why does the Church take no role in seeking the physical healing of its people, but condemns their best efforts? “

“We’ve tried to look at the often neglected felt needs of people within an often authoritarian Church, as well as the frequently valid criticisms of those “pagans” who look on from outside. In it all I think we’re coming to know ourselves better and to stand in love and awe before the redemptive work of the Christ who became man and lives among us. He enters and embraces the deepest recesses of our (Sudanese or American) humanity, and even of our distinctive histories and ancestors. ---I hope we in war-torn Sudan can learn to love and respect each other more than the sun and moon, and learn that any light we have, all light comes from one creator.”

On August 19, 1986, Marc wrote from Bishop Gwynne College:

“With frequent rains the nights are often cool as we gather in the compound behind our house to practice new Dinka songs. Kongoor and I stuff the dry husks from Akurdit’s just-harvested maze underneath three big logs. With lots of fanning the old wood flames up midway through our hours of singing the coals become a glowing bed for roasting fresh ears of maze. Each time we hone a song to satisfaction we nibble off the singed corn and sip cups of hot tea. These are the new songs of worship, the ones that rise from the struggling, Christian groups in Khartoum, in Bor, in Juba.”

“The beat often reaches the soul and clasps more tightly with each verse. The haunting tone transfixes even those who cannot understand the language. So perfectly do some of these songs meld the sorrow and the trauma of these years together with the rhythm and word. As we sing “Father of our

Lord in Heaven” (Diat Jot De Duoor, 68, “Won de Beny den to Nhial.” It is the last hard beating line of each verse that leaves a chill as I see the solemn, lost faces of my Dinka brethren round the fire:

1. The Father of our Lord in Heaven,
Visit us for we are worried in our hearts
We are without faith, O Lord; try to
visit us all.
We are all worried; the hardships of this
world are upon us.
The sin of the world has cut us away
from your path.
We are left alone, we are left, we are
left, we are left.
2. The Father of our Lord, who has power,
Help us for we are all worried.
Don’t allow the evil spirit to crush us.
Help us, we are mourning, we are
mourning, all of us are mourning.
The sin of the world is preventing us
from taking your path.
We are left alone, we are left, we are
left, we are left.
3. The Father of our Lord who has love,
Follow us with your heavenly power.
We are scattered like the sheep who
have no shepherd.
The world is scattering us; we are all
being scattered.
The sin of this world has cut us off
from our Lord.
We are left alone, we are left, we are
left, we are left.
4. Father of our Lord who is able to help,
Allow us to sit at your right hand.
Your truth I have heard, O Lord.

Release us from sin for we are falling in
the fire.

The sin of this world has divided us and
thrown us into the fire, O Lord.

We are burning, we are dying, we are
burning, we are burning, we are
burning, we are burning.

In 1987 as the political tensions became severe, Marc was kidnapped by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army, trekking 150 miles in just a few days time, together with three other companions. They were held hostages for seven weeks, returning pounds lighter, but thankful to have been treated kindly. He lived the scripture: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or peril or sword?” Nothing could have separated him from the love of God and to love God’s people in Sudan.

In October 13, 1987 Marc wrote:

“The four of us were awakened by the rumble of armed men about 1:00 a.m. on Tuesday, the 7th July and marched from our homes. Could our captors understand our desperation to hold together our fragile College? A soldier does not easily desert his post. I could not leave mine.”

“My emotions ran deep and angry during the first weeks of our “evacuations.” Our bodies, and especially our blistered feet, were not prepared to cover what would be 150 miles during the first thirteen days of captivity. The greatest pain, however, was in what had been left behind, the abrupt severing, the shared life suddenly terminated, the chaos that followed the wake of our capture... Often we sat with our guards to listen to the radio.”

“We heard of Southern civilians massacred, present day slavery, young people taken for sale by nomadic bands, parents killed, their cattle raided entire villages wiped away... Compassion for the armed men who held us blended with longing for our own liberation... The 25th of August, the 49th day of our captivity became for us a Day of Jubilee. We were released to Kenya.”

Because of the hostile climate, he was unable to return to the Sudan. The Lord opened the door for him to enroll at the Edinburgh University in Scotland completing his doctorate degree in 1994. In this endeavor we again see how he poured his life into the life of Dinka people. He wrote his thesis on “the development of Christianity among the Dinka People of Sudan. In the process he translated hundreds of their songs which speak so clearly of their confidence in God through their suffering, including the reality of the demonic powers of battle.”

“Marc had now heard them sing songs of lament, songs of loss, songs about powers in conflict, songs of conversion and songs of hope like “The center pole of the cattle shed has become the Cross of Christ.” He helped to collect and publish the 2,000 and more vernacular songs of this wartime mass movement to Christ.”

In mid-September Marc went back on African soil for 11 days as he attended meetings of the New Sudan Council of Churches in Nairobi. It was a joyful reunion with former students, now visionary leaders in the Church of Sudan. On his return from Nairobi he wrote from London on St. Francis Day on October 4, 1994: “Images of the desolation of war,

famine and natural disaster are sobering. Two pastors, former students, now work in the vast territories of the Upper Nile which have been thoroughly inundated by floods. Life is conducted on ant mounds or by building barriers against the mud. In many regions, war and disease have eradicated once flourishing herds of cattle; pestilence and floods stultify the crops. Into this swamp have come 400,000 Sudanese refugees fleeing the camps of Ethiopia. Food is almost non-existent except for a trickle of relief aid. The Sudan Government has, on occasion taken to aerial bombings of these concentrations of the dispossessed, and the threat of chemical weapons remains high.”

“And yet, from this quagmire of misery, come glimpses of the miraculous resilience of the Sudanese spirit. Over vast territories people are constructing hundreds of churches and preaching centers as Christian faith replaces ancient systems of belief. Schools flourish where naked children seek to learn, having nothing but the ground to write upon.”

“The Diocese of Bor, with perhaps ten churches in early 1980s, today has over 120, as well as innumerable preaching centers. Accounts of mass conversions, miracles, visions and the renewal of life are thoroughly reminiscent of the first formative years of the Christian Church in the book of Acts. Amidst all the challenges of mere physical survival, Sudanese leaders have set theological education as the first priority of the New Sudan Council of Churches, an effort in which I hope, one, to offer my support.”

When Marc returned to Africa, he made his residence in Nairobi, Kenya and later made his home among displaced Sudanese at Kakuma Refugee Camp. Kakuma is situated in Turkana district in northern Kenya, approximately 850 km from Nairobi. The camp was started in the early Nineties, primarily as a safe haven for the “lost boys of Sudan.”

The young boys from Southern Sudan were sent to Kenya in a bid to prevent them from being forced to fight in the civil war between Muslims in north and the Christians in the South. The Camp is inhabited by Sudanese, Somali and Ethiopian refugees. The current total refugee population is just under 90,000 in 2001. From Kakuma Camp Marc ministered to the Sudanese Community along with other Sudanese pastors. In March 7, 1995 he wrote from Kakuma refugee Camp:

“Kakuma is home to some 40,000 Sudanese refugees... The pastors average age is 39, the youngest 22. Most have been ordained by Bishop Nathaniel Garang during the past four years to meet the immense demands of a burgeoning church. Their education aborted by decades of war, over half have no formal schooling, but learned to read in self-help clubs of the churches. Yet, each pastors one or a cluster of churches, with an average attendance of 538. Three of their churches have congregation over a thousand.”

February 12, 1997 he wrote from Kakuma:

“We no longer weep at graveside. We have cried for the dead too often. You want to know what makes us weep? We cry when we think how the gospel of Christ came into our land

and our lives. We weep when we think that our land and our lives. We weep when we think that our land is being taken by force and our faith being replaced by Islam. This makes tears rise from the dry places inside us.” (Rev. Atem, Pastor, Kakuma Refugee Camp).

“Despair pervades the lives of many. As I encounter increasing malnutrition and death, I wonder at the impotence of our response. Atem refrains from going to his own family compound during the daytime because he cannot bear to hear his children pleading for the milk he cannot give them.”

Marc helped to open seven study centers at Kakuma to teach English, Social Studies, Science and Math. I have personally visited these study centers in 1998 while Marc lived at Kakuma, and later in 2000 and 2001. Church Missionary Society in London and Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia and several other churches in the USA have provided funds to run these study centers. It is a grassroot movement with hundreds of newly literate men and women entrusted with leadership. The Church in Sudan is the fastest growing church in the Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church in Sudan is blessed to have these young men and women to lead their Church in Diaspora.

The refugee community at Kakuma fled from war, believing they would be protected in a refugee camp. But they have no food in this desert and live continuously near starvation. Among such difficult circumstances Marc remained a faithful pastor to serve the “suffering Church” and provided it encouragement and shared the voice of the voiceless with the outside world.

On August 21, 1998 we received shocking news by e-mail message by Dr. Patricia J Nickson, a Church Missionary Society partner in Congo. She had come to Nairobi to work with Marc as there was civil war going on in Congo. In her letter she wrote :

“This week I had planned to go with Marc to Kakuma to see if, or how the church could better respond to the health needs of the camp community. However, events this week have changed our priorities and our programme. Marc has asked me to share with you something of the situation.”

“The evening before we were due to leave for Kakuma (Sunday 16th August), Marc developed severe abdominal pain. He had been increasingly unwell over a two-month period, but had tried to dismiss the symptoms. He was immediately admitted to Nairobi hospital, and had exploratory surgery the following day. The outcome of the surgery warned us that Marc’s problems here far more serious than a recurrence of Bilhar-zia, as was originally suspected. Further investigations confirmed that Marc has extensive cancer of the abdominal cavity. While the surgery should relieve his immediate symptoms, further tests need to be done in order for an appropriate chemotherapy programme to be prescribed. Such tests cannot be done in Nairobi and so it is planned to transfer Marc to London on Monday, August 24th (arriving the following day}. I will travel with Marc.”

As you can imagine, the news of Marc’s condition shocked his friends and colleagues here in Nairobi as well as farther afield. Marc showed tremendous courage in dealing with the diagnosis as well as coping with the inevitable post-surgery discomfort.

Marc arrived at Royal Marsden Hospital in London and the doctors began chemotherapy. His faith and inner spirit was a tremendous witness to those who visited him in the hospital.

Nancy Frank from Rochester, New York, Marc’s sister and brother-in-law, Marvis and Sam Bergen of Reedley, California arrived from United States to be with him. The Rev. Canon John Peterson, appointed missionary of the Episcopal Church, and Secretary General of Anglican Consultative Council and several Marc’s friends from the CMS community visited him. His laptop computer, a gift from Trinity Church, Wall Street, was a tremendous source to keep Marc in touch with his friends in lots of places. There was a great outpouring of phone calls, e-mails and letters as an expression of love from the body of Christ.

The prognosis was poor and doctors gave Marc two weeks to live. Marc wanted to make his journey to his homeland and to visit his lather and members of his family in Reedley, California. In one of his letter he wrote to me he said, “I am fully open to the miracle of the Lord in healing my stomach. Nonetheless, I am having a profound season of the Spirit, working with patching my history together

with friends from round the world, and in the midst encountering all the agony and ecstasy of our life in Sudan as it is deeply engrafted into our journey in Christ.” The Lord was gracious and Marc arrived in New York on October 6, along with Dr. Robin Fisher, another CMS missionary at Mount Sinai Hospital.

He arrived tired and fatigued but the staff of Episcopal Center in New York worked hard to make all the necessary preparation for Marc to have medical attention in the big city. Margaret Larom and Dorothy Gist needs to be thanked for their good organization. I went to visit Marc on October 11th after the Sunday services. During the 10.30 a.m. service at St. John’s Waynesboro, Fr. Edgar Hollowell and members of the congregation came forward to lay hands on me to carry the prayers of Healing to Marc. My arrival at Mt. Sinai Hospital was at 6.00 p.m. and I found Judy Gillespie, Nancy Frank and Dr. Robin Fisher were present with him.

Marc asked me to celebrate Holy Eucharist with him as he already had bread and wine in his room. He asked me not to rush through the service but take time to reflect, meditate, and sing songs of praise with him. Earlier in my pastoral training I had learned that one should keep a brief visit with a patient in the hospital. This patient was different and he led us in prayer. Marc has a tremendous gift of ministry to those who came to visit him in the hospital. We sang hymns “When I survey the wondrous cross”, “Abide with me fast falls the eventide”, and “Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.”

It was a unique and powerful experience of worshipping the risen Lord who came to visit us in breaking of the bread and in the acclamation of hope, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ shall come again.” I was really blessed with this visit and Marc’s faith. I left Mt. Sinai with a sense of hope and giving thanks to God for Marc’s ministry and witness of his life to us all.

Next morning Marc, along with Dr. Robin Fisher, left on a long journey from JFK, New York to Los Angeles. From there, Marc and Robin traveled to Reedley in a white Limo as Marc needed to stretch and to be comfortable during this journey of four hours. It was quite an experience for a desert traveler who was not used to such a luxury. He shares the joy of this experience in these words: “It was little over the top, but great to stretch my legs out for the four hour drive. I’m not quite certain what our driver thought when we asked him to stop at Kentucky Fried Chicken, or of our greasy picnic amongst his champagne glasses, but we certainly received plenty of rubbernecking attention from passers by.”

It was long and arduous journey but thanks be to God for the miracle that Marc was reunited with his family. He was able to spend time with his ailing father who is in his nineties and sister Marvis and brother-in-law Sam Bergen. He expressed his joy in another correspondence on October 13 and wrote:

“It is so good, so very good, to be in the embrace of family. I’ve had a lovely phone conversation with my Dad, who in the moment was wonderfully lucid. He and his wife, Maria, will be with us for dinner this evening.”

Marc had this continuous theme of hope and dependence on the Lord. In his letter of September 26 to Bishops and leaders of Episcopal Church in Sudan, he wrote:

“It is now just one month since I left Nairobi. Though we are separated by many miles, know that you are in my thoughts every day. You are in my thoughts during the day and in my dreams at night. My heart is seldom far from you. How I gave thanks to God for all that we have experienced together during the past five years in Kenya and in at home in Sudan. I carry within myself all the memories of those years and I thank God for what he has given us in our labors, in success and failure, in joy and sorrow, in our continuing hope for the future.”

“Most of all I give thanks for your individual lives, for the privilege we have had of growing as fellow workers, and the diverse and excellent gifts God has given each of you to build up his people.... I ask forgiveness where I have failed you. If there is anyone among you who feels any grievance against me, if there is anyone how has an unresolved problem with anything I have done or said, please write to me about it. If there is any area that needs healing, let us confess to one another and be fully reconciled.”

“... Perhaps it shows how much I think of you, and miss you, and long for news of you. You must know that throughout these past six weeks, I have found that God is very near me. Whether I am sick or strong, whether I am in pain or free from pain, God is at the center of my experience. He is closer than my own breath, closer than the beat of my heart.”

“However, if there are times when I weep at night on my bed, I weep not because God is distant, but because I miss you. This is the greatest pain I have felt since I left Africa. I think of you at night and I long for your words, your songs, your touch, and your physical presence. It is my Sudanese family whom I miss most of all. The thought of not being able to see you again, this is the greatest sorrow I feel. I think I have some of your crosses with me here. They speak of your faith and survival. They remind me of the meeting place between our endings and our beginnings. I also have the beautiful ‘thum’ of Abraham Akec that reminds me of music in the midst of war. These things remind me of you. But most of all I long to see your faces again.”

Dead Man Walking

In August 1998, Marc had given a list of suggested funeral preparations, that he would including a plain wood coffin which perhaps he could make with some of his friends. While in Reedley five of the former classmates of Marc gathered and built a coffin. It became a tangible expression of solidarity with the dying. While Marc left for UK on October 26, it was suggested that he should tote it with him. However, he decided to leave it in Reedley.

While returning to UK, Marc went to see the doctor in Royal Marsden Hospital on October 28. The examining doctor was surprised that Marc’s health had actually improved. Its blood readings were quite good and feeling his belly the doctor found no obvious sign of the advance of cancer. The doctor several times remarked on how good he looked. Upon

hearing the good news, he asked the doctor if he could return to Africa to work out his farewells with friends from whom he was severed so abruptly. The doctor's response, "I see no reason why you shouldn't make the journey to Africa. Marc wrote a letter to his friends titled, "Rejoice With Me"

Church Missionary Society booked an air ticket for Marc to return to Kenya. Finally, in the first week of December he flew into Nairobi and then to Kakuma Refugee Camp. On his arrival, Kakuma was a billow of dust and celebration. Some 4000 souls came marching out to welcome him, banners waving and songs abounding. On Sunday the 6th, the head count for united service led by Bishop Nathaniel Garang came to 6,855. They had gathered under acacia trees simply to hear words of greeting from this dead man walking. People often during the sermon repeated this phrase, "The man who died has risen again".

Marc was told that during his absence, people of Kakuma crammed themselves into his mud brick house in Zone 4, laying hands on his bed praying that he would return to sleep there once again. In Nairobi young men took a jacket from his house, holding it a sign of Marc's presence, and they prayed for his healing. The woman of Kakuma came one early morning and asked Marc to stand in the circle as they grasped hands in prayers of thanksgiving for his recovery. Passionately, they petitioned the "God of widows and orphans, the God of the weak, the suffering and dying".

The engine of prayer, lubricated by tears and fears of refugees, has produced a tangible sign of divine grace. He found himself suddenly transformed in these days into a symbol of Resurrection for the marginalized of Kakuma Refugee Camp. He is a sign of God's efficacious new life, of his response to the petitions of the most sidelined, among whom raw, unexplained death and rotting corpses are a daily reality. These were the times of celebration and giving thanks to God, the living God ever present among his people in Kakuma.

Marc wrote to me on Ash Wednesday, 1999. "I wish you and the good folks of St. Johns' a blessed, billowing, deep-filling day of dust and ashes. This has long been my favorite in the liturgical year. Even more so this year, with all its near endings, tentative beginnings, hidden resurrections, redolent with those terse words, 'dust you are, and to dust you shall return. 'It is good to be back in the warmth of Kenya, walking in the warmth of Kenya."

"Several times a friend has mentioned, offhand, my being a man living in two worlds. How good, that image, complimenting my soul's identification with the Celtic crosses of Ireland & Scotland. How exhilarated I've been standing beside them, caressing, tracing their penetration of the 'thin membrane' between heaven and earth."

"Yes, at this phase of life, I find a deep empathy in old stones, standing silent for a century and more, between the worlds. They are for me a tangible piece of Incarnation, hallowing my six months 'betwixt & between' each day, sheer gift. We are such vulnerable beings of the earth, humans, common

creatures, insignificant whiffs of dust, puffs of breath. Beloved. Your brother, a furtive gasp in an ailing body, bound round with Christ's love." Marc.

Nuer-Dinka Peace Conference

Marc's health remained a joyful mystery of God. He returned to East Africa again during the first week of February 1999 for a major Nuer-Dinka peace conference. Perhaps 2,000 tribal members attended this peace gathering, deep inside Sudan. The Rev. Bill Lowrey of the Presbyterian Church accompanied Marc. He said, "On June 10th, 1999, the Huer-Dinka Loki Accord was signed by chiefs and church leaders from the border areas on both the west and east sides of the Niles. The New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) was the house who made it all possible. It was a nine day peace conference. After seven years of terrible conflict in which thousands have died, the key border chiefs and church leaders had initiated a process of reconciliation that offered hope in the midst of untold suffering."

During the last seven months the planning and work for the first of two planned people's peace conferences has been very intense. Abducted women and children have been returned home. People have been mobilized in the field by chiefs, church leaders, and local community leaders. Anticipation and hope for peace has become so strong in the field that families with their cattle have begun to move toward the conference site with faith that they can build a peace with their neighbors. Strong support has come from the major military and political factions. The story has been told broadly, and aid has been sought to support the conferences. Non-government

organizations, churches, government aid agencies, and the United Nations have all been brought into the process in varying degrees.

Marc reported from Nairobi, Kenya that on Thursday, February 11th, 1999, a plane carrying conference organizers and photo journalists from the Washington Post and LIFE Magazine will lift off from the Kenya border town of Loki on this emotionally charged flight.

A delegation of three Nuer chiefs, a women's leader and a church leader will be picked up in the towns of Nyal and Leer in Western Upper Nile which is in Nuerland. They will then fly, to Rumbek to pick up three Dinka chief's and finally land in Thiet to be greeted by additional Dinka chiefs and local authorities. This is in Bahr-el-Gliazal which has become known around the world in the past year with the devastating famine, rooted in the seemingly endless conflict."

At the conference site an entire peace village is rising from the soil by the labor of the people. Hundreds of youth have worked, sometimes for weeks with no material incentives arriving to assist them. They are building 150 tukhls (mud and thatch houses) for the participants.

The International Committee for the Red Cross has drilled a well. Chiefs have promised to donate 200 bulls. Food for 2000 people for a month is now on trucks moving toward the site. Hundreds of delegates have been chosen that include chiefs, elders, women, church leaders, youth, and community leaders. Soon they will begin to move by foot to travel to the

conference. Some intellectuals in the Sudan Diaspora are also coming to join with the people on the ground.

Both the security and the site of the conference are unlike what may be expected in other conferences, sponsored by governments or international organizations and held in plush hotels or palaces. The Serbia--Kosovo conference being held in France is forcibly held under the threat of NATO bombing attacks, pressured with a two-week time line, and presented with a "peace accord" written almost in full by the international community.

In south Sudan the Dinka are inviting hundreds of Nuer to come into their land unarmed and trust them to provide security for the conference. The Nuer chiefs, in this exchange visit, will sit with their Dinka counterparts and with some of the top leadership of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and discuss ways to be confident that they can advise their people from Nuerland to come into their "enemies" territory and feel safe.

At the end of the visit to Dinka land, both Dinka and Nuer will board a plane and fly to Nuerland in Western Upper Nile. This will be an opportunity for them to show their unity of commitment to make peace, to report on the results of their discussions about security, and to tell the people of the work that has been accomplished to prepare the site for the peace conference.

Following the chiefs' visits, both sides will come to agreement on any remaining steps that are needed to complete their confidence

that the time has come for the conference to begin. Letters of assurance will be exchanged, stories will be told, and finally the signal will be given on both sides of their borders for the hundreds of chosen delegates on each side to make their way to the conference. Many will walk for days through difficult terrain. The price of peace will not come lightly.

The cost of all this is great and will run over \$300,000 plus the cost of food and the well drilling and other in-kind. But, it will pale in comparison to the benefits if a sustainable peace is built over time. Please pray for peace and wisdom, who gather to take counsel.

On March 15, at the end of the Peace Conference Marc wrote, "I arrived back in Nairobi by noon yesterday, Sunday the 14th, exhausted but satisfied with a remarkable three weeks in Bahr el Ghazal. This was one of the greatest experiences in my Sudan years, with some 1,500 participating in the Dinka-Nuer West Bank Peace Conference held at the secluded village of Wunlit."

"The Conference was attended by about 350 delegates, with a continuity of 1,200 to 1,500 support people. Some 150 Nuer Chiefs, elders and women's workers were transported by air (sitting on the floor of a cargo plane), their security ensured by Commander Salva Kiir who oversees the region under SPLA.

Delegates, Dinka and Nuer, were honest about past losses through three days of open narratives. All worked hard to come to six solid, practical resolutions to bring peace between Western Nuer and Bahr el Ghazal Dinka, with the firm hope that their initiatives will ultimately effect political and military

authorities and ripple out to the rest of Southern Sudan. Some 400 leaders signed/thumb printed the documents that resulted.”

Marc wrote, “Throughout the ten days of meeting I served as scribe, pecking away at my computer, recording virtually every word that was spoken. My health has been good, stable through out, working long hours, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day; plus a few very late nights, printing up documents, with the aid of our solar system.”

On June 8, 1999, I had the personal privilege to be with Marc at Earl’s Court, London, United Kingdom. The Next day, Marc was celebrating his forty-ninth birthday, and I delivered to him a birthday card signed by some sixty members of my parish. Last year at this time, Marc was told he would not live beyond a few weeks. This was a time for me to celebrate what God has done for us all by granting Marc’s continuing presence with us. We had a wonderful lunch in an Italian restaurant to celebrate Marc’s life as a gift of God.

The next time I met Marc was in July 2000 at the Episcopal Church General Convention in Denver, Colorado. I was there as a deputy from the diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Myra and I also hosted a reception for the Most Rev. Joseph Marona, the Archbishop of Sudan. Marc had just returned from Nairobi via London. He looked pale and tired. He was invited by the Anglican and Global office to speak at a luncheon meeting. He attended General Convention for two days and then left for Reedley, California.



Rev. Marc Nikkel with Myra Augustine and Dr. Grant LeMarquand at Episcopal General Convention 2000, Denver, Colorado.

The last four weeks of his life Marc spent at ancestral home with his 94-year-old father, sister Marvis and brother in law Sam Bergen. During these days he wrote several letters to his friends in Africa and instructions to the Church Pension Fund that his assets should be given to the education of the Sudanese refugee children. Marc in the last two days of his life wrote down his own funeral service. He wanted to be buried from Mennonite Brethren Church with the liturgy of the Holy Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer.

On the early morning of Sunday, September 3, 2000, Marc ended his earthly journey. He had lived twenty hard, busy, and fulfilling years in Sudan. He suffered with the Sudanese people and Christ suffered with him every day. His triumphant faith in the risen Lord was a beacon to the world and Christ shined through his life and ministry. The last two years of his life were full of pain and hope for healing. God finally set Marc free and he was led into the eternal light of God to follow Jesus. Marc always ended his letters with these three words: “My times are in his hands. All in the end is harvest.”

The liturgy of the funeral service “A Pilgrim Finds His Home” was truly a celebration of Marc’s life. It was held in his family Mennonite church in Reedley. Rev. Robin Anker-Petersen and Marianne Anker-Petersen were Marc’s friends who came to attend his funeral service from Scotland. Peter Kenworthy represented the Church Missionary Society, London. Carole Shriver from St. John’s Waynesboro, Virginia joined me to pay our final tribute to Marc’s life. Marc’s friend Rev. Mark Liberation, a Presbyterian pastor, paid his homage in his sermon and said, “that Marc had an intense personality. There was a shortage of oxygen when Marc was present with you in a room.”

The Rev. Canon Patrick Mauney, Director of Anglican and Global Relations remembered Marc in these words: “Marc served the Church as a teacher and poet, translator, scholar and theologian. He was our man in the Sudan and it was his passion for the people—his people—and their witness that mobilized the tremendous surge of commitment to Sudan visible throughout our church today. It would be difficult to overestimate the impact he had on the church in Sudan, and, through that ministry, the impact he had on our church. On behalf of the Presiding Bishop, whose missionary appointee he was, and on behalf of his many friends and colleagues at the Episcopal Church Center, I bid farewell to our brother Marc, in the sure and certain hope that his life in God has only begun.”

On the top of Marc’s casket there was a Sudanese Cross surrounded by African violet purple roses and Grandma’s patchwork quilt. Marc wanted two African Dinka hymns to be sung at his funeral service. Unfortunately, the people whom he called his family, no Sudanese could be present at his service. At the end of the service the two Dinka hymns were played on cassette player.

Following is the first Jieng hymn Marc translated; and was played at his funeral service. Marc said, “It moved me deeply. I sang it in Dinka with our students, in Churches of displaced Dinka across equatorial, Sudan, and with soldiers during our abduction in 1987. It is one of the most popular beautifully constructed, rich in meaning.”

Death Has Come

By Mary Aluel Grang, about 1984

- 1) Death has come to reveal the faith, it
has begun with us, and it will end
with us.
O person who fears death do not fear
death.
It only means that you will disappear
from the face of the earth.
Who is there who can save his life and
deny death?
We who live in the world, we are mere
sojourners upon the earth, there is
no man we can call our Father.
We abide together equally in unity as
brothers,
God did not create us to be the slaves
of mere mortals like ourselves.
This cannot happen upon the earth!

*Chorus: We are only the windblown dust
rising for the black soil.
We have no one among us to
save our souls
We are blind and deaf within our
hearts.
We have rejected the words, the
words spoken by our Saviour
are wonderful words!
The Jok of deception has held us
back from the light.*

- 2) Put the *jok* behind you.
Do not allow the *jok* to get ahead.
He is the *jok* who come carrying
conflict, and destruction of the
nation.
Between human beings and the *jok*,
Who is better, one or the other?

The *jok* herds us into the fire by
trickery.

His heart is full of that evil curse,

The curse that came upon him at
the fall of man.

- 3) Those of evil and good are competing
with one another

The earth will stand still
and the blood of mankind will cry
out, "Lord! Lord!"

People are crying out all over the earth:
"Lord, do not make us orphans of
the earth,

Turn and look upon us, O creator of
humankind

Evil is in combat with us!

It has tied a burden upon our necks
Which is impossible to bear!"

- 4) Let us comfort our hearts in the hope
of God who once breathed wei into
the human body.

His ears are open to prayers;

The Creator of man is watching.

He reigns from his high throne,

He sees the souls of those who die,

Turn your ears to us: upon whom else
can we call?

Is it not you alone, *O Nhialic*?

Let us be branches from the vine of
your son!

Jesus will come with the final word of
judgement

He bears the book upon the earth,

Peace and the truth of faith.

(Note: *Jok* means evil force)

A Sister's Reflection

Marvis Bergen

God has again made me aware that He desires to radiate His glory through His people., not because of their significance but because of their availability. I not only saw that in Marc's life, but in an amazing expression of love by five high school friends who made this pine box for him. They researched, they gave time, one of them allowed it to be charged to his account, another gave his shop for the construction project and a nephew and his Dad painted it. They truly gave of themselves. Thank you men for your part in making this segment of Marc's journey have so much meaning. They are serving as pallbearers today.

You'll notice the floral piece has a Sudanese Cross rising above the lovely flowers. Many of you are aware how the cross is so central to the faith of the Sudanese people. They understand what suffering really is, a people who identify with what Christ has given for us all on the cross; but in the middle of their suffering they rejoice in the victory they have as followers of Christ. It is to this cross that Marc shared much around the world.

One of Marc's requests, before his change of residence, was to be wrapped in a patchwork quilt that a family member had made. We thought it most appropriate that this particular one, which was made by his grandmother, be brought back to Reedley from Scotland for today. Marc has always compared his journey to the patches in a quilt. The variety of sizes, shapes and colors, each one being important. This particular quilt was not only made in Reedley, but has been in countries on two

other continents. The most significant being in Sudan when he was abducted by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army. As they came in the night to take Marc and three of his comrades away from their homes, the only thing that Marc grabbed was this quilt. It gave him that sense of connectedness to a part of his heritage.

During these last seven weeks, more than ever, I have seen what lovely, yet complicated, depth of color and history Marc's patches have been in the quilt that represents his life.

Seeing the pattern of life from my perspective, my thoughts go back to a dialogue Marc had with his grandma as a young boy. She would say, "Marc, I'm praying that you'll be a preacher some day." He'd respond saying, "Oh, no Grandma, you don't need to pray that. I'll never be a preacher!"

As we have seen, Marc's life has been a sermon in itself. We may have conflicts with ourselves, struggling against the beautiful grain in our lives that God has put there. Often we aren't able to see at the time (only in hindsight) how God has been working with the grain all the time (as the carpenters and painters of this pine box) to bring about its purposes.

One special memory we as family will always cherish is that whenever Marc would be home, participating in the Eucharist was always part of our experience. This would be at all the holidays, celebrations and good-byes.

It was Saturday, late afternoon, the evening before Marc left. As I was by his bedside, he said; “Marc, we’re having Communion, (pointing to the sitting area). Would you join us? See, it’s all set up.” When I offered to prepare the elements he looked again at the sitting area and chuckled: “Oh, it’s not even there. Yes, please do.” At that moment Sam walked in and Marc said with great expectancy: “We’re having Communion, you are welcome to stay.”

Then the tone of his voice changed to sadness when he said: “But, I’m very sick, Sam, I won’t be able to participate with you. Go ahead and I’ll join you from the bed.”

Little did we know that in only 12 hours he would no longer be with us, but would be changing his residence forever. Had the Lord put this in his heart to once again participate in this most fulfilling and complete form of saying “good bye” that Marc knew and loved?

As we came near Marc’s bed, Sam led in a most precious time of reflection, focusing on 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. It was so meaningful to us, that just as Jesus Said to his disciples that he would not eat this bread or drink this wine again until he would meet his disciples in heaven, so it became prophetic to us, that this would be the last Communion we might have with Marc. The next morning he left us at 5:25 a.m. What a celebration this will be when all of us will be participating in the Greatest Eucharist ever, with Christ leading it with ALL HIS CHILDREN. HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH!!!

This moment has become so meaningful to us as we reflect on the completeness of that communion time. Marc has gone on ahead and we are celebrating, in part, what he is in full perfection. We give thanks to Our Lord for this way of remembering His work of Grace in our lives!!



A Tribute to the Rev'd Dr. Marc Nikkel

***Issued by the Lambeth Palace,
As Released by the Anglican News Service,
London September 5, 2000***

I am sorry to share with you the sad news that Marc Nikkel our brother and missionary to Sudan died on the early morning of Sunday 3rd September in his sister and brother-in-laws' home in Reedley, CA. His 94 years father visited with him yesterday. It is only after twenty years of service in Sudan, Marc returned home to spend his final days with his blood family.

His heart was still in Sudan and a number of times he expressed during his last days on earth that he would like to go back to Sudan.

His family in Reedley, CA is planning a service to celebrate his life on Friday 5th September. Marc was a guest for three days at the General convention in Denver last July. He said to Myra, my wife, that he was tired and was ready to go home. Marc had visited us in Waynesboro three times since 1997. He loved hot food and we enjoyed his company. Our parish and in particular our family was blessed by his visits.

The Revd Dr Marc Nikkel was a joint ECUSA and CMS missionary to Sudan for twenty years from the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Little over two years ago Marc was diagnosed at the Royal Marsden Hospital, London, that he had developed extensive cancer of the abdominal cavity. The prognosis was poor and doctors gave Marc two weeks

to live. Marc did receive some treatment at the Royal Marsden in London but they sent him in August 1998 to die in his hometown in Reedley, CA.

While in Reedley his health actually improved. His blood readings were quite good and feeling his belly he found no obvious sign of the advanced cancer. He went back to Sudan and people who loved him dearly celebrated his arrival shouting in the air "The man who died has risen again."

Marc was told that during his absence people of Kakuma refugee camp crammed themselves into his mud brick house, laying hands on his bed, praying that he would return to sleep there once again. In Nairobi, Kenya, young refugee Sudanese men took a jacket from his house, holding it a sign of Marc's presence, and they prayed for his healing. The women of Kakuma gathered early morning and prayed: "God of widows and orphans, the God of the weak, the suffering and dying, heal Marc Nikkel."

The engine of prayer, lubricated by tears and fears of refugees, had produced a tangible sign of divine grace. He found himself suddenly transformed in those days into a symbol of Resurrection for the marginalized of Kakuma Refugee Camp. While he was there his health remained a joyful mystery of God.

Marc was an apostle to the oppressed and persecuted church. He understood his mission to Sudan through the eyes of Jesus. The theme of God's liberation of the poor and oppressed was always heard in his messages. Jesus Christ the liberator, the helper and the healer of the wounded will restore the scattered diaspora of the Sudanese church. These were the chosen people of God to witness to the living faith of the persecuted church that has grown from the Cross of Christ.

He shared with us through the stories of the Sudanese Crosses that the Cross has become their proud symbol of the strength to live and to die for Christ. The followers of Jesus in Marc's Sudan have adopted the Cross to symbolize the only life these followers of Jesus want to live. In the sign of Cross they conquer the forces of darkness, oppression, hatred and evil. To Marc and his people in Southern Sudan, the Crosses they carried in their hands represented their daily struggle, the pain and betrayal, suffering, affliction and the triumphant faith to follow Christ. Now he can experience liberation with millions of Sudanese martyrs in heaven and sing a song,

*When I gets to heaven, gonna be at ease
Me an' my God gonna do as we please.*

Marc, the saint of God, is going to plead before God's throne of Grace and mercy and ask the God of the oppressed to liberate the Sudanese Church.

Marc was called to be an apostle of peace and agent of reconciliation in a war torn country of Sudan. In February 1999 he was a major player to bring 2000 Dinka and Nuer tribal leaders deep inside Sudan for a Peace

Conference. These tribes had been at war for many decades. Nuer are mostly Presbyterians and Dinkas are Anglicans. The Islamic Fundamentalist in the North encouraged Nuer to attack, loot, and kill Dinkas. After many years of conflict thousands had died. Marc had initiated a process of reconciliation that offered hope in the midst of untold sufferings.

He recorded on his laptop computer every conversation on hundreds of pages regarding the Peace Conference. At the end of several weeks of sharing their stories of pain and suffering, the 400 tribal leaders signed a peace accord.

Marc during his twenty years in Sudan was a one man Seminary who trained hundreds of Sudanese Pastors, Evangelists. Several of these men whom Marc trained in the ministry are now the Bishops of the Episcopal Church in Sudan. I personally witnessed his ministry in Kakuma refugee Camp (54,000 people) and inside Southern Sudan in the war zone area in 1998. He was much loved by the Sudanese as their friend, teacher, brother and Messiah of the suffering community. As Sudanese called Marc 'dead man walking', he was surely used by God as a vessel of the living grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two weeks before his death Marc wrote a letter to the church in Sudan and said, "These days I find myself becoming physically weaker. As for myself, I simply long for the Great Transition that will allow me to enter my new life in the fellowship of Christ and all who have gone before. Upon my death I am requesting that any funds remaining to me personally be channeled to CMS office, Nairobi, to provide educational scholarships

for leaders, men or women, for six dioceses in the Episcopal Church of Sudan. If any individuals or churches would like to make contributions, one time or on an ongoing basis, in my memory after my death, I would invite them to contribute to the ‘Marc Nikkel Scholarship Fund’.”

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia has an account in the name of Marc Nikkel. We would be glad to pass your gifts to CMS, Nairobi.

Marc had twenty hard, busy and fulfilling years in Sudan. The last two years were full of pain and hope for healing. Towards the end of his journey Marc was ready to sing:

*Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on
let me stand, I am tired, I am weak
I am worn; Through the night
Lead me on to the light, take my hand
precious Lord, lead me on.*

God has finally set Marc free and now he has been led into the eternal light of God to follow Jesus. Marc always ended his letters with these words: “My times are in his hands. All, in the end, is harvest.”

We pray for the repose of the soul of our brother Marc. He was a faithful servant of God. We celebrate his life, giving thanks to God. I pray that the spirit of the living God will fall afresh on the Sudanese Church and the Lord will provide them another Marc, a servant missionary, a leader and teacher of his choice.

Marc suffered with the Sudanese people and Christ suffered with him every day. His triumphant faith in the risen Lord was a beacon to the world and Christ shined through his life and ministry. This is my prayer for my brother Marc Nikkel:

“May the Angels lead you into the paradise; may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem. May the Choir of angels welcome you, And where Lazarus is poor no longer may you find eternal rest. Christ has risen from the dead, trampling down death by death. We shall meet again when the last trumpet shall be blown and the dead shall rise to sing a new song of Alleluia!”

Adieu, my brother Marc - Adieu. We shall meet again!

The Rev. Canon Patrick P Augustine
Chair, Companions for World Mission
Diocese Of Southwestern Virginia

A Tribute to Bishop Daniel Manase Zindo

Dean and Acting Archbishop of Episcopal Church of Sudan



On October 20 1998, I received an e-mail message by Dr. Richard Jones that he has come to know through Jackie Krause of Chicago that Acting Archbishop Daniel Zindo had died in a car accident. I was deeply shocked as in last July we spent three weeks together at Lambeth Conference in Kent, England. I sat down and said a prayer for the repose of his soul and wrote the following tribute to my brother and friend Zindo and sent it to the Episcopal / Anglican news and Bishop Marona, the Secretary General of the Episcopal Church of Sudan:

I was deeply sorry to learn that the Acting Archbishop of Sudan, Daniel Manase Zindo, was killed in an accident on his way from Kenya to Kampala, Uganda, to set up a regional office for the Episcopal Church of Sudan. It happened at about 5 a.m. on October 20. Bullen Nginzo Murang, Bishop Zindo's personal assistant and chancellor in Nairobi, said the bishop's body will be brought back to Sudan.

Daniel Zindo was born in 1944 and graduated from Bishop I4annington Training Center. He was ordained to priesthood in 1972. Later he earned a B.A. from Oak Hill College in England. He was consecrated Bishop of Yambio in the Archdiocese in Sudan in 1984.

He was a member of the Anglican Consultative Council from 1987 to 1990, and chairman of the Sudan Council of Churches since 1994. He was elected Provincial Dean for Juba, Sudan in 1988.

Last February at Sudan's House of Bishops meeting in Nairobi, Archbishop Benjamin Wani Yugusuk was asked to retire, and the bishops elected Zindo as Acting Archbishop of Sudan. His job was to prepare the Church for electing its next Archbishop. Zindo had a tough assignment – one requirement of the job was for him to move from the liberated area to the government-held area of Juba, see city of the Archbishop.

I met with Zindo last February in Nairobi during an Episcopal Church USA delegation's visit to southern Sudan. I learned from him that last year his wife and daughter were killed by his son-in-law, and the bishop was taking care of his grandchildren. He and his wife had seven children together.

Bishop Zindo was a very brave man and proclaimed the Gospel with gusto.

During the Lambeth Conference, my wife Myra and I spent another three weeks with Bishop Zindo. As chairman of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia's Companions for

World Mission, a partner with the Province of Sudan, I had special opportunities to visit with Bishop Zindo.

During the three weeks of Lambeth, we sat together for at least one meal each day in the Eliot College dining room. When the Sudanese House of Bishops met during Lambeth, he invited my wife and me to attend that meeting.

On August 5, the Church of Sudan led the Lambeth Conference Evensong. Bishop Zindo asked me to join the Sudanese Bishops and lead the intercession. It was quite an honor to be invited, as a priest and a friend of the Church of Sudan, to celebrate with the Sudanese House of Bishops. I felt humbled that the Sudanese Bishops chose me to offer prayers for the church of Sudan and stand in worship with them.

I had written an earlier edition of this book, *Hear My People's Cry*, to tell the story of the suffering of God's people in Sudan and Pakistan. Bishop Zindo endorsed distributing this book to the bishops at Lambeth.

My heart aches at the loss of a brother and a valiant leader of the fastest-growing church in the Anglican Communion. The Church in Sudan needs our prayers, as it has lost a very able and brave leader.

He was a faithful servant of God. We celebrate his life, giving thanks to God. I pray that the Spirit of the living God will fall afresh on the Sudanese Church and the Lord will provide them the leader of his choice.

This is my prayer for my brother Bishop Zindo:

My the Angels lead you into paradise;
May the martyrs come to welcome you
And take you to the holy city,
The new and eternal Jerusalem.
May the Choir of angels welcome you,
And where Lazarus is poor no longer
May you find eternal rest.

The body of Christ in this part of the world joins with the Episcopal Church of the Sudan in mourning the death of this servant leader of the risen and living Christ.

He suffered with is people and Christ suffered with him every day. His triumphant faith in the risen Lord was a beacon to the world, and Christ shined through his life and ministry.

I join with the members of this Episcopal Church in paying homage to Bishop Zindo's life. We pray that the power of the risen Lord will raise a new Zindo to serve God and his people.

Christ has risen from the dead, trampling down death by death. We shall meet again when the last trumpet shall be blown and the dead shall rise to sing a new song of "Alleluia!"

Adieu, my brother Zindo. Adieu. We shall meet again!

- The Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine
Chair, Companions for World Mission
Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

A Modern Holocaust'

Local rector appeals for prayers, support for Sudan

by Gayda Hollnagel, La Crosse Tribune

Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to Sudan this week was watched with great interest by two La Crosse people concerned about the humanitarian crisis in the north African nation.

The Rev. Canon Patrick Augustine, rector of Christ Episcopal Church, has an ongoing relationship with the Anglican leadership in Sudan and has visited the country nearly every year since 1998 to observe firsthand the struggles of Sudanese Christians and others who have been forced from their homes or killed and maimed by Muslim extremists within the Sudan government.

Augustine said the government is dominated by the National Islamic Front, a fundamentalist political organization formed from the Muslim Brotherhood in 1986. Sudan gained its independence from Egypt and the United Kingdom on Jan. 1, 1956.

Augustine has been appointed by the Most Rev. Joseph Biringi Marona, archbishop and primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, as his official representative in the United States. Augustine said he was pleased to see the U.S. government finally paying attention to the violence being perpetrated in the war-torn nation, which is located on the Red Sea and is the largest country in Africa, dominated by the Nile and its tributaries.

"It's a modern holocaust and genocide," Augustine said, adding that 2.5 million people in the southern Sudan have been systematically killed in the past 20 years, and 4 million have

been displaced from their homes and are now living in starvation conditions in refugee camps.

The situation has worsened since February 2003, when black African groups rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, resulting in 1 million displaced persons. Some 120,000 refugees have poured across the western border into Chad since last year, and more than 10,000 people have died in Darfur. About 10,000 more people are likely to die over the coming month, World Health Organization officials have said.

"It's bigger than the Balkans, and it's bigger than Afghanistan," David Nabarro, the World Health Organization's top emergencies expert said this week after his visit to Darfur.

Augustine said he was surprised by Powell's reluctance to call the killing of Sudanese by fellow countrymen genocide.

"If it is not a modern holocaust, if it is not a modern genocide, what is it?" said Augustine, who has testified before the United States Congress International and Human Rights committee on behalf the church in Sudan. He also has written Powell and President Bush, asking that the United States step in to provide humanitarian aid and help to stop the violence.

June Kjome, a longtime local peace and justice advocate, also is thinking about Sudan this week and hoping Powell's visit will help raise public awareness about the crisis there.

Kjome, who spent 19 years in South Africa as a nurse missionary while the country still was governed by apartheid, suggests that local people begin to get involved by writing their senators and legislators about the Sudan issue.

Working to stop the violence in Sudan fits with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's ongoing "Stand With Africa" initiative, a three-pronged program to combat AIDS and hunger and bring peace to all African people, said Kjome, an ELCA member.

The first two problems, AIDS and hunger, have to be resolved before peace can happen, Kjome said.

"There's never going to be any peace unless there's something for people to eat," she said. "You can't have peace without justice."

Augustine, who has written extensively about the Sudan, provides a heart-wrenching description of conditions in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya near the Sudanese border where 84,000 displaced Sudanese live, in his book, "Hear My People's Cry," which was written after a 1998 visit:

"Many are sick, and most are starving. Medicine is scarce and inadequate. A man afflicted with leprosy is receiving no treatment whatsoever. Hollow-eyed children with distended stomachs bear a heart-rending witness to the malnutrition that is everywhere in the camp. The United Nations manages to distribute a ration of only six kilos of white flour per household every 15 days. It is barely enough for 10 days and far below the 1900 calories per day prescribed as a minimum standard by the world food program. The ration provides no meat, milk, vegetables, yeast, oil, salt or soap. People stand in line for hours in

the blazing heat to receive their ration of water. ... There are no libraries, no books, no school supplies."

Besides food, water and medical care, the lack of education is an especially painful need, Augustine said, quoting one Sudanese man who said the deprivation is "killing our future."

Augustine said we have set a HELP WITH COMPASSION fund to provide scholarship for St. Andrews Primary and High School students in Bor, South Sudan. Provide support for the empowerment of Women through work of the Mothers' Union. Theological education of the clergy. Donations may be sent to: Help with Compassion, 427 14th St South, La Crosse, WI 54601.

Augustine appeals to people of faith to pray for peace in Sudan.

"As persons of good will, we call for the situation to be resolved in Darfur and fighting to be brought to an immediate end," he said, adding that he hopes a recent peace agreement between Sudanese government and SPLA from the Christian Southern Sudan may become a reality.

"Let us commit ourselves to working at every level toward bringing an end to genocide of innocent people, widespread raping, looting, pillaging and burning of homes and agriculture tools and crops," Augustine said. "These are crimes against humanity. The war in Sudan must stop now and pray to bring an end to this, the worst human crisis of our time."

Story originally printed in the LaCrosse Tribune or online at <http://www.lacrossetribune.com> July 3, 2004

PAKISTAN – The Cry of the Voiceless

An Introduction to the Country of Pakistan

“... It is the will of the people of Pakistan to establish an order ... where shall be guaranteed fundamental rights, including equality of status, of opportunity and law, social, economic and political justice, and freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association...”
from the Preamble, Constitution of Pakistan



Pakistan - History

Pakistan was created in 1947 to be a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian Sub-Continent. In a famous speech at Independence, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the nation and a man held in the greatest reverence within the country, advocated religious tolerance and the right of every individual to practice his own religion. Sadly, that ideal has been eroded as successive governments have implemented a program of Islamisation.

Until 1971, the country consisted of Eastern and Western Pakistan separated by 1,000 miles of Indian territory, having little but Islam in common. After a brutal war, Eastern

Pakistan became Bangladesh, a separate nation. Pakistan's history has been unsettled right from its creation, and is still unstable. The National Assembly has been dissolved three times in the last eight years. There have been 25 years of martial law, the last regime ending in 1988. In 1992 there were five Prime Ministers. There is a democratically elected government, but the culture of democracy is weak, and the shadow of the military is over every political move. Pakistan has the seventh largest army in the world, absorbing over a quarter of the government's spending. Corruption is widespread through every area of life. A recent UN report listed Pakistan as the second most corrupt country in the world.

Pakistan - Geography

Pakistan has a land area of 887,700 square kilometers and borders India on the east, Iran and Afghanistan on the west and China to the north. In the northwest, Pakistan borders Kashmir. This troubled state has been the cause of two wars between India and Pakistan. Even to this day the future of Kashmir remains very much in the balance.

Pakistan is divided into four provinces: Sind, Baluchistan, Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. The country is a kaleidoscope of different ethnic groups, each very distinct. One estimate is that 70 different languages are spoken in Pakistan but in general citizens have

one thing in common: Islam. The country is 97% Muslim. Christians are the second largest group, representing between 1.6% and 1.9% of the total population (just fewer than 3 million individuals). Official estimates are that the other minority religions -- Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Ahmadis and Parsis combined -- total 2% of the population.

Christians in Pakistan

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” - - Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1

Indicator	Pakistan	World Avg.
Life expectancy at birth	62.3	63.2
Population access to Health	55%	-
Population access to Safe Water	74%	-
Population access to Sanitation	47%	-
Adult literacy rate (Male)	49.0%	83.5%
Adult literacy rate (Female)	23.3%	70.8%
Real Gross Domestic Product per Capita	2,154 US\$	5,806 US\$
Gross National Product per Capita	430 US\$	4,797 US\$

Pakistan - Human Development

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistical device developed by UNDP to compare the quality of life in different countries. The Human Development Rank is the placing achieved by each of the 177 countries included in the survey in descending order of HDI. The index measures a variety of indicators including longevity, literacy, resources and schooling. There is no measure for freedom or human rights. Pakistan is currently ranked number 139 on the list, and has fallen ten places in the ranking list in the last 3 years. Some of the indicators are listed below:

It should be borne in mind that these are national averages, and that in rural situations or in the inner city bastis (slums), levels of ALL the above indicators are well below this level.

The history of Christians in Pakistan begins long before partition. The Christians now living in Pakistan are mostly the descendants of Punjabi Hindu converts. Most are descended from the low-caste of Hindus. Between the 1890's and World War

I, a mass-conversion this social class took place. Behind this was a desire to be affiliated with the Colonial rulers, to improve their existing situation and to `escape` to a religion which considered everyone equal. The Christianized Chuhras entered into a sort of patron-client relationship with the Colonials, gaining some degree of protection from the worst of the treatment from local society. Their social position, however, remained firmly at the bottom.

In the bloody and unstable times following Partition, most of the new Christians in India drifted towards Pakistan, preferring to throw in their lot with the Muslims who offered Christians a protected status as `people of the book`. However, they remained at the bottom of the society. They continued at menial jobs: That was all they knew; all they could do. Most were illiterate, landless, and extremely poor, and still occupied the lowest position

in society. Now, without the patronage of the British, they were responsible for looking after their own interests, and relied on Muslim masters to provide them with work.

Christians in Pakistan Today

Today the Christian community is still at the bottom end of Pakistani society. Christian communities are found in the poorest housing in the cities. Christian areas often receive the poorest amenities, and receive the harshest treatment in the implementation of the government's austerity measures. The combination of being involved in menial work and living in overcrowded, poor housing with bad sanitation means that many Christians have low self-respect and a poor self-image.

They are often poorly educated and so suffer from a lack of skills and opportunity to be able to change their jobs and improve their lifestyle. In a country where there is no free education, poverty and lack of education create a self-perpetuating vicious circle, meaning many can see no means of escape from the poverty trap. Government spending on education in 1996-97 was 2.6% of the GNP compared with 8% of the GNP spent on the military.

The lack of opportunity, which has existed for generations, has also created a ghetto mentality. Many people feel defensive and inward-looking. They cannot imagine themselves being anything other than sweepers, the job that Christians have had a monopoly on for so long. One estimate suggests that as many as 80% of Christians in Pakistan work as sweepers. The same survey shows that 63% of Christian employees in the Federal and Provincial civil services are in the bottom two grades, while only 2% are in the upper middle or high grades. In the Federally

controlled public sector, 87% of Christian employees are in the lowest three levels and only 0.2% are in the highest three levels.

Christians in Pakistan - The Church

The largest Christian denomination in Pakistan today is the Church of Pakistan, which was formed in 1970 by the amalgamation of the Anglican Church of Pakistan, Lutheran, Scottish Presbyterian and Methodist missions. There are also strong Roman Catholic and Presbyterian missions, with smaller groups including the Lahore Council of Churches, Salvation Army and Free Evangelical Churches. The church buildings are usually to be found in the cantonment of cities and towns, built by the British to serve the colonials.

The church building is an important meeting place for the Christians of the area, and the hub of the Christian community. Many of the Christians are illiterate, and mainly for this reason have only the barest knowledge of the Bible and its application. Thus they rely heavily on local pastors for guidance. It seems strange to say that in such a confined and oppressed community there is a problem of 'nominal Christianity', but many of those from 'Christian' families do not practice the Christian faith and are not involved in the life of the Christian community.

(Excerpts taken from the paper presented by Bishop Mano Rumalshah of Peshawar Diocese, Pakistan, at "Hear the Cry" Episcopal Conference, held at Seamen's Institute, New York, April 24, 1998)



Christian home burnt in Shantinagar, Pakistan, February, 1997.

The Impact of the Blasphemy Law on Minorities in Pakistan

The Religious Liberty Forum
Capitol Hill, Congressional Room SC6
Washington, D.C. May 19, 1998

By the Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine

I stand before you this morning to share the sadness and pain I carry in my heart for the suffering of the Christian community in Pakistan. The members of this community of almost 3 million among 140 million of the population of Pakistan who have lived in this land for centuries together. I grew up in Pakistan where my family had many opportunities to interact together as people of two different faiths in our motherland. We celebrated our joys and mourned for our deceased together.

I am an Episcopal parish priest, and a Muslim friend of my wife's family gave us the crucifix I have on the wall of my office. It was brought from Tanzania, carved by an African artist for the purpose as a wedding gift to us. I am not trying to deny that there were no instances of discrimination. Yes! There were, but there did not exist national laws and sanctions to persecute Christians or any other minorities. The laws and circumstances have so rapidly changed that one wonders if this is the same country where I was raised, and I dream of her every night as my motherland.

The purpose of this article is not to demonize Islam but to remind our Muslim brothers and sisters that we have for centuries lived together and never had laws to protect our sacred books or our Prophets. What has changed towards the end of this century that

we need to pass such harsh punishments and laws to protect the name of Almighty God and his Servants? He sent them to minister to humanity. Those servants of God were people of faith and dealt with tolerance those who differed with them.

Why on earth is there a need today to protect the name of Allah the Merciful, the Holy Qu`ran and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)? It has caused lots of grief and trouble for the minorities in Pakistan. The present-day blasphemy law has become a sword hanging over the heads of Christians and other minorities in Pakistan. By creating such laws you cannot force people to respect you or your faith. This is accomplished only by the example of how we live and treat others. I humbly appeal to the Muslim Umma to pay attention to the plight of those who suffer psychologically, socially, economically and physically because their faith is different than the State Faith of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

At the time of partition of the Sub-Continent, the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, assured all minorities that they would have freedom of worship and equal rights as citizen of Pakistan. Present day Pakistan has changed and is denying the very basic rights of minorities who have served that country as loyal citizens. I would like to

share with you the recent story of the tragic death of the Catholic Bishop of Faisalabad, Dr. John Joseph.

Bishop John Joseph was consecrated the first Punjabi Catholic Bishop in Pakistan in 1984. He had earned a doctorate in theology and was a well-known human rights activist. He was chairman of the National Justice and Peace Commission and Chairman of the Christian-Muslim Commission. He played a vital role in the development of about 60 colonies for the Christian community. He was also instrumental in the establishment of 30 schools and over 100 technical centers. Why would a person of such standing and courage choose to commit suicide in present-day in Pakistan? Please hear the cry - feel the pain of the suffering church and listen to its story.

In 1982, under President General Zia Ul-Haq, Blasphemy Law section 295-B was passed. This law dealt with defiling the Holy Qur'an, a crime to be punished with life imprisonment. Four years later, section 295-C was added, concerning offenses against Prophet Muhammad, which were to be punished with life imprisonment or death and a fine. This section was given even greater force when the federal Shari'at Court in Pakistan ruled that the life imprisonment option should be disallowed, leaving death as the mandatory sentence for defiling the name of Prophet Muhammad. This ruling was enforced in 1991.

Pakistan's blasphemy legislation is originally derived from British Indian Penal Code of 1860. The basic law is found in section 295, which deals with defiling a place of worship of any religion. For this there is a maximum

punishment of two years imprisonment and/or a fine. In 1927, an amendment added section 295-A, which concerned "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings" of any citizens of Pakistan; the same mild punishment was specified.

One of the victims of the new blasphemy law is Ayub Masih, a Christian young man who has been in solitary confinement since October 14, 1996. He lived with 135 other Christians in Arifwala, a village of Muslim majority. Christians owned small pieces of land, but over the years the Muslim landlords had forcibly taken it away. This small band of Christians demanded their land back. The dispute ended in filing charges against Ayub Masih that he had insulted Prophet Muhammad. Ayub Masih was arrested by Pakistani police and was locked up in jail. The rest of the 135 Christians of Arifwala left the village after they were given threats to burn their houses and cattle.

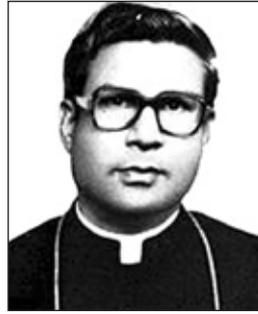
After 18 months in prison without bail, Ayub Masih, 31, was sentenced to death April 27 by Sessions Court Judge Rana Abdul Ghaffar. He was given 30 days to appeal to the High Court. Bishop John Joseph had been closely involved in Ayub Masih's case. After the guilty verdict, he sought a lawyer to conduct the appeal. All declined to accept the brief. It seems that this brick wall was what drove the Bishop to protest the injustice of the situation in the most powerful way he could think of--by laying down his own life. The Vatican declared him a martyr of the Church.

Earlier on the day of his death the late Bishop had gone to Shaiwal, the Pakistani City in Punjab Province where Ayub Masih was

sentenced to death. He attended a meeting called to make joint efforts against the death sentence of Ayub Masih. He conducted a special prayer service and encouraged his flock not to give up the struggle. He also sent an open letter to Pakistan's largest English language newspaper, Dawn. On the day of the incident his open letter was published. Following are two excerpts from Bishop Joseph's letter:

"After several serious consultations, the following points became clear: "We have to act in unity and coordination: The bishops inside and outside Pakistan, the parliamentarians inside and outside the parliament, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, men, women and the youth, all in harmony, Pakistani NGOs and NGOs abroad to support the repeal of Sections 295-B and C in the Pakistan Penal Code. Now we must act strongly and in unity, without worrying about the sacrifices we shall have to offer. Dedicated persons do not count the cost.

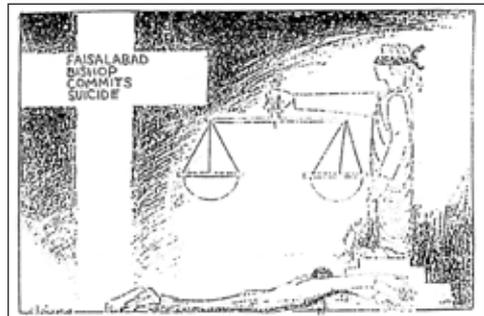
"The final push: 295-C is the greatest block in the good and harmonious relations between Muslims and the religious minorities in Pakistan. In order to achieve national harmony, let us give a mighty push to this immense boulder, before it crushes all of us. Once this obstacle is away, each Pakistani will be able to live and work in peace and our beloved motherland., Pakistan will prosper. Let us pray continuously for it, publicly and in private, throughout the country. Amen."



~ John Joseph,
Bishop of
Faisalabad

On May 6, at 9:30 p.m., Bishop Joseph, after praying with his Christian community, went

to see the Sahiwal District Court where earlier Ayub Masih was sentenced to death. He accompanied Fr. Yaqoob Farooq, a parish priest of Sahiwal. Fr. Farooq told Compass News that "The Bishop asked me to show him the spot where attacker had shot at Ayub Masih last November, when he was waiting to be called for his hearing." After asking the priest to wait near the car with his driver, the bishop walked a few paces back to the spot. "The next thing, I heard a shot," Farooq told Compass. When Farooq rushed through the darkness toward the sound, the bishop was already dead on the ground, he said, a pistol lying at his side.



In addition to Ayub Masih, six individuals have been found guilty under section 295-C and sentenced to death. These comprise three Christians (one of them a 14-year-old boy) and three Muslims. All were acquitted on

appeal. No executions have yet taken place. Islamists who have taken the law in their own hands have killed several. However, the due process of law is not the only danger to someone accused of blasphemy. Once accused, the individual is at risk from zealous Islamists, who believe that they earn merit with Allah by killing a blasphemer.

Five individuals--four Christians and one Muslim--have been murdered as a direct result of being accused of blasphemy. At least three of these were in custody at the time of the attack. The police show little enthusiasm for prosecuting the murderers. All three of the Christians found guilty but then acquitted have fled the county. Not only the accused themselves, but also others associated with them are in danger. The judge of Lahore High Court, Justice Arif Iqbal Bhatti, who acquitted two of the Christians, has himself been assassinated.

Benazir Bhutto's government proposed amendments in 1994, which would have made the law less biased in favor of the accuser. However, threats from radical Islamic groups to the life of her Federal Law Minister after he announced these proposals led to the amendments being dropped. Some unofficial changes in procedure were introduced the following year, requiring magistrates to investigate the credibility of the allegations of blasphemy before filing formal charges. This led to a decrease in the number of cases being filed.

On May 9, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, expressed his grief over the death of the Bishop. Mr. Sharif described the bishop's suicide as tragic, and urged

Pakistanis to show tolerance for each other's religions and beliefs. On May 10, during the Bishop Joseph's funeral at his Cathedral in Faisalabad, thousands of Christians called for the repeal of the blasphemy law. At that same time, a nearby Christian colony was attacked by 400 to 500 militant Muslims who burned shops and houses, demanding that the law be left unaltered. They also attacked the mourners with sticks and bricks as they returned home after the funeral.

Another Christian, Ranjah Masih in Faisalabad, was arrested the day before the funeral under section 295-B for breaking a board carrying a Qur'anic verse. The deputy commissioner of Faisalabaad, Abid Saeed, said that a local citizen filed an application asking the authorities to take action against Ranjah Masih, who is accused of using a stick to beat a billboard with a Qu'ranic verse written on it.

Christians have staged large-scale demonstrations in many large cities of Pakistan. On May 15, in Lahore, thousands of Christians protested against the blasphemy law. There were clashes between the police and Christian youth, and extensive damage was caused to private property and vehicles, including a police car. Injuries were caused to a large number of protesters as well as to passers-by caught in the melee. Hundreds of members of the minority community were arrested and severely beaten up by the police.

The persecution of Pakistani Christians is no longer distant to me. The wrath of Islamic extremists has hit my own hometown. I was born in a town called Gojra in Punjab, where

my father, the late Venerable B. M. Augustine, was the Rural Dean and later Arch-deacon of Lahore Diocese. He served there for fifty years as a faithful priest of the Anglican Church and then the Church of Pakistan. I was baptized and confirmed at St. John's Cathedral in Gojra. The very house I was raised in, and the church my Christian faith was nurtured in, was attacked by a fanatic Muslim mob on May 24, 1998.

On May 25, the Bishop of Faisalabad of the Church of Pakistan, The Rt. Rev. John Samuel, wrote the following letter to the Anglican Consultative Council office in London:

"I would like to report that last night at 18.00 hours on the 24th, we heard a call given by Muslim priest (Moulvi), in charge of a mosque which is adjacent to the Bishop's house, that some unknown person has made an attempt to incinerate several old copies of Holy Qur'an at 14. 00 hours on 24''". Since as per Islamic philosophy it is a matter of great concern, all Muslim scholars urged the general population to go on strike the following day. That is for today 25th May. We realized at the same time that we will be on the top of their hit list. So, we took the following precautionary measures.

1. We informed the local subdivisional magistrate that the situation can take a serious turn at any time so they should provide us protection.

2. Girls' Hostel was closed down and early in the morning they were shifted to nearby Christian village Chak No. 424 - Montgomerywala, for safety and protection.

3. Employees' families were told to stay inside their house and specially the young boys of Iver Hostel were advised to remain inside their rooms and they should remain, show Christian spirit of peace by accepting all hardship to glorify His name and not make any reciprocal action.

4. This morning, after 08 hours, the templating moment arrived although a handful of policemen who were deployed by the administration at main gate of St. John's Cathedral Higher Secondary School, but could not resist much in the front of precisionists who were trying to attack the following premises:

1. THE BISHOP'S HOUSE: They tried to get in the Bishop's House to damage the place from three directions but police made their attempts unsuccessful by shooting in the air and using heavy tear-gas and with baton charge.

2. MISSION COURTYARD HOUSING AREA: At one stage, they were able to get into the Housing Area by pushing police backward by stoning them heavily but at the right time efforts of Muslim friend, factory owner, saved us from heavy loss, who pushed them out and restrained them by causing much damage to the properties in this area apart from damaging fuel gas meter, power supplies meters.

3. *IVER HOSTEL: They also tried to attack Iver Hostel from all directions and they made several attempts. Police were able to control them by using tear gas shells and firing in the air. Over here they burnt power meter and fuel gas meter and windowpanes were broken also.*

4. *ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL: They made several attempts to get inside but were restrained by police.*

5. *ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL: First of all, the mob tried to get into the school from front but police made their attempt unsuccessful. Then they went from the backyard and burnt Primary Section class rooms with furniture inside and electric fittings, installations in those rooms. It will take awhile to assess the actual loss.*

6. *ST. JOHN'S GIRLS' HOSTEL: Though they were not able to get inside the hostel's main building but were able to devastate the Chapel, which is on the roadside.*

It is just to inform about this mishap and another attempt to punish the Christians in the name of "Islam" for those deeds that have nothing to do with us and Muslim Scholars led all of these processions. The situation is still very tense, so please keep us remembered in your prayers and other friends and well-wishers, brothers and sisters around the world. "

Pakistan's Section 295-C is unique. No other Muslim country has this kind of legislation. It reflects the particular flavor of Pakistani Islam. The Rt. Rev. Joseph Coutts, Roman Catholic Bishop of Hyderabad, addressing a meeting of Asian bishops at the Vatican last month, spoke of the "rising tide of intolerance, militancy and oppression in Islam which is causing suffering to Asian churches." He said, "The predominant attitude in Muslim countries considers Christians as second-class citizens or traitors. Islam cannot and must not be put in the same class Hinduism, Buddhism or Shintoism. Islam is a politico-religious force with expansionist tendencies which can have grave consequences for the Catholic Church in Asia." And, he might well have added, for all other Christians and non-Muslim minorities.

I suggest the following recommendations for you to act:

1. Write a letter to the Pakistani Prime Minister and President for repeal of sections 295-B and 295-C of Pakistan Penal Code. Failing this, it would be an improvement to have the maximum sentence decreased to two or three years in prison, and equal weight given to witnesses of all faiths.
2. Ask for a change of procedure in the Pakistani police whereby those who murder, attempt to murder or threaten individuals accused under the blasphemy law would be prosecuted vigorously. This would also apply to threats or violence to the family and co-

religionists of the accused and to members of the legal profession representing them or judges finding in their favor.

3. We do not ask for the repeal of sections 295 and 295-A, which are concerned with the desecration of places of worship and with deliberate attempts to hurt religious sensibilities. These sections apply to all faiths and have lenient sentences.
4. Christians should invite open-minded Muslim leaders to form a Committee of International Ambassadors of Peace. They should travel with a message of peace seeking justice for all to the places where religious persecution is happening. I shall be glad to assist in forming such a group. Bishop David Smith of the Anglican Diocese of Bradford, England, and Mr. Ishtiaq Ahmed, Information Officer for the Bradford Council of Mosques and Director of the Racial Equality Council, set an excellent example last October (1997) BY visiting Shantingar, a Christian village in Pakistan burnt by Muslim extremists in February 1997. They traveled together to both Muslim and Christian places of worship and shared the message of peace and reconciliation. I suggest we need to learn from this model and send more ambassadors of peace and good will to Islamic countries.

We do not ask for a change in attitude of Pakistani Muslims towards their Holy Prophet. Real and deliberate insults to Prophet Muhammad would be covered under Section 295A.

Please keep the 3 million Christians and other minorities of Pakistan in your prayers. They are being tested and live under constant fear and harassment. Pakistani Christians themselves have been vociferous in their protests, but to no avail. Bishop John Joseph's suicide on May 6, 1998 was a gesture born of sheer frustration and desperation at the Christians' inability to protect themselves from this law.

Hear the cry of the suffering church and act in the name of humanity to seek justice and peace.



Canon Patrick; Baroness Caroline Cox, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, Great Britain; Bat ye'or; an internationally known author. Capital Hill Testimony 1997.



Canon Patrick visiting Christian Community Center at Bait-e-Saida Colony, Rawalpindi. August 17, 2002.

Few Examples of Victims of Blasphemy Law



A Christian couple sat outside their destroyed home in Gojra on Sunday, a day after more than 100 Christian houses were burned and looted by a large mob. Credit Mohsin Raza/Reuters

Hate Engulfs Christians in Pakistan August 1, 2009

I was born in Gojra, Punjab, Pakistan in 1950. I graduated from M. B. High School, Gojra. I was sad to learn that More than 100 Christian houses in a Christian Colony in Gojra were burned and looted on Saturday, in a rampage that lasted about eight hours by a crowd. The authorities estimate it was as large as 20,000 Muslim men attacked. In addition to the seven members of the Hameed family who were killed and burnt, about 20 people were wounded. The attacks were triggered by reports of desecration of the Qur'an. It was reported that Mukhtar Masih, Talib Masih and his son Imran Masih had desecrated the papers inscribed with Qur'an verses at

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Gojra_riots

a wedding ceremony. District Police Officer Inkisar Khan said a case had been registered under section 295-B of the Pakistan Penal Code against Mukhtar Masih, Most of the houses were burnt by youths who had their faces covered with veils

“They were shouting anti-Christian slogans and attacked their houses.” Residents said that police stood aside while the mob went on the rampage. “We kept

begging for protection, but police did not take action,” Masih said. “According to Pakistan government they had received information that a group of armed ‘miscreants’, with masked faces had come from Jhang¹ a city less than hundred miles away from Gojra. Not a single person was convicted for attacking innocent victims of Blasphemy Law. In the third week of August I went to visit Gojra on the invitation of the Moderator Bishop of Church of Pakistan representing Episcopal Church in the USA.

Appeal to the People of Good Will Hear My People's Cry

I wrote the following Op-Ed which was published in Several newspapers:

The Global Community is shocked to watch on their news the horror scenes of the brutality of Islamic militants against Christians in the Gojra area. It is not the first time such heinous crimes have been committed; there is a long list of the systematic persecution of the Christian minority in Pakistan. The excuse is always to defend the honor of Islam and the Holy Prophet. I ask why you need to defend the honor of the Prophet and Holy Qur'an. Do you not believe in the power of God Almighty to punish those who shall dishonor God and His Prophet's name? Do you consider Allah is so weak that He cannot defend His own honor?

Pakistan is a Muslim majority country; so why, then, is there a need for a Blasphemy Law? Christians are persecuted in Pakistan on the basis of the draconian Blasphemy Law section 295-B and 295-C passed in 1982. These two laws make anyone deemed to have insulted the holy prophet of Islam or dishonored the Holy Qur'an liable for capital punishment and life imprisonment and fines. In its selective application this law has provided a pretext for private vendettas, but its victims almost always have been Christians. Let me ask the Pakistani legislators and common man on the street to count how many innocent Christians have been killed, imprisoned and communities diminished since 1982 with the excuse always that Christians have blasphemed against the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam. Is there one such example of Prophet Muhammad ever behaving in such vengeful fashion? The Islamic Society in North America (ISNA) has condemned these shockingly cruel acts

stating: "The perpetrators have betrayed a brutal outrage and demeaned themselves as Qur'an describes *asfala safileen (95:5)*,"the lowest of the low".

The passage of the blasphemy law has caused heartache on a grand scale for the Christian community. I beg the Pakistani parliament to repeal the blasphemy law which has been used for unfair persecution. Allah and His Prophet do not need human intervention to defend their honor. God Almighty has the power to punish the unrighteous. I beg Pakistani Muslims to speak against this discriminatory blasphemy law which hangs like a sword on each and every Christian's head in Pakistan.

We are also grieved to observe how Provincial and Federal Government failed to protect her own loyal citizens who are members of the minority community. Punjab government delayed many hours to send help to prevent attacks of Muslim militants on the Christian Colony in Gojra. Even though both Provincial and Federal governments were well aware of the unrest well before the militants torched, pillaged and looted 75 homes of poor Christians in Bahmaniwala, the Punjab government delayed many hours to send help to prevent attacks. There, also, was no warning; it was only after committing these crimes that the perpetrators filed a report with police in Gojra against Christians on the basis of the blasphemy law. They accused Christians to desecrate the pages of Holy Qur'an. "In fact the way to uphold the respect for the Qur'an is to show the Quranic respect for religious diversity and solidarity with the poor and the weak" (ISNA August 3, 2009).

Later, when the victims of Bahmaniwala went to register their complaint in the police station in Gojra, the police refused to register their case with the excuse they were too busy at the moment; even then these same Police were aware that Muslim extremists were planning another attack on Christians the next day. Instead, they allowed it to happen. Provincial and Federal authorities remained spectators while fanatics raged and at the Christian colony mothers begged for mercy to spare them and their children. Police did nothing as Muslim militants shot women and children and torched Christian homes. Those police who are supposed to protect citizens are responsible for the loss of these innocent lives and their possessions. If there is any decency left in the system of our government then the elected officials and police should accept responsibility for their negligence.

Pakistani Christians are not “mahajars” who have appeared on Pakistani soil from somewhere else. They are the people of “First Nation” who have lived in the same area for centuries. Their land and their homes have been taken by Muslims who have come from other parts of India and Arabia. Christians always have been a loyal asset to their country. They have worked in the service sector, and have given the best schools and hospitals to the Pakistani nation. Christians have honorably served in the Armed Services while patiently abiding the discrimination and oppression at home. The contribution of Christian communities in the progress of the nation of Pakistan has always been praiseworthy for which they have not received much credit. They have not caused any terror nor have they brought dishonor to Pakistan.

Their record of honesty, hard work and as loyal citizens speaks loudly for them. Why, then, in their own homeland are they treated as second class citizens and have to daily live under the harassment of Islamic militants?

There is trouble all over Pakistan. In the Province of North West Frontiers Christians have been given written notices to leave or convert to Islam. I recently talked with a man who came to the United States from Pakistan. He informed me that his family had to sell their ancestral home of more than 100 years for a very low price and leave North West Frontier Province as they found their lives were in great danger. Christians, have been killed in Sudan, and over four million were forced to flee from their homeland. Such persecution, wherever it occurs, diminishes us all. I beg you to hear the cry of the persecuted Christians in Pakistan and let them live in Pakistan with dignity and honor.

I pray that the majority community and the government of Pakistan will finally say enough is enough, and shall begin to protect their minority community so that all can feel safe in their own homeland. Muslims in Pakistan must remember that on the Day of Judgment they shall have to give account for senseless killings of the innocent and negligence to defend the rights of the weak. It is my prayer that together our faith communities we all shall strive to live in harmony and peace.

The God of the Bible and Qur'an is the God of hope. “May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). As the children of God we are the disciples of hope.

Let us strive to build bridges of understanding and find new ways of fostering co-operation, understanding and above all peace.

Asia Bibi's picture can be found: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/october/asia-bibi-pakistan-supreme-court-blasphemy-death-sentence.html> (Please remove it after you find the webpage.)

Asia Bibi June 2009

Asia Bibi, a Christian mother of five, has been on death row since 2010. She was accused of committing blasphemy in 2009. A trial court had found her guilty of the crime and awarded her the death sentence. The Lahore High Court (LHC) upheld the sentence. In 2011, former Punjab governor Salman Taseer, who spoke out in support of Bibi, was gunned down in broad daylight in Islamabad. His assassin Mumtaz Qadri was executed earlier in 2016 after the court found him guilty of murder. On March 2, 2011 Shahbaz Bhatti, a Christian Federal Minister Minorities Minister, was killed in a day light while on his way to his office in Islamabad. Taliban claimed that they killed the infidel for speaking for Asia Bibi's release. Pakistan's Dawn newspaper reported, "The time has come for the federal government and provincial government to speak out and to take strong stand against these murderers to save the very essence of Pakistan."

The lawyers of Bibi have approached the Supreme Court of Pakistan as a last resort, seeking repeal of her sentence. A day before the hearing of Asia's final appeal challenging her conviction and death sentence for blasphemy before a bench of the Supreme Court, [International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) released Questions and Answers about the case.

The Q&A explains the allegations against Asia Bibi and describes her blasphemy trial and appeal before the LHC.

What are the allegations against Asia Bibi and when was she convicted?

Asia Bibi was convicted for blasphemy under section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code for allegedly defaming Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The offence carries mandatory death penalty under Pakistani law. The allegations against Asia Bibi are that she made three "defamatory and sarcastic" statements about the Prophet (PBUH) on June 14, 2009, during an argument with three Muslim women while the four of them were picking fruit in a field. The prosecution also claims Asia Bibi "admitted" making these statements at a "public gathering" on June 19, 2009 and asked for forgiveness.

A trial court convicted Asia Bibi for blasphemy in November 2010 and sentenced her to death. The Lahore High Court (LHC) upheld her conviction and confirmed her death sentence in October 2014. The Supreme Court (SC) admitted her appeal in July 2015. The first hearing of the appeal before the SC was scheduled to take place on October 13, 2016.

What was the evidence in support of the allegations against Asia Bibi?

The prosecution presented seven witnesses to support the allegations of blasphemy against Asia Bibi. Two eyewitnesses, Mafia Bibi and Asma Bibi, claimed they heard Asia Bibi make the allegedly blasphemous remarks, and later "admit" to making the statements during a "public gathering" a few days later.

Other witnesses included the complainant Qari Muhammad Salaam, a local cleric, who claimed he heard about the alleged blasphemous statements from Mafia and Asma and got a criminal complaint for blasphemy registered with the police; three police officers who registered and investigated the case; and a local resident, Muhammad Afzal, who alleged he heard Asia Bibi admit to making “blasphemous remarks” and seek pardon at the “public gathering”.

What was Asia Bibi’s defense?

Asia Bibi stated she had a “quarrel” with Mafia and Asma on June 14, 2009, over their refusal to drink water brought for them by Asia Bibi because she was Christian. She claimed “some hot words were exchanged” during the argument, after which Mafia and Asma, alongside Qari Muhammad Salaam and his wife (who taught Asma and Mafia the Quran), fabricated the blasphemy case against her. Asia Bibi also stated that she had “great respect and honour for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Holy Quran” and never made the alleged blasphemous remarks.

What are some of the problems with Asia Bibi’s conviction?

In its judgment in Asia Bibi’s case, the LHC conceded “the defence has not defended its case with the required seriousness...” Yet, despite acknowledging possible violations of the right of a fair trial, particularly the right to an adequate defense, the court went on to uphold Asia Bibi’s conviction and death sentence. Further, the trial court used Asia Bibi’s statement as an admission of guilt, finding that the “hot words” exchanged between her and “the Muslim ladies” were

“switched into a religious matter”, and concluding that the “hot words” must have been “nothing other than the blasphemy”.

Curiously, however, the trial court rejected the notion that the altercation over water was a possible motive for the prosecution eyewitnesses to falsely implicate Asia Bibi for blasphemy. The LHC too did not probe further into Asia Bibi’s statement, and held that there was no possible “ill will” between the eyewitnesses and the accused for them to fabricate the blasphemy allegations. Both courts also disregarded discrepancies in the accounts of the witnesses regarding the “public gathering” where Asia Bibi allegedly “admitted” her guilt.

These discrepancies included significant differences in the number of people allegedly present at the “public gathering” (ranging from 100 to 2,000 in the different testimonies); how Asia Bibi was brought to the “public hearing”, and how long the “hearing” lasted. The courts also failed to apply “tazkia-tul-shahood” (inquiry undertaken by the court to establish the credibility of witnesses), without which defendants cannot be convicted or punished in hadh (capital punishment) cases for certain offences under Pakistani law.

During the entire course of the proceedings, neither court considered which of the three statements attributed to Asia Bibi were “blasphemous” and why, or what was the “reasonable person” standard in the interpretation of section 295-C to meet the threshold of blasphemy. Additionally, both courts did not consider whether Asia Bibi possessed the requisite criminal intent to

commit the crime of blasphemy, despite the Federal Shariat Court's ruling that blasphemy is an "intentional or reckless wrong".

The prosecution's failure to prove all elements of the offence, including the requisite intent to defame Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) calls into question the convictions by the trial court and LHC².

On April 26, 2017, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, had declined the appeal for hearing the case of Asia Bibi in first week of June. Asia Bibi's defense counsel Advocate Saif ul Malook told local media that: "Today I have been informed that the plea was declined by the CJP." She is still waiting for justice for the crime she has not committed. Close to a million people all over the world have signed a petition to Pakistan government for the release of Asia Bibi. Asia Bibi has been nominated for European Union's high-status award.

Asia Bibi Spent eight years in prison convicted of false blasphemy charges against Prophet of Islam. Finally, Supreme Court of Pakistan on October 31, 2018 rejected her conviction of death sentence and ordered to be set free. The acquittal stated that while "blasphemy is a serious offense," truth tainted with "falsehood" could not be the basis for her conviction in a lower trial court. A review petition was filed the next day by the local cleric who levied the allegations against Bibi in the first place, Muhammad Salaam, demanding the three judges look at the case again and challenging Bibi's freedom.

"Based on merit, this petition is dismissed," stated Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, who heard the case on January 29, 2019 in Islamabad along with Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel. In their acquittal, the judges ruled that the Muslim cleric accusing Bibi of blasphemy had not witnessed the incident himself. Instead, Salaam based his legal complaint on the testimony of two sisters, and all gave "inconsistent statements" that "cast a shadow of doubt" on the prosecution's version of the facts. The alleged blasphemy occurred during a dispute between Bibi and the women she worked alongside while picking fruit in their village.

The judges also noted that the "alleged extra-judicial confession was not voluntary but rather resulted out of coercion and undue pressure."

"Blasphemy is a serious offense," wrote Khosa in the October acquittal, "but the insult of the appellant's religion and religious sensibilities by the complainant party and then mixing truth with falsehood in the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was also not short of being blasphemous."³

On October 31, 2018, Asia Bibi, 47, was finally acquitted by Supreme Court of Pakistan. Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa said, "You think we give the death sentence to someone on the basis of false evidence? Such lies were told that one statement doesn't match with another. The image of Islam we are showing to the world gives me much grief and sorrow." He further added, "The beauty of a Muslim community

² Dawn.com Oct 13, 2016

³ Christianity Today, Asif Aqeel in Lahore, Pakistan. January 29, 2019.

is that non-Muslim are taken care of.” There were violent protests by hardline Islamists Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP). One Islamist leader said all three Supreme Court judges also “deserved to be killed.”

“I want to tell the rulers that you have caused great pain and agony to the millions of followers of the prophet,” said acting party leader Allama Shafiq Ameeni. “I urge all Pakistanis and especially order the workers of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan to come out of their homes in protest against this cruel and unjust decision.” Despite her October acquittal, she was forced to remain in prison for her safety. Finally, after a decade after being accused of blasphemy, Asia Bibi left Pakistan with her husband Ashiq Masih and five children for Canada.



Rimsha Masih, August 16, 2012

let him inspect the contents of her bag. The boy then took the bag to the imam of a local mosque, Hafiz Mohammed Khalid Chishti who accused Masih of desecrating the Quran, gave police burned papers from the trash as evidence against her. On August 24 Chishti told AFP news service that he thought Rimsha

Rimsha Masih,, for allegedly burning pages from the Quran. While carrying trash in a plastic bag in the neighborhood where she lived she was told by a Muslim boy (Hammad) to

had burned the pages of Holy Quran deliberately as part of a Christian “conspiracy” to insult Muslims, and that action should have been taken sooner to stop what he called their “anti-Islam activities” in the area. Outrage by local Muslims forced 300 local Christian families to leave their homes and to attempt to “find shelter in one of the Islamabad’s forests.

There were conflicting reports as to whether she has a mental health condition, with some sources claiming that she has Down Syndrome, and her family has been reported to have told her lawyer that she suffers from mental illness. Following a medical examination, a medical report estimated her age as being 14, and therefore a minor under Pakistani law, and stated that she had mental capacity lower than would be expected for someone of that age. She is illiterate, and may have unknowingly picked the pages of the book up from a waste dump. Members of the All Pakistan Ulema Council joined with the Pakistan Interfaith League in protest against the accusations. Her father made a personal appeal to President Zardari on her behalf.

Two weeks after her arrest, the local imam who had reported her to police was arrested on suspicion of planting pages of religious texts in Rimsha’s bag. Rimsha was eventually acquitted of all charges. In mid-2013 after months of hiding, Rimsha and her family were able to escape to Canada.⁴

All Saint Church, Peshawar Attacked – September 22, 2013

All Saints in Peshawar was targeted by two suicide bombers at the end of Sunday worship

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rimsha_Masih_blasphemy_case#New_evidence_and_release_on_bail

service, killing 127 people and injuring 170. Many of victims were women and children. Although they lost a large number of their members in this bomb attack. I have been visiting All Saints since 2014 every year. Each time I am there church is packed and there is hardly any space left empty. During the attack, 12 of the 15 choir members were killed. Those three survived, one of them is our daughter-in-law. Many suffer severe pain as pieces of ball bearings, blades and poisonous material still are in in their bodies. During my visits to All Saints Church I have been invited to preach and celebrate Holy Eucharist. I have observed there are several members of this congregation who could not kneel at the time of receiving Holy Communion because of pain. I was amazed and blessed to experience their living and vibrant faith.



All Saints Church Kohati Gate Peshawar, Pakistan on Sunday morning



Mourning in the compound of All Saints Church, Peshawar

Pakistani Christians Burned Alive Were Attacked by 1,200 People - November 7, 2014

Sajjad Masih, 27, and his wife Shama Bibi, 24, were set upon by at least 1,200 people after rumors circulated that they had burned verses from the Quran. Their legs were also broken so they couldn't run away. The couple tried to flee but were forbidden to leave by the brick factory's owner. Just like their parents, the slain pair worked under an arrangement of bonded labor and the owner said they owed him money. Factory owner Yousaf Gujjar allegedly went to the couple's home and locked them in an office so they couldn't leave. The Imams through loudspeaker announcements from local mosques were branding Sajjad and Shama as "blasphemous" and saying they should be "wajib-ul-qatal," which translates as "necessarily murdered." Unable to break down the office door, the swelling crowd ripped open the building's thatched roof. "They first threw bricks at them."

"They picked them up by their arms and legs and held them over the brick furnace until their clothes caught fire, and then they threw them inside the furnace."

Bibi, a mother of four who was four months pregnant, was wearing an outfit that initially didn't burn. The mob removed her from over the kiln and wrapped her up in cotton to make sure the garments would be set alight.⁵

⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/pakistani-christians-burned-alive-were-attacked-1-200-people-kin-n243386>



Sajjad Maseeh, and his wife Shama Bibi feeding their child.

125 Christian houses burnt over blasphemy – March 9, 2013



Destruction scene of Joseph Colony, Lahore, Pakistan.

I was on my Sabbatical in 2013 visiting churches in Lahore, Pakistan, during the Holy Week. A Christian man living in Joseph colony in Badami Bagh area of Lahore was accused of blasphemy against Islam. A local Imam announced from mosque's loud speaker that a resident of Joseph colony 26-years old Sawan Masih has blasphemed against Islam. Police in their inquiry found that Sawan

Masih and another Muslim man had quarreled under the influence of liquor on March 7, but the later painted it as a case of blasphemy. The case was registered on March 8 under section 295-C of the Blasphemy Act. An eye witness reported to Pakistani newspaper Dawn that "I returned after dropping my children at their school around 8:00 a.m. and saw people gathering at the roundabout. They later started throwing furniture and crockery from houses and burning them," said Mohmmad Safdar, a local resident. The Police warned the resident of Joseph Colony to leave their homes immediately.

Seven thousand protestors armed with sticks, clubs and stones ransacked Joseph Colony. They set on fire over 175 residential properties, a church, as well as some motorcycles and rickshaws on fire. A clash between the police and the arsonists left several people injured from both sides. The affected people accused police of doing nothing to preempt the plunder. Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif issued orders for suspension of two police officers and demoted the ranks of two other police officers.⁶

On March 12, I went to visit Joseph Colony with a team of six high school girls, a woman evangelist led by retired Air Commodore Matthew to visit Christians who had returned to their homes which were absolutely destroyed. We spent whole day visiting families and prayed with them. We gave each family a copy the Bible in Urdu language. Later in the week Moderator Bishop of the Church of Pakistan and Muslim leaders were invited at the Governor of Punjab's House in Lahore. The Most Rev. Samuel Azariah

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/791491>

asked me to present a paper on Interfaith Relations Promoting Peace and Harmony at the Governor House. A large representative of Muslim and Christian religious leaders were in attendance. The Governor of Punjab as a host was present with us.

Taliban bomb kills 26 in Lahore, March 15, 2015.

On Sunday morning two Taliban suicide bombers attacked two churches in Youhanabad home to more than 100,000 Christians. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan’s Jamaat-ul-Ahrar faction claimed responsibility for the attack.



In this picture Christians gather in a church to mourn victims of a pair of suicide bombings that struck two churches in Lahore on March 16, 2015. AP/file

Attack on Christians on Easter Day in Lahore. March 27, 2016



After Easter Day services, many Christian families from all over Lahore went to enjoy Easter Festival in a crowded Gulshan-i-Iqbal park. Witnesses said the blast was so massive and fatal that there were pools of blood and scattered body parts in the park. The injured were seen crying for help and women running to find their children. They were at least 72 people were killed in a Gulshan-i-Iqbal park on Sunday evening. At least 300 others were injured. On April 3, the local religious leaders decided held a interfaith prayer vigil to at the Park at the same time of the bombing. It was an act that they defined as “defiantly holy.”

Christian Student Beaten to death by Muslim Classmates – September 12, 2017



Sharon Masih. Picture from Daily Wire. Amanda Prestigiacomo

Sharoon Masih, 17 years old was a brilliant student. His 8th grade teacher told his father to admit him in high school. Sharoon's father was without job for the last nine months. Still he wanted his son to study and used his savings to get Sharoon admitted to MC Model Boys Government High School Burewala, District Vehari, to pursue higher education. From the day Sharoon started his high school on August 25, he was subjected to abuse from Muslim boys for being a Christian. His mother Rizia Bibi has said, "Sharoon and I cried every night as he described the daily torture he was subjected to." Sharoon complained to his father that that his teacher had slapped him for not wearing a uniform and was told to stand in the sun for the whole day. His father told Sharoon that Should take off from school the next day. He took a loan of Rs.2,000 to buy his son the school uniform and told him that he would talk to the Principal the next day. But it was too late, he was killed that day.

Muslim students would not let Sharoon drink water from the same glass on hot sunny days as he was Christian. He remained thirsty all day. After school, Muslim boys attacked him which resulted in his death. His teacher was informed by some students that Sharoon is being beaten by large number of students. He kept reading his newspaper and totally ignored to help Sharoon. The killing of a young Christian teenager at school, serves only to remind us that hatred towards religious minorities starts a young age. It is transferred from one generation to another through cultural norms and a biased national curriculum. Earlier in the year a young

university student Mashal Khan, a Muslim, was killed in Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Pakistan on blasphemy charges by university students.

Sunday 30, 2022.

A Sri Lankan working in Pakistan, Priyantha Kumara, lynched by a mob of hundreds of people on December 3, 2021, over allegations of blasphemy or sacrilegious act. After being assaulted, he was dragged into the streets and set on fire, and the lynching was recorded and shared widely on social media.

Gunen Shot dead Pastor Wilson Siraj and wounded senior priest Rev. Patrick Naeem in an ambush in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar. They both represented All Saints Church, Khoti Gate Peshawar's mission church planted in the outskirts of the city. This church is called All Saints Church of the Martyrs. This parish was established few years ago; most Christians who worked as janitor staff in the Peshawar municipality. They used to live in government single-room slum type accommodation. Few years ago, the local government demolished those slums, which were in the center of the city, close to all the basic facilities and especially churches, and rehabilitated these Christians near Ring Road, outside the city. Church of Pakistan, Diocese of Peshawar has built this church to provide religious care for these poor Christians. Pastor Siraj and Rev. Naeem were returning home after Sunday worship service. They were attacked by most probably militants who do not want Christian presence in that area.

St. John's Episcopal Church

BOYDEN PARISH - 1837

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THE REV. CANON PATRICK P. AUGUSTINE, RECTOR

March 5, 1997

The Most Rev. Edmond Lee Browning, DD
The Presiding Bishop
815 Second Ave
New York, NY10017

Dear Bishop Browning,

I am writing this letter to you after many nights of almost no sleep. Yesterday when I received the copy of March issue of Episcopal Life and saw on the cover the picture of Pakistani Christians arrested and restrained with rope about their necks while protesting peacefully against widespread attacks on Christians. It reminded me of the story of Israelites as slaves in Egypt and of the African Americans story told in the film **Roots**. It is almost inconceivable for one to think that as the human race is ready to step into the new millennium as enlightened dwellers of this fragile earth, our island home. The religious hatred could be so strong among the children of God in the two living faiths. I like to share with you the following story:

During the first week of February in Pakistan, thirteen churches were burned and the Christian village of Shanti Nagar was almost entirely destroyed. 30,000 armed Muslims under the protection of local police, after mosques announced unproven allegations that Christians had desecrated the Holy Quran. About 1500 homes were razed to the ground, possessions, agricultural tools and livestock were stolen or burned, and pumps and water tanks were wrecked. Several Christian females were openly raped and humiliated.

Thirteen churches during that week in Pakistan were set on fire, five Pastors houses were burnt. One girls' boarding school and a medical center were also burned. Two innocent lives were also lost in this brutality. Around 30,000 Christians are now homeless.

Bishop Azariah, a Church of Pakistan's Bishop was quoted by the Anglican news service after his visit to Shanti Nagar said, "The flames are still to be seen in the village, and houses have been destroyed with petrol bombs and grenades. Concrete roofs have been blown away which clearly indicate that forces beyond human strength were used.

This was an instance of the most oppressive, senseless and mala fide attack by some members of the Muslim community against Christians. He was sorry to note that Pakistani Government had not expressed any concern. It gives us the impression that this has not been taken seriously by the authorities. We demand that the government and Muslim clergy give the minorities positive assurances that such shameful acts will not be repeated so that the sense of insecurity amongst them may be removed.”

The name Shanti Nagar means “Community of Peace” - but there is no peace in Shanti Nagar.

In Egypt on 15 December, a new center for mentally handicapped children being built outside Cairo by the Coptic Church was bulldozed. All that had been constructed for the “Cheerful Heart Center” was destroyed by 300 soldiers from the Egyptian army chanting “Allahu Akbar”. “Allah is Great.” Then on 12 February, eight Christians were killed and five others wounded when gunmen, believed to be members of a militant Islamic group, broke into a church in Abu Qurqas, upper Egypt, and sprayed the interior with machine gun fire.

In Sudan the suffering of the body of Christ is beyond doubt, but their joy is unbelievable. Hundreds of thousands have been lamenting the loss of their homes, churches, or loved ones.

In Indonesia on February 1, five more churches were destroyed and another pastor was killed. Over 200 churches have been burned or destroyed in Indonesia since 1992.

Bishop Browning, I humbly call your attention to the plight of our brothers and sisters of the body of Christ in the places of persecution. You have been a person whom I admire to have a courage to speak for the oppressed within the American Episcopal Church. But you are not only a Bishop in the American Church, but a Bishop and Primate in the Anglican Communion. Please be the prophetic voice of the voiceless.

In the words of Bishop Tutu, “It is part of God’s mission and purpose for his world to bring about wholeness, justice, good health, righteousness, peace, harmony and reconciliation. These are what belongs to the Kingdom of God and we are his agents to work with him as his partners to bring to pass all that God wants for his universe... He takes the side of the poor, the weak, the oppressed, the widow, the orphan and the alien. He is no neutral God. He takes the side of the weak and the oppressed. Where there is injustice, exploitation and oppression, then, the Bible and the God of the Bible are subversive of such a situation. We see it in the entire history of Israel.”

Bishop Browning, my Primate, I was raised in Pakistan as a son and grandson of Anglican ministers. I have experienced myself the pain of the suffering church. I have been Priest of the Episcopal Church since 1983. I am the first non-white Rector in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Since many years I have been educating and inviting our Church and nation to ‘*Hear The Story Of The Persecuted Church.*’

Last year during the months of February and March, I was invited on the Capital Hill in Washington D.C. to testify before the House and Senate Committees on Human Rights and International Affairs of the United States government. My purpose was not to demonize Islam. I have been working for many years to hold Christian-Muslim dialogues. My plea has been for people of both faiths to unite against injustice. I serve on your advisory committee for Christian-Muslim relations. Therefore, I approach this issue with open mind. I like to propose the following suggestions for action:

1. A delegation of Episcopal clergy and laity should be immediately formed to visit Pakistan and Sudan under your leadership to learn firsthand information and strengthen the witness of the *Suffering Church*. I would personally be glad to serve on the fact finding mission.
2. I would humbly like to ask if you would give money for rehabilitation of Christian families in Pakistan. I am presently serving as the chair of the Partners in Mission in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. I have asked my parish of St. John's Church, Waynesboro to receive gifts to be sent to the Church of Pakistan. I am an honorary Canon of St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar and Bishop's Commissary of the Diocese of Peshawar, Pakistan in North America.
3. The Visiting delegation should report to the General Church at the General Convention. The story of *The Persecuted Church* should be shared in both houses. I would be glad to prepare a written report for both the houses.
4. Please ask the *Episcopal Life* to cover the story of *The Suffering Church*. The last year after my testimony on the Hill in Washington DC, *Episcopal Life* refused to carry the story of their own Episcopal Clergy. Whereas, to my surprise Washington Post and Washington Times both reported extensively.
5. Muslim leaders in North America should be contacted to seek their cooperation in this matter.
6. Letters should be sent to Pakistani and Sudanese embassies to register our protest and seek their help to inform their governments for fair treatment and tolerance for the Christian minorities in the Islamic World.

As during this Holy Season we remember the suffering of our Lord, and prepare to celebrate the joy of his resurrection. Let us also remember these brothers and sisters in our prayers that their celebration of our Lord's resurrection will be a real triumph of faith and hope.

Humanly, speaking, it seems quite hopeless. But we are not alone. Our Risen Lord is the Head of the Church and he has given us the ministry of reconciliation, of liberation, of justice, of peace and love. And I believe passionately with all my being in that ministry and in him who has called us to his service.

I see the vision where our Lord is going to use you in a mighty way and I hear it in the words of the vision of St. John the Divine:

*AFTER THIS I looked, and there was an enormous crowd— no one could count all the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They called out in a loud voice: “**Salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne and from the lamb!**” All the angels stood round the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures. Then they threw themselves face downward in front of the throne and worshipped God, saying, “**Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might belong to our God for ever and ever! Amen**” (Rev 7:9-12)*

Thank you very much for your concern.

Yours in Christ,
The Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, Rector
Chairman, Companions for World Mission
Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

*(Note: Following the Easter Celebration Bishop Browning took this letter to the Primates of the Anglican Church held in Jerusalem on April 8 1997. He personally read this letter and gave a copy to all Archbishops of the Anglican Communion. Episcopal Church PBF/WR gave \$50,000 to Church World Service for the relief work in Pakistan. In February 1998 a fact finding team of four Episcopalians was formed to visit Sudan. Following our visit to Sudan, **The Episcopal Life** wrote three feature stories on the persecuted church in Sudan and in 1998 and Anglican Global Relations Office organized a national conference in 1999 on “Hear the Cry.”)*



Sermon: 'Hear My People's Cry'

Delivered at Christ Church Cathedral and Holy Spirit Church
Lexington, Kentucky, October 26, 1997

Published in Roanoke Times, Virginia, January 11, 1998
and United Voice, Dallas, March 1998

“Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.” (Hebrews 13:3)

In 156 AD, Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna, Turkey. He was arrested by the Roman proconsul who asked Polycarp to curse Christ. Polycarp said, “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me? Polycarp was burned at the stake. Many of us consider such accounts of persecution to be only in the past.

Let me share with you some recent stories of religious persecution:

A 22-year-old Muslim girl, Rahila, of Lahore, Pakistan, started attending Bible studies with her Christian friend Salima at the home of Pastor Salim Arthur and his family. When Rahila’s family found out, they began making arrangements for her to marry a Muslim man. Rahila fled into hiding in the middle of June 1997. She was found by her family on July 16, and immediately killed by one of her male relatives.

Before her death, Rahila was heard acknowledging Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior.

Two Filipino Christians were beheaded by the sword on May 4 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. According to the Saudi press, Ruel Janda and Amel Beltran were convicted and executed for “forced armed robbery.”

However, a former Filipino cellmate of the two men, Donato Lama, claims they were sent to prison in April of 1995 on fabricated charges, and he believes they may have been executed because of the active Christian witness of Janda among other Filipino prisoners. In September of 1996, he and Lama were reportedly locked in an isolation cell for eight weeks with a madman after their Christian activities had been reported by other Muslim prisoners.

On May 23, a riot occurred in Banjarmasin, Indonesia, and the rioters attacked a church called Katedral Keluarga Kudus. Upon reaching the church, they threw stones at it while yelling in Arabic, “Allah-U-Akbar!” (God is great). They also used gasoline and lighted arrows to burn the church. Such damage has occurred to more than 200 churches so far.

The Rev. Marc Nikkel, an Episcopal missionary from the United States to Sudan for the last 15 years, wrote in a letter on October 18, 1997: “The days since my return from the U.S. have been unsettling, with violence sponsored by the Sudanese Government erupting in displacement and refugee camps well beyond the war zone. In Kakuma there were five killings by armed men in late August, with an apparent focus on the churches.

- “One of our Rural Deans (a priest) died, shot at the entry to our Episcopal Church compound, and one of our gifted young evangelists was severely wounded. With political instability in Kenya, food supplies from the port of Mombassa were cut for several weeks, leaving refugees desperately hungry.
- “Last week we learned of a brutal attack on the Lebone Displacement Camp inside the borders of Sudan. Destruction went from midnight until dawn, leaving some 32 people dead. In these camps, members of the Episcopal Diocese of Bor comprise the majority, a devout fold already displaced four, five, six times.”
- A Chinese Christian, Xu Yongze, was sentenced to ten years in a labor camp on September 25, 1997 in Zhengzhou, Hunan Province. It is reported that this is the harshest sentence given to a Christian believer since 1982. Xu is the leader of the Born Again house church movement. This movement may have more than three million members in China’s central provinces. Also arrested were Xu’s wife and three fellow leaders.

It’s happening now

These are not the stories told in the early church history courses I took in seminary, but are actual happenings in the last six months. Every year almost 150,000 Christians are killed because of their faith. In Sudan alone there have been 1.5 million Christians and Animists killed by Muslim fundamentalists, and four million are refugees today. More Christians have been martyred in the 20th century than in the previous 19 centuries combined.

We are amazed to find this is happening now at the end of this enlightened century. Many people wonder if these stories of persecution are true. Some are even saying that it is propaganda of the Christian Right. The suffering church does not care whether you are Democrat or Republican, conservative or liberal.

Those starving, dying, sick and imprisoned want the members of the body of Christ in the world community to hear their cry. The Western Church is mostly silent.

“I am in prison,” says the Lord, “and you are not visiting me.” The time has come to shatter the silence and hear the cry of the persecuted Church, the people’s cry.

Jesus our Lord had warned his disciples, “Any one who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Many of us take this as a metaphor, but the Church in persecution understands that to follow Christ means one may even have to

die for one's faith. The Baptismal liturgy says it in very clear words: "In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life."

It means we commit our lives to Jesus and he offers us a new life. A life without faith in Jesus will mean one is afraid to carry his cross. The fear may be of losing our possessions, jobs or comfort. Many of us are preoccupied with having it all. We live in a free and wealthy society, but can be embarrassed and afraid to be recognized as followers of Christ. Like the disciples of Jesus, we are afraid in our boats when storms come.

We would also have been afraid like the disciples were afraid when Jesus was crucified. When the disciples came to know the power of the resurrected Lord in their lives, they became bold witnesses. Those of our persecuted brothers and sisters have literally experienced the Risen Christ in their lives and are ready to witness for Jesus with a resurrected mind.

This cross I have in my hand was given to our congregation during a visit by the Sudanese Bishop Nathaniel Garang of the Diocese of Bor, and the Rev. Marc Nikkel. The person who owned this cross was shot by Muslim extremists on a Sunday morning while he was coming to a church service. This cross has become a living sign of the triumphant faith of Sudanese Christians in the face of tyranny and death. In spite of fierce opposition, contempt, abuse and physical persecution, the Church in Sudan is the fastest-growing Christian church in the Anglican Communion. The living faith of the persecuted church has grown from the Cross.

The Cross has become their proud symbol of strength to live and die for Jesus Christ. The followers of Jesus in those lands of oppression and killing fields have adopted the Cross to symbolize the only life these followers of Jesus want to live. In the sign of Cross they conquer the forces of darkness, oppression, hatred and evil. This is their bold witness, and do we hear their cry?

I want to close this with a song written by a Sudanese Pastor, the Rev. Mark Atem from Kakuma refugee camp:

"We no longer weep at grave-sides

***We have cried for the dead too often
during recent years.***

You want to know what makes us weep?

***We cry when we think how the Gospel of
Christ came into our land and
our lives***

***We weep when we think our land is being
taken by force and our faith being
replaced by Islam***

***This makes tears rise from the dry, places
inside us."***



Refugee homes at Kakuma camp.

Reconciliation Conference

Community of Cross of Nails, USA

Christianity And Islam In Conflict: Is There A Way Forward?

December 2-5, 2001

Kanuga Conferences Hendersonville, North Carolina

Reflection on September 11, 2001

CALL TO RECONCILE TO THE ABRAHAMIC COMMUNITY OF FAITH

December 2, 2001

Dear members of the Islamic faith,

“How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nation! She weeps bitterly in the night.”

Lamentations 1:1

During this month of December our faith communities are observing the holy season of Advent, a preparation time for the birth of Christ, and the holy season of Ramadan. We the Abrahamic faith communities are meant to prepare ourselves with a spirit of repentance, fasting and prayer for God’s mercy, blessings and peace.

On September 11, we saw hate in action, as devastation and destruction came to cities of the United States. The blood of the innocent and the dust and debris of steel, cement and ashes from the sacrifice of burnt human bodies in the inferno of fanatical terror ultimately engulfed all humanity. It was a sad day in human history when misguided zealots in the name of religion attacked innocent lives. The name of the God of Abraham, Moses, Muhammad and the Father of Jesus Christ was desecrated and used by

these persons in vain. In the wink of an eye, precious lives were lost, children became orphans, wives became widows, and God was portrayed as a God of hatred and destruction. Our brothers and sisters of the Islamic communities have been embarrassed. These heinous and dastardly acts do no service to Islam or any other religion.

The God we know from Torah, Injeel (The Gospel) and Qur’an is God of mercy, forgiveness and love. Jesus Christ commands: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27).

Likewise, Holy Qur’an teaches: “Verily, those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (Surat Al-Baqarah 2:62).

The trail of terror does not end in New York or Washington. Now the United States’ mighty forces are at war because war has been declared on the United States. Their

mission is to destroy the center of terrorism. Afghanistan is under attack. Innocent Afghans will suffer and more are being displaced in refugee camps. This is the price of war.

During these days of human suffering, we have also found the blessings of God Almighty, the Merciful and All Compassionate. His reconciling Spirit has brought people of faith to hold peace prayer vigils. Muslims, Christians and Jews have held hands together as children of God and wrapped arms of love around each other. Here in the United States we have heard churches, mosques and synagogues pledge to unite and work in unity for peace among the human family.

Two days after September 11, I was invited to speak at St. Paul's Episcopal High School in Baltimore, Maryland. Two of the children had lost their fathers in the World Trade Center. These young students had written prayers to be offered during the morning worship in their church. I heard prayers for forgiveness for the perpetrators of violence, for God's compassion for the people of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, and for peace among all religions. Children prayed the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in an interfaith meeting in London, said, "As we battle with evil, our goal must be a world where such violence is a thing of the past. Acts of terrorism negate the tenets of Islam. We are called to build bridges, not walls."

Dr. Zaki Badawi, Chairman of the Imams and Mosque Council of United Kingdom signed a joint letter with leaders of faith communities. It reads, "We share a belief in God's compassionate love and a commitment to cherish and respect our common humanity."

Tarek E. Masoud, a young Muslim Arab graduate student at Yale wrote, "As it becomes ever more apparent that our co-religionists have visited slaughter upon our compatriots, so many of us want to declare from the rooftops our allegiance to this great nation, to show our solidarity with our fellow citizens, and to join the fight against our common enemy."

The enemy lives within us. It is hatred, violence and fanaticism that dehumanize our humanity. It has caused many black Tuesdays in human history. Countless lives have been destroyed. The present examples include Ireland, Kashmir, Sudan and Palestine. These are both Christian and Muslim communities. Peace is possible and justice can be gained only provided we as faith communities unite against the tyranny of hatred, violence and injustice. Would we ever had thought that such strong evil forces of apartheid in South Africa could be brought to justice? It was achieved when people of all faiths joined together to free South Africa from a tyrannical rule of a small racist white minority.

If we as faith communities fail to speak against crimes against humanity, against injustice and bigotry, then we fail to live according to the precepts of our living faiths. We cannot continue to be spectators of these brutal and dastardly acts of vengeance and violence. The perpetrator were incited

to believe that it is a “holy war” between Christians and Muslims. Our message as people of faith is that we are all children of God. God wants us to live in peace and harmony. Dare not call us infidels! We are “people of the Book.” Allah commends to Muslims, “So, if you (Muhammad) are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed unto you then ask these who are reading the Book (the Torah and the Injeel [Gospel]) before you. Verily the truth has come to you from thy Lord. So be not of those who doubt” (Surat Yunus 10:94). This is not war between Christians and Muslims. There is no Christian nation in the West and not one single church propagating such hateful and violent messages.

Christians belong to ancient churches and in some countries the Christian presence is older than the Muslim. In Egypt, for example, there are approximately eight million Christians, most of whom belong to First Century Orthodox Coptic Church. Christians and Muslims have lived together for fourteen hundred years in Egypt. The word Copt simply means “Egyptian” (Greek Aiguptios, Arabic Qubti). Ancient churches like the Chalcedonian and Nestorian churches have been present in Syria, Iran, Iraq, India and Palestine pre-Islam. Pakistan’s ancient city of Taxila has the ruins of St. Thomas’ preaching room. Both of our faith communities have been in relationship for a very long time.

The first Muslim state was established in Medina and Christian and Jews were there. And when Prophet Muhammad was living in Mecca, and the infidels (not Christians) were persecuting his first followers, the

Prophet asked some of his believers to go to Abyssinia, which was ruled by a kind Christian king. And they went to live a happy life there. The infidels of Mecca followed them. They said, “Oh, give our men back to us.” He said, “No, I’m a just king. I will not give you these men. I’ll ask them why you have come to me.” And they recited the Surah Mariam of the Holy Qur’an. And when they recited the verses of Holy Qura’n, the Christian king, picked up a straw and said, “Holy Christ is neither less nor more than what you have described.” Our relationship is further attested, “Verily, you will find strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are Al Mushrikun, and you will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) those who say: “We are Christians.” That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud.” (Surah Al Maidah 5:82).

Islam took rise in a predominantly Christian environment. This means that both Islam and Christianity have been aware of each other’s existence from the very inception of Islam as an organized religion. There has been, in short, a situation of encounter if not always of dialogue. The Qur’an, as we have seen, takes a polemical attitude vis`a vis Christianity on certain matters, but in other matters it is irenic in spirit. On the Christian side, we find that eminent Christian apologists such as St. John of Damascus and Nestorian Patriarch Timothy maintained excellent relations with their Muslim rulers and yet, at the same time, made a vigorous defense of the Christian faith vis`a vis Islam. In our present day the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury

have visited and invited the Grand Muftis of Alhazar, Cairo, and Damascus. There is an active attempt to work to create harmony among members of the human family.

The September 11 attack has stirred lot of emotions among our faith communities. Some of our Muslim brothers and sisters have been racially profiled in the West. My family and I have lived these days with some fear. We must ask, however, whether this policy is a product of prejudice or experience and may therefore constitute reasonable security measures. Christian leaders have issued many statements in support of the Islamic community now living in the West. Churches in the West have always offered their sacred spaces and generous hospitality to Islamic communities in the West to use it for Friday prayers and for social gatherings. The ministry of hospitality and embassy gives us to build bridges and celebrate our common humanity through welcome and mutual respect.

We hear dreadful fatwas from the Islamic world against innocent Christians in Islamic countries. Islamic clerics have given fatwa in Pakistan that if one Afghan Muslim is killed in the recent attack by the USA, Muslims would kill two Christians in Pakistan to take revenge on the United States. Now on October 28, 2001, Islamic gunmen have killed 18 persons, while Christians were worshipping in a church in Bhawalpur. What do Christians in Pakistan have to do with the present political turmoil in the world? They are as innocent and loyal citizens as other Pakistanis. The same question could be asked, what do six million Muslims and others in the West have to do with the action of terrorist

attacks on the United States. Should they be held responsible by the West? No, they are as loyal citizens as others in the West.

The leaders of the Islamic community throughout the world must denounce such proclamations. It is no service to Islam. In the West we hear from our Islamic community leaders that Islam is a religion of peace and it respects dignity of all human beings. Why then do we not hear the same message from the East from the Islamic scholars and Imams of the Islamic Ummah from their mosques and other gathering places, encouraging the message of peace and reconciliation?

Bishops of the Episcopal Church in the USA have issued in a pastoral letter a call for Waging reconciliation. The letter reads, "We, your bishops, have come together in the shadow of the shattering events of September 11. We in the United States now join that company of nations in which ideology disguised as true religion wreaks havoc and sudden death. Through this suffering, we have come into a new solidarity with those in other parts of the world for whom the evil forces of terrorism are a continuing fear and reality."

Let hatred not win, to divide and destroy our faith communities. May we not further divide and labor each other with hatred and violence. We want this war to stop and live in peace. Together we raise our prayers to God and our appeals to the international community about the suffering of Palestinians, Kashmiris, Iraqis, Sudanese, Afghanistans, Kurds and Irish, Catholic and Protestant alike. Our human family has seen enough pain, death, hunger, homelessness and senseless killings. Cardinal Arinze of

the Vatican has said, "Religion is the soul of society; it is like leaven that can permeate and transform humanity for the good." We need a social vision based on the teaching of our two faiths to bring people together, a commitment to justice with the capacity also for reconciliation, equality and respect for the dignity of human lives. We are children of God, created in His image from one essence. Our capacity to construct such communities of hope depends on the quality and vitality of our imagination. We have stepped into the new millennium. May our prayers and intercession for each other be, "Lord, make us your agents of peace to create a world of beautiful people of different races, cultures, religions and languages, so that it will be a world of laughter and joy, of justice and reconciliation, of peace and unity, of compassion, caring and sharing. Let us allow our common humanity to lead us to find new ways of fostering cooperation, understanding and above all peace.

The enlightened words of the Persian poet Saadi describes so well the spirit of the common task set before us to work as peacemakers:

*All men are members of the same body,
Created from one essence.
If fate brings suffering to one member
The others cannot stay at rest.
You who remain indifferent to the burden
of pain of others
Do not deserve to be called human.*

The God of the Bible and Qur'an is the God of hope. Our God is still in control and the source of our hope. Hope is the energy of change and transformation. With this hope we can plan and sow the seeds of hope to cultivate culture of peace. Let us engage with each other to wage not war, but reconciliation, and offer the balm of healing for the wounded and love to embrace each other. *"May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13)

We wish you the blessings of the Holy month of Ramadan, and joy and peace of the Christmastide. Salaam, Peace!

The Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine
Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church
Waynesboro, Virginia
Chairman, Companion for World Mission
Diocese of Southwestern Virginia
Canon and Commissary to the
Archbishop of Sudan in the USA

Hear My People's Cry

The Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min.

August 4, 2009

The Global Community is shocked to watch on their news the horror scenes of the brutality of Islamic militants against Christians in the Gojra area. It is not the first time such heinous crimes have been committed; there is a long list of the systematic persecution of the Christian minority in Pakistan. The excuse is always to defend the honor of Islam and the Holy Prophet. I ask why you need to defend the honor of the Prophet and Holy Qur'an. Do you not believe in the power of God Almighty to punish those who shall dishonor God and His Prophet's name? Do you consider Allah is so weak that He cannot defend His own honor?

Pakistan is a Muslim majority country; so why, then, is there a need for a Blasphemy Law? The persecution of Christians in Pakistan is on the basis of the draconian Blasphemy Law section 295-B and 295-C passed in 1982. These two laws make anyone deemed to have insulted the holy prophet of Islam or dishonored the Holy Qur'an liable for capital punishment and life imprisonment and fines. In its selective application this law has provided a pretext for private vendettas, but its victims almost always have been Christians. Let me ask the Pakistani legislators and common man on the street to count how many innocent Christians have been killed, imprisoned and communities diminished since 1982. The excuse for

such crimes is always that Christians have blasphemed against the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam. Is there one such example of Prophet Muhammad ever behaving in such vengeful fashion? The Islamic Society in North America (ISNA) has condemned these shockingly cruel acts stating: "The perpetrators have betrayed a brutal outrage and demeaned themselves as Qur'an describes *asfala safileen* (95:5), "the lowest of the low".

The passage of the blasphemy law has caused heartache on a grand scale for the Christian community. I beg the Pakistani parliament to repeal the blasphemy law which has been subject to be used for unfair persecution. Allah and His Prophet do not need human intervention to defend their honor. God Almighty has the power to punish the unrighteous. I beg Pakistani Muslims to speak against this discriminatory blasphemy law which hangs like a sword on each and every Christian's head in Pakistan.

We are also grieved to observe how Provincial and Federal Government failed to protect her own loyal citizens who are members of the minority community. Punjab government delayed up to five hours to send help to prevent attacks of Muslim militants on the Christian Colony in Gojra. In fact, both Provincial and Federal government was well aware of the unrest that a day well before these militants torched, pillaged and looted 75 homes of poor Christians in Bahmaniwala. This happened only seven miles from Gojra.

It was only after committing these crimes that the perpetrators filed a report with police in Gojra against Christians on the basis of the blasphemy law. They accused Christians to desecrate the pages of Holy Qur'an. "In fact the way to uphold the respect for the Qur'an is to show the Quranic respect for religious diversity and solidarity with the poor and the weak" (ISNA August 3, 2009).

Later, when the victims of Bahmaniwala went to register their complaint in the police station in Gojra, the police refused to register their case with the excuse they were too busy at the moment; even then these same Police in Gojra were aware that Muslim extremists were planning another attack on Christians the next day. Instead, these police allowed it to happen, not asking for help from the provincial or Federal government. Provincial and Federal authorities remained spectators allowing the fanatics to vent their rage against Christians while, at the Christian colony mothers begged for mercy to spare them and their children. Police did nothing but watch from a distance as Muslim militants were shooting women and children and torching Christian colony homes.

Provincial, Federal and local governments and police forces are responsible for the loss of innocent lives and their worldly possessions. If there is any decency left in the system of our government then the elected officials and police should accept responsibility for their negligence.

Pakistani Christians are not "mahajars" who have appeared on Pakistani soil from somewhere else. They are the people of "First Nation" who have lived in the same area for centuries. Their land and their homes have been taken by others who have come from other parts of India and Arabia. Christians always have been a loyal asset to their country. They have worked in the service sector, and have given the best schools and hospitals to the Pakistani nation. Christians have honorably served in the Armed Services while patiently abiding the discrimination and oppression at home. The contribution of Christian communities in the progress of the nation of Pakistan has always been praiseworthy for which they have not received much credit. They have not caused any terror nor have they brought dishonor to Pakistan. Their record of honesty, hard work and as loyal citizens speaks loudly for them. Why, then, in their own homeland are they treated as second class citizens and have to daily live under the harassment of Islamic militants?

Do Muslims in Pakistan realize that Christian Churches in Europe and North America have offered generous hospitality to Muslims? Christian churches have sponsored refugees from Muslim countries such as Sudan, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iraq, and have opened their churches and social halls for Muslims to say their Friday prayers. Food, Shelter and warm friendship are always provided. President Obama in his speech to the Islamic world in Cairo recently said, "Freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one's religion. That is why there is a mosque in every state and over 1,200 mosques within our borders. That is

why the U.S. government has gone to court to protect the right of women and girls to wear the hijab and to punish those who would deny it.” The Archbishop of Canterbury is supporting Shari, a Law for Muslims in England. Muslims in other lands want to be treated well by other nations and faith communities. Why do they not offer the same hospitality and dignity to their own Christian citizens?

In the Province of North West Frontiers Christians have been given written notices to leave or convert to Islam. I recently talked with a man who recently came to the United States from Pakistan. He informed me that his family had to sell their ancestral home for a very low price and leave North West Frontier Province as they found their lives were in great danger. His family had lived peacefully in that home for more than 100 years.

I pray that the majority community and the government of Pakistan will finally say enough is enough, and shall begin to protect and defend their minority community so that all can feel safe in their own homeland. Muslims in Pakistan must remember that on the Day of Judgment they shall have to give account for senseless killings of the innocent and negligence to defend the rights of the weak. It is my prayer that together our faith communities we all shall strive to live in harmony and peace.

The God of the Bible and Qur’an is the God of hope. “May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). Even though heartache confronts us time and again, as the children of God we are the disciples of hope. Let us strive to build bridges of understanding and find new ways of fostering co-operation, understanding and above all peace.

Salaam, Peace!

Yours sincerely,

The Rev. Canon Patrick Pervez Augustine,
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August 3, 2009

The Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams

Archbishop of Canterbury

Lambeth Palace

London SE1 7JU, UK

Dear Archbishop Williams,

I am writing this letter after 24 hours of heartache and prayers on my bended knees for God's protection for the persecuted Christian community in Pakistan. In the last two months attacks on Christians in Pakistan have been on the rise. On June 30th one hundred Christian homes were set on fire in Bahmaniwala village in the Kasur district. People still remain there without shelter and livelihood.

On July 31st, another Christian community in the village of Korian near Gojra in Punjab province was attacked by thousands of Muslims. Christians had been accused by Muslims of having desecrated the pages of the Qu'ran. These Christians had brought this matter to the Muslim elders to settle it; but later, the Muslim Imam made announcements that Christian infidels needed to be taught a lesson, and he called from the mosque's loud speakers for the faithful to attack Christian homes. The Christians heard this, so most of them had time to flee to nearby fields. Soon after this announcement, a large group of Muslims gathered from the neighboring villages to protect the honor of their faith and to take revenge by attacking Christian homes. These Muslim militants first looted the homes and then set them on fire. The mob blocked roads to stop police and firefighters from helping the Christian community. There is, yet, no official accounting about the loss of human lives as Christians are still hiding and afraid to go back to their village. Christians in Korian have lost all their worldly possessions, livelihood and their cattle.

The next day, August 1, thousands of Muslim Militants gathered in the nearby town of Gojra only seven miles away from the village of Korian. Gojra has been a major headquarters of the Anglican Church for 150 years, and the Bishop of Faisalabad of the Church of Pakistan lives there. Gojra has a small Christian colony where several hundred Christian families live. Approximately 200 Muslim militants along with several thousand supporters, while covering their faces and holding semi-automatic weapons, attacked this Christian Colony. The attackers looted more than 100 homes and then set them on fire. One eye witness account tells of

Christian women begging to spare their children and homes; then attackers opening fire, killing four women, a man and a child. The leaders of the Christian community are afraid that more bodies will be discovered after police are able to search the burned homes.

In the Province of North West Frontiers, Christians have been given written notices to leave or convert to Islam. After I attended the General Convention, I visited Pakistani and Indian Christians in the Greater San Francisco area. I met a man in his late fifties who recently came to the United States from Pakistan. He informed me that his family had to sell their ancestral home for a very low price and leave North West Frontier Province as they found their lives were in great danger. His family had lived in that home for more than a hundred years.

The British Broadcast Company reports that the local officials have confirmed that the rumor of desecration of the Holy Qu'ran was false. The Federal Minority Minister of Pakistan Government has accused police of negligence and failing to protect minority communities. The Rt. Rev. John Samuel, Bishop of Faisalabad who resides in Gojra told me in a telephone conversation, "We are in great distress and helpless. We have no protection or resources to help our Christian community. I saw, today, the homes of our church members being destroyed and Christians being shot. Please pray for God's mercy and protection for us."

A tragedy of our time is that relief from the global tensions of the Cold War has revealed religious persecution on a scale not seen since the WWII Holocaust. Vicious intolerance shattered the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Christians in Sarajevo when Serbia launched its brutal "ethnic cleansing" against the majority Muslim population of Bosnia in what had been Communist Yugoslavia. In the last 24 years 2 million citizens, with the majority of them being Christians, have been killed in Sudan, and over 4 million were forced to flee from their homeland. Such persecution, wherever it occurs, diminishes us all and demands more than finger-wagging in response. I am begging you and our Christian community to hear the cry of the persecuted brothers and sisters in Pakistan. We must not allow indifference to obscure and abet this most blatant and brutal kind of religious intolerance. We must stand together with the persecuted Church in Pakistan and plead their case while preaching and practicing the kindness and tolerance we seek in our interfaith dialogue with the Islamic Ummah.

The Muslim attackers have justified the persecution of Christians in Pakistan on the basis of the draconian Blasphemy Law section 295-B and 295-C passed in 1982. These two laws make anyone deemed to have insulted the holy prophet of Islam or dishonored Holy Qu'ran liable for capital punishment and life imprisonment and fines. In its selective application it has provided a pretext for private vendettas, but its victims almost always have been Christians. I beg you to speak against the discriminatory blasphemy law which hangs like a sword on each and every Christian's head in Pakistan. Please write a letter to the Prime Minister and President of Pakistan to protect this minority of Christians in Pakistan, and to provide help for the diocese of Faisalabad. In 2000 and 2002 Bishop Frank Griswold and Archbishop George Carey gave me

letters to deliver to the President of Pakistan and visit the areas where Christians were attacked. Gojra is a town where I was born and my father and grandfather served as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Anglican Diocese of Lahore. I would be happy to be your commissary to carry your letters to the Bishop of Faisalabad and to the Prime Minister and President of Pakistan. This is a time when our church should show our solidarity.

“Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured”
(Hebrews 13:3).

Please hear my cry for the persecuted Church. I ask your sincere prayers and voice for the Church in Pakistan.

Thank you very much for your concern.

Most sincerely,

The Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min. D.D. Rector

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Hear My People's Cry

Open Letter to Islamic Community in North America

August 3, 2009

Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed,
National Director
Office for Interfaith & Community Alliances
Islamic Society of North America
110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 304
Washington DC 20002

Dear Dr. Syeed,

I am writing to you and to the North American Islamic community with a heavy heart and sleepless nights. The cause for this is increased violence and attacks by the Islamic militants on the minority Christian Community in Pakistan. The violence against the innocent Christians continues in the name of Islam when the shadowy “black Talibans” and thousands of their followers are striking Christians homes with pseudo pretense to defend the honor of Islam to teach a lesson to Christian infidels. These alleged Christian infidels are the same whom Islamic Society of North America recognize as “People of the Book” and children of Abrahamic faith. Our communities are aware that we have differences. To focus on differences has caused much heartache among our faith communities. In the present reality of the day in the United States Christians, Jews and Muslims are intentionally striving towards the goal to celebrate our common heritage to build a world of peace and harmony with a unified objective that we all can live in harmony. It is not the same reality for Christians in several Islamic countries, particularly in Pakistan.

President Obama, in Cairo on June 4, 2009, said in his speech to the Muslim world, “Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims.” He spoke the truth and now this “Potent minority of Muslims” is becoming a large majority of extremists conducting violent acts against innocent human beings. After 9/11 the United States forces attacked the centers of tyranny of Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants in Afghanistan. In response Osama bin Laden issued a fatwa: “If one Muslim is killed in Afghanistan, two Christians will be killed in Pakistan.” Since then Christians have been systematically targeted in places of their worship and in Christian schools and hospitals. On October 29, 2001 four gunmen went inside

St. Dominic's Church, Bahawalpur and started shouting: "Pakistan and Afghanistan, graveyard of Christians. Allah is Great. This is just the start!" They, then, opened fire mercilessly killing 17 Christians. A senseless killing of Christians has continued in different parts of Pakistan. A culture of Islamic militancy against a small Christian minority now flourishes in Pakistan forcing them to live under constant harassment and fear.

In the last few months there has been an escalation of attacks on the Christian community. Let me share with you a few recent examples:

June 30, one hundred Christian homes were set on fire in Bahmaniwala village in Kasur district. People still there remain without shelter and livelihood.

July 31, another Christian community in the village of Korian near Gojra in Punjab province was attacked by thousands of Muslims who falsely accused them of desecrating the pages of Qu'ran. Christians had brought this matter to the Muslim elders for assistance. The Muslim Imam responded by making announcements that Christian infidels needed to be taught a lesson, resulting in a large group of Muslims gathering from neighboring villages to protect the honor of their faith and to take revenge. Christians then heard the Imam calling, from the mosque's loud speaker, for the faithful to attack Christian homes. Most of the Christians fled to the nearby fields just before Muslim militants attacked, looted and burned the Christians' homes. In addition, the Muslim mob blocked roads to stop police and fire responders to assist the assaulted community. Christians in Korian have lost all worldly possessions, livelihood and their cattle, and there is still no official accounting about the loss of human lives as Christians are still hiding and afraid to return.

August 1, for a third day in a row, the violence continued when thousands of Muslim Militants gathered in a nearby town of Gojra only seven miles away from the village of Korian, and the headquarters of the Anglican Church for 150 years. With their faces covered and using semi-automatic weapons these militants attacked and looted and burned more than 100 homes in this Christian Colony. Witnesses reported that when Christian women begged to spare their children and homes, the attackers opened fire killing four women, a man and a child. The leaders of the Christian community fear that more bodies will be discovered when police search the burned homes.

The British Broadcast Company reports that the local officials have confirmed that the rumor of desecration of the Holy Qu'ran was false. Furthermore, the Federal Minority Minister of Pakistan Government has accused police of negligence and failing to protect minority communities.

Knowledge of these attacks stems from my personal connections; however, many additional accounts can be verified. The Rt. Rev. John Samuel, Bishop of Faisalabad who resides in

Gojra in a telephone conversation told me, “We are in great distress and helpless. We have no protection or resources to help our Christian community. I saw today the homes of our church members being destroyed and Christians being shot. Please pray for God’s mercy and protection for us.”

In the Province of North West Frontiers, Christians have been given written notices to leave or convert to Islam. Two weeks ago I visited Pakistani and Indian Christians in the Greater San Francisco area. I met a man in his late fifties who recently came to United States from Pakistan. He informed me that his family had to sell their ancestral home on a very low price and leave North West Frontier Province as they found their lives were in great danger. His family had lived peacefully in that home for more than 100 years.

The persecution of Christians in Pakistan is on the basis of the draconian Blasphemy Law section 295–B and 295-C passed in 1982. These two laws make anyone deemed to have insulted the holy prophet of Islam or dishonored the Holy Qur’an liable for capital punishment and life imprisonment and fines. In its selective application it has provided a pretext for private vendettas, but its victims almost always have been Christians. I beg you to speak against the discriminatory blasphemy law which hangs like a sword on each and every Christian’s head in Pakistan.

A tragedy of our time is that relief from the global tensions of the Cold War has revealed religious persecution on a scale not seen since the Holocaust itself. Vicious intolerance shattered the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Christians in Sarajevo when Serbia launched its brutal “ethnic cleansing” against the majority Muslim population of Bosnia in what had been Communist Yugoslavia. In the last 24 years 2 million, the majority of them Christians, have been killed in Sudan, and over 4 million were forced to flee from their homeland. Such persecution, wherever it occurs, diminishes us all, and demands more than finger-wagging in response. I beg you to hear the cry of the persecuted Christians in Pakistan and to help stop further suffering.

May I beg to suggest the following to the Islamic Society of North America:

1. Condemn in a public statement the attacks on Christian community in Pakistan.
2. Islamic scholars in North America should appeal to the Pakistan Government to repeal the draconian Blasphemy Law section 295 –B and 295-C.
3. A delegation of Christians and Muslims should travel together to Pakistan to promote harmony and peace between our two faith communities.

I pray that you shall hear the cries of the defenseless Christians in Pakistan. It is my prayer that together as faith communities we shall become the voice of those whose voice cannot reach to the international community for justice and equal rights.

Yours Sincerely,

The Very Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min. D.D. Rector

The enlightened words of the Persian poet Saddi describe so well the spirit of the common task set before us to work as peacemakers:

*All men are members of the same body
Created from one essence.
If fate brings suffering to one member
The others cannot stay at rest.
You remain indifferent to the burden of
pain of others
Do not deserve to be called human.*

The God of the Bible and Qur'an is the God of hope. *"May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13)*

Even though heartache confronts us time and again, as the children of God we are the disciples of hope. Let us strive to build bridges of understanding and find new ways of fostering co-operation, understanding and above all peace. I look forward to your response.

Salaam, Peace!

Yours sincerely,

The Rev. Canon Patrick Pervez Augustine, D.Min. D.D. Rector

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August 3, 2009

Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 205500

Dear Mr. President,

In your speech to the Muslim world in Cairo on June 4, 2009 you said, "Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small, but potent minority of Muslims." It is true and now this "Potent minority of Muslims" is actually becoming a large majority of extremists conducting violent acts against innocent human beings. After 9/11, the United States' forces attacked the centers of tyranny of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden issued a fatwa: "If one Muslim is killed in Afghanistan, two Christians will be killed in Pakistan." Since then, Christians have been systematically targeted in places of their worship and in Christian schools and hospitals. On October 29, 2001 four gunmen entered St. Dominic's Church, Bahawalpur and started shouting: "Pakistan and Afghanistan, graveyard of Christians. Allah is Great. This is just the start." They opened fire and mercilessly killed 17 Christians. Senseless killing of Christians has continued in Pakistan. A culture of Islamic militancy against Christians now flourishes and the small Christian minority lives under harassment and constant fear. In the last few months attacks on the Christian community have escalated.

The justification for the attacks on Christians is based on the draconian Blasphemy Law section 295 -B and 295-C passed in 1982 by the Pakistani National Assembly. These two laws make anyone deemed to have insulted the holy prophet of Islam or dishonored Holy Qur'an liable for capital punishment and life imprisonment and fines. In its selective application, it has provided a pretext for private vendettas, but its victims almost always have been Christians.

Let me share with you few examples of the last few weeks:

June 30, one hundred Christian homes were set on fire in Bahmaniwala village in Kasur district. People still there remain without shelter and livelihood.

July 31, the Christian community in the village of Korian near Gojra in Punjab province was attacked by thousands of Muslims who accused Christians of desecrating the pages of Qur'an. Christians brought this matter to the Muslim elders for assistance. However, the Muslim Imam made announcements that Christian infidels needed to be taught a lesson. A large group of Muslims gathered from neighboring villages to protect the honor of their faith and to take revenge. Christians then heard the Imam, calling from the mosque's loud speaker, for the faithful to attack Christian homes. The Christians fled to the nearby fields. Soon after the announcement, Christian homes were attacked. Their homes were looted and set on fire by Muslim militants. In addition, the Muslim mob blocked roads to stop police or fire responders to assist the assaulted community. Christians in Korian have lost all possessions, their livelihood and cattle. Yet, there is no official accounting of the loss of human lives as Christians are still hiding and afraid to return to their village.

August 1, continued the violence when thousands of Muslim Militants gathered in the nearby town of Gojra, seven miles from the village of Korian. In Gojra there is a small colony of several hundred Christian families. Two hundred Muslim militants, covering their faces and holding semi-automatic weapons, supported the several thousand who attacked the Christian colony. The attackers looted more than 100 homes and set them on fire. Witnesses reported that when Christian women begged to spare their children and homes, the attackers opened fire and killed four women, a man and a child. The leaders of the Christian community fear that more bodies will be discovered after police search the burned homes.

The British Broadcast Company reports that the local officials have confirmed that the rumor of desecration of Holy Qur'an was false. The Federal Minority Minister of Pakistan Government has accused police of negligence and failure to protect minority community.

The Rt. Rev. John Samuel, Bishop of Faisalabad who resides in Gojra, in a telephone conversation, told me, "We are in great distress and helpless. We have no protection and resources to help our Christian community. Today I saw the homes of our church members being destroyed and Christians being shot. Please pray for God's mercy and protection for us."

In the Province of North West Frontiers, Christians were issued written notices to leave or convert to Islam. Two weeks ago I visited Pakistani and Indian Christians in the Greater San Francisco area. I met a man in his late fifties who recently came to the United States from Pakistan. He informed me that his family had to sell their ancestral home of more than 100 years for a very low price and leave as their lives were in great danger.

Knowledge of these attacks stems from my personal connections; however, many additional accounts of violence can be verified, also.

The violence continues and innocent people die daily. We cannot remain mere spectators as basic human rights to practice freely one's faith are violated. The United States has always advocated for the rights of the weak, defenseless and oppressed. In your speech in Cairo to the Muslim world, you clearly articulated the right to the free exercise of one's faith. You said, "Freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one's religion. That is why there is a mosque in every state and over 1,200 mosques within our borders. That is why the U.S. government has gone to court to protect the right of women and girls to wear the hijab and to punish those who would deny it."

The cause for such attacks is direct result of the presence of the United States forces in Afghanistan. These Militants equate this to a war between Islam and Christianity. Christians in Pakistan are an easy target for revenge, and those in Pakistan are the poorest community and are targeted victims of the fatwa and blasphemy law.

Mr. President, I beg your attention to plead for the cause of the poor, defenseless and persecuted minority community of Christians in Pakistan. May I suggest the following measures United States government to consider?

1. The State Department, in collaboration with churches and North American Islamic Society, should form a High level deputation to visit Pakistan.
2. The United States Embassy in Islamabad-Pakistan should be instructed to grant asylum visas to Christians whose lives are threatened by the blasphemy law.
3. The President of the United States should ask the Islamic Government of Pakistan to repeal of sections of 295 and 295- B and 295-C of Pakistan Penal Code, the draconian blasphemy law. This law is the basis for the rising tide of intolerance, militancy and oppression against Christians in Pakistan.
4. United States Aid to Pakistan for refugees and displaced should also be given to those who have lost their homes and lives because of the militancy of Islamic extremists in the North West Frontier Province.

Mr. President, I beg you to hear the cry of the suffering minority in Pakistan. I speak in the name of humanity to seek justice and peace. I am plainly asking you to advocate for the defenseless. You are a man whom God has blessed with a spirit of reconciliation. Your desire is to bring people of different faiths together to build a world of peace and harmony. You have encouraged Muslims, Christians and Jews to come together. In Cairo you said, "Indeed, faith should bring us together. That is why we are forging service projects in America that bring Christians, Muslims, and Jews together.

There are thousands of Pakistani Christians who are citizens of the United States who beg for your help. We believe in inter-faith harmony. I have personally dedicated my life to bridge building between the Abrahamic faith communities. Religious persecution, wherever it occurs, diminishes us all, and demands more than finger-wagging in response. I sincerely pray that God shall use you to bring an end to the persecution of Christians in Pakistan.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you very much for your concern.

Yours truly,

The Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min. Rector
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cc: Senator Russ Feingold

Timeline: Accused under the Blasphemy Law

published by Dawn

(Pakistan's largest English language newspaper on September 12, 2012)

An estimated number of 1,274 people have been charged under the stringent blasphemy laws of Pakistan between 1986, from when they were included in the Constitution by General Zia ul Haq, until 2010. 51 people accused of blasphemy were murdered before their respective trials were over. However, the death sentence has never been implemented.

1990: Tahir Iqbal, a Christian convert from Islam and resident of Lahore, was accused of abusing Prophet Mohammad at the time of Azaan and imparting anti-Islamic education to children he tutored. Iqbal was an engineer with the Pakistan Air Force before being paralyzed and used a wheelchair. He lived near a mosque in Lahore and his change in religious affiliation had annoyed many. So much, that the local cleric accused him of abusing the Holy Prophet during azaan.

1991: Chand Barkat, 28, a bangle stall holder in Karachi, was accused of blasphemy by another bangle vendor, Arif Hussain, because of professional jealousy.

Gul Masih, a eunuch from Faisalabad, was charged for using sacrilegious language about the Prophet and his wives. The complainant was Gul's neighbor Sajjad Hussain who had a quarrel with him over the repair of a street water tap.

1992: Eighty-year-old philanthropist, Akhtar Hamid Khan, a Muslim, was arrested for allegedly committing blasphemy during an

interview with an Indian journalist. Later, Khan was arrested again for blasphemy because he wrote a children's poem that was interpreted as insulting the Prophet and his family.

Naimat Ahmar, 43, was a Christian teacher in Faisalabad. Naimat's colleagues, unhappy with his professional success, convinced a student, Farooq Ahmed, that Naimat had committed blasphemy and urged him to take the law into his own hands.

During the same year Bantu Masih, 80, and Mukhtar Masih, 50, were arrested on the allegation of committing blasphemy. Bantu was stabbed eight times at a Lahore police station and at the hospital, the police reportedly convinced him not to file a case against his attacker in order to escape blasphemy charges. However, he succumbed to his injuries shortly. Mukhtar was tortured to death in police custody.

1993: In February, Anwar Masih hailing from Samundri, Punjab was arrested for alleged blasphemy after a quarrel with a shopkeeper. Masih had converted to Islam twice before converting to Christianity again and the case against him was filed by Haji Mohammad Tayyab, a local leader of the Anjuman Sipah-e-Sahaba (ASS), who had heard about the quarrel.

Alamat Masih, 11, Manzoor Masih, 38, and Rehmat Masih, 44, were accused of writing

blasphemous remarks on a wall belonging to a mosque. The complaint was filed by a prayer leader at the mosque who alleged that they had written insulting remarks about Islam on paper and thrown them inside the local mosque and later also written on the walls on the mosque. Salamat Masih and Manzoor Masih were completely illiterate but despite that all three were arrested in May. The imam of the mosque said that he had removed the writings on the wall because they were blasphemous. In 1997, Justice Arif Iqbal Bhatti was assassinated in his chambers at Lahore High Court allegedly for defending Rehmat and Salamat Masih. In 1998

In November 1993, Riaz Ahmad, his son, and two nephews from the Ahmadi community were arrested in Mianwali District for their blasphemous remarks. In 1997, the Supreme Court granted bail to Ahmed, his son and nephews.

1994: Hafiz Farooq Sajjad, a Muslim, was stoned to death after a Quran in his house caught fire. The local mosque announced that a Christian had burned the Quran and a mob gathered outside Sajjad's house.

1995: In July of 1995, Catherine Shaheen, a teacher in Lahore, was denied her salary as she was accused of blasphemy. Although she was not formally charged, Shahaeen has been in hiding since then.

1996: Ayub Masih, a brick layer, was arrested when his neighbors accused him of propagating Christianity and inviting people to read Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses".

2000: Younus Shaikh, a physician, was charged with blasphemy on account of remarks that students claimed he made during a lecture.

2002: A 55-year-old Muslim cleric, Muhammad Yousuf Ali, was allegedly shot dead by a member of Sipah-i-Sahaba in Lahore prison after being accused of committing blasphemy.

2003: Samuel Masih, a Christian, was arrested for allegedly defiling a mosque by spitting on its wall. While in police custody Masih contracted tuberculosis and was sent to Gulab Devi Chest Hospital for treatment. He was killed by a police officer, Faryad Ali, who was one of the guards escorting him. He used a hammer to kill him in the presence of other officers and claimed that it was his duty as a Muslim to kill Masih.

Anwar Mashih, a Christian charged under Section 295 after a neighbor reported to the police that Masih had insulted the Holy Prophet.

Munawar Mohsin, journalist from KPK working for Frontier Post, was sentenced to life imprisonment for writing an article on blasphemy which triggered nationwide protests.

2005: In August 2005, an anti-terrorist court found Younus Sheikh guilty of disrespecting the Quran after he wrote a book 'Shaitan Maulvi' which mentioned that the concept of stoning to death after committing adultery does not exist in Islam. The judge imposed a fine of Rs 100, 000 rupees and sentenced him to lifetime imprisonment.

2006: Qamar David was arrested after some Muslims claimed that they received blasphemous text messages from him. He was given a life imprisonment sentence in 2010 and passed away in jail in 2011 due to a cardiac arrest according to reports.

2007: Martha Bibi from the district of Kasur was accused of making derogatory remarks against the Holy Prophet. Reports suggest that the complaint was filed by contractors who did not want to pay her for materials they had bought from her. She was released on bail.

Salamat Masih, aged 45, along with four other Christians was charged with blasphemy for desecrating posters featuring Allah's name.

In April, Sattar Masih, 28, was assaulted and sentenced for alleged blasphemy in Kotri city. He was arrested after a mob stormed his house but later in January 2009, the accusations were found baseless and he was released.

In May, nursing school at PIMS was shut down and seven members of the staff suspended after students from Jamia Hafsa accused them of desecrating Islamic posters.

Muhammad Imran was arrested from Faisalabad for allegedly burning the Holy Quran. He was tortured for three days and later kept in solitary confinement.

2008: An Ahmadi, Altaf Hussain, was arrested for alleged desecration of Holy Quran from Kabir Wala town of Khanewal.

2009: Punjab police arrested a laborer along with four students belonging to Ahmaddiya community. They were accused of writing prophet's name on walls a Sunni mosque's washroom.

Two Christians, both elderly men from Faisalabad, Punjab, were acquitted by the Lahore High Court in April.

Following the alleged desecration, an angry mob torched 75 houses owned by Christians in Gojra. At least seven Christians were torched alive during the riots.

In August of 2009, an angry mob broke into the house of an old woman in district Sanghar. She was accused of desecrating the Quran.

2010: In July, the Lahore High Court ordered the release of 60-year-old Zaibun Nisa, a woman who was jailed in 1996 on a charge of blasphemy on a complaint that the Quran had been defiled because of the lack of evidence.

Asia Bibi, the first Christian woman arrested and sentenced to death by hanging on a charge of blasphemy. Asia was accused of committing blasphemy after an argument at the farm where she worked. Asia is still in jail and the case has sparked international reactions.

2011: In January 2011, Salman Taseer, Governor of Punjab was assassinated by his bodyguard for voicing his opinion on blasphemy law and supporting Asia Bibi.

In March, Shahbaz Bhatti, federal minister for minority affairs was assassinated.

2012: A mentally unstable man was torched alive for alleged blasphemy near Bahawalpur in July. The mob took the man from a police station where he was under custody on blasphemy charges after burning pages from the Quran.

Rismha Masih was accused of blasphemy and arrested by the police from a village near Islamabad. Rimsha was arrested because she was allegedly burning pages from the Quran. However, a cleric, Hafiz Mohammad Chishti was later arrested for framing her by planting pages from the Quran in her bag. Rimsha was cleared after the police said they had no evidence against her and the case was dropped after the Islamabad High Court ordered the FIR against her to be dismissed due to lack of witnesses.

A man was accused of blasphemy after he refused to join an anti-Islam film protest.

Haji Nasrullah, who owns a market at Hala Naka area off National Highway and is the chairman of a local shopkeepers association was booked after Kolachi Khan lodged a complain against him. He had objected to closing his shop when in protest against the anti-Islam film.

After a trial spread over 14 months, Additional District and Sessions Judge Raja Pervez Akhtar jailed a blasphemy accused for 10 years and imposed a fine of Rs 200,000. Convict Ghulam Ali Asghar, a resident of Chinji village in Talagang tehsil, was booked on Nov 17, 2011, on a charge of blaspheming the Holy Prophet (PBUH) by misquoting a Hadith in Punjabi language.

Ghulam Ali Asghar was acquitted under 295-C, but imprisoned him for ten years under 295-A (which forbids outraging religious feelings). The convict will have to undergo an additional jail term of six months if he does not pay the fine.

35-year-old man detained in a lock-up in a Quran desecration case was beaten to death and his body was torched by a lynch mob who stormed the Rajo Deero police station.

Officials said over 1,000 people from Sita village and its surroundings attacked the police station at 8am to take out from the lock-up the man who had been handed over to the police some hours earlier by Memon Masjid area residents while accusing him of setting fire to the Quran.

2013: The Supreme Court admitted a petition filed against Sherry Rehman on January 17, 2013 over allegedly committing blasphemy.

The petition against Rehman, Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, was filed by Faheem Akhtar Gill, a citizen of Multan. Gill had requested to the court to register a case against Rehman for allegedly committing blasphemy. The petition claims that Rehman had committed blasphemy while speaking on a news channel two years ago. In November 2010, Rehman had submitted a bill to the National Assembly Secretariat seeking an end to the death penalty under the existing blasphemy laws.

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August 28, 2014

The Rt. Hon'ble The Most Rev. Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury
Lambeth Palace
London SE1 7JU

Dear Archbishop Welby,

Recent weeks have brought news of calamitous events for Christians in the Middle East. ISIS, the so called Islamic State, is killing Christians and members of other faiths, driving them from their homelands, kidnapping children and destroying historic worship sites. Journalists covering these developments are being taken prisoner and most recently, American journalists James Foley was horrifically executed by beheading.

I am thankful for your voice on behalf of the persecuted church. I read your sermon "We must be Christ in this troubled world" this morning to members of my congregation gathered for Holy Eucharist and Bible Study. Over forty years of my ordained ministry I have felt a strong call to speak for the oppressed and to build bridges through ministry of reconciliation with those we differ. At Lambeth Conference 1998 I was advisor to Archbishop Lord George Carey on persecution of Christians, Islam and inter-faith issues. I have travelled in many Muslim countries to promote inter-faith harmony and visited churches in persecution. I served as Canon and Commissary to Joseph Marona, the Archbishop of Sudan for ten years. December 2012 Archbishop Rowan Williams gave me "Cross of St. Augustine Award" and title "Ambassador of Peace". It has been a long journey of faith to be the voice of the persecuted and to work for reconciliation among our Abrahamic faith communities.

Now there have been awful events of tyranny and oppression against God's people. We know that God has longed to put the world to rights and bring new creation to birth by victory on the Cross. One often wonders how this faith help us to live in a world where tyranny and injustice are rampant. In your sermon at the Holy Sepulchre Maori Mission Church in Auckland, you issue a call to us that "there are millions of reasons for fear. Christians are called by God to

serve, to transform. Yet the pattern of action is set by the figure on the Cross.” In the face of the actions of hate by ISIS. The Gospel call us to be harbinger of hope and peace. You call us to be people with hope and courage to proclaim Christ the healer and reconciler for the broken timber of our humanity. Thanks again for your voice and ministry.

May I humbly suggest the following:

- Your Grace, should call a small group of Anglicans to work on your behalf. This group should travel to Mecca, Islamabad, Qatar, Nigeria and other Islamic countries to meet with Islamic leaders with a message of reconciliation. I shall be happy to write a paper to present.
- A summit should be called at Canterbury Cathedral or Lambeth Palace with Muslims and Christian leaders. We should invite them to sign a joint statement to condemn the atrocities committed against Christian minority communities. Leader like the Grand Mufti (Sunni) of Saudi Arabia should be included. We should seek their support to promote ways to strengthen the witness and security of Christian presence in Islamic Countries. We should stop being apologetic and hesitant but to name the perpetrators of oppression against Christian communities in Sudan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Middle East. We should speak the truth and invite Muslim leaders to hear our pain and work with us for reconciliation.
- Canterbury with collaboration with Rome and Eastern Churches should hold a International Day of Prayer to support Christians in persecution.

I like to offer my assistance in carrying this ministry of hope and reconciliation in these difficult times. I will be happy to serve as your assistant/emissary (Ambassador of Peace) to carry this important ministry. I am willing to travel to Lambeth Palace to meet with you in person if I am invited by, Your Grace. Jesus is at work, and so am I offering my services on behalf of our persecuted brothers and sisters.

With much regards.

Yours in Christ,

The Very Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min. DD.
Rector and Dean



HEAR MY PEOPLE'S CRY

The Anglican Witness

(This Lecture was originally delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo, New York; January 24, 1999 & Prince George Winyah Episcopal Church, Georgetown, South Carolina, March 1, 1999)

“The Church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning.” Emil Brunner

Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison, with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. (Hebrew 13:3)

We belong to the world family of churches known as the Anglican Communion. The 72 million members of this Communion live in 164 countries. The story of this faith-community started in 596 A.D., when Augustine with 40 equally fearful monks, set out nervously from Rome for England. He had not gone very far, when murmuring among his team and his own fears of that hostile and savage country, Britain, overwhelmed him. The party turned back to Rome. But Gregory the Great would not sympathize with their fears. He reminded them that they were called to a life of prayer and that they must have faith in the passionate commitment they share- to witness to the claims of Christ. If they were loyal, he told them, they need not fear the “barbarous, fierce, and pagan” warriors of Britain.

According to the historian Bede, Gregory wrote to the party, “My very dear sons, it is

better never to undertake any high enterprise than to abandon it when once begun... with the help of God you must carry out this holy task which you have begun. Be constant and zealous in carrying out this enterprise which, under God's Guidance, you have undertaken.” The origin of the Anglican Church is through the work and ministry of scared, weak and frail human beings, but, in the end, they were obedient to their call to be missionaries to the native Britons.

In the *Ecclesiastical History of the English people (genetic Anglorum)*, Archdeacon Bede made abundantly clear that the term *eclessia anglicans* was simply a description of that part of the Catholic Church situated in England. The idea that Anglicanism could or should expand worldwide would have seemed a contradiction. Nevertheless, the Church of England slowly began to take seriously missionary obligations overseas. In 1698, the Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), and in 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) were established to evangelize the non-Christian people who were subject to the British crown. John and Charles Wesley came to America under SPG auspices.

William Carey, the Baptist missionary to Serampore in North India, raised England's profile of mission at the end of eighteenth century. Evangelicals in the Church of England, especially prominent lay people such as William Wilberforce, became deeply involved in the humanitarian movement for the abolition of the slave trade. This led in 1799 to the formation of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, which was explicitly evangelical and voluntary. In West Africa, the freed slaves and creoles of Sierra Leone became the most dynamic missionaries. One of them was Samuel Adjai Crowther, who in 1864 became the first African Anglican bishop. Today in Birmingham, England, there is a missionary training college named after Bishop Crowther. An Indian priest is the principal/dean of this missionary training college. The CMS also campaigned vigorously for the East India Company to abandon its opposition to missionary activity among the Indian population. The result of the insistence and the advocacy of CMS were that Henry Martyn brought Abdul Masih to Christ, and he became the first Indian Anglican priest on the sub-continent of India.

In New Zealand, whole communities of the Maori people responded to the Gospel brought by CMS missionaries. The SPG and CMS also worked outside the British colonies Japan and China, and in those parts of the Ottoman Empire where they could work without much Islamic opposition. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Episcopal Church also began to be involved in missionary work, almost entirely outside the British spheres of influence or control:

Japan and China, the Philippines, and South America. These were the areas where Americans had an increasing commercial or diplomatic interest.¹

The missionary role of the Episcopal Church has been clear from the beginning of the century. The name of the Episcopal Church as a registered body in the United States is *Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society*. In 1835 the Rt. Rev. George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey presented his argument before the General Convention to carve out the identity and purpose of the Episcopal. He argued:

That by the original constitution of Christ, the Church as the Church, was the one great Missionary Society, and the Apostles, and the Bishops, their successors, his perpetual trustees, and that this great trust could not, and should never be divided or deputed. The duty... to support the church in preaching the Gospel to every creature, was one, which passed on every Christians by terms of his baptismal vow, and from which he could never be absolved.²

Thus since 1835 the Episcopal Church has said that mission and the Church are inseparable. To be an Episcopalian is to be involved in mission. The Church is mission. The Episcopal Church sent missionaries into three primary foreign mission fields, Liberia, China, and Japan. The energetic and voluntary association of women in the Woman's Auxiliary, and other women's organizations such as Daughters of the King, the Church Periodical Club, and the Girls Friendly Society provided all the help this

¹ Andrew Wingate, *Anglicanism. A Global Communion*, Mowbray, Wellington House, 1998. Pp.13-17

² Walter Herbert Stowe, "A Turning point—General Convention of 1835," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, September 4, 1935. p.136

missionary society needed to proclaim the Gospel in the missionary fields.

One of those missionaries who went to serve in China was Channing Moore Williams. He was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1829. He was ordained deacon in 1855, and offered himself to work in China. After being two years in China, he was sent to Japan to start a new work in Nagasaki. His first convert was baptized in 1866, the year he was chosen bishop for both China and Japan. Williams translated parts of the Book of Common Prayer into Japanese. He was a close friend and warm supporter of Bishop Samuel Isaac Schereschewsky (an Episcopal missionary and graduate of the General Seminary, New York. His successor in China, Bishop Schereschewsky, later succeeded Bishop Channing and translated Bible and Prayer Book in Chinese.³

On December 2, 1993 on the feast day of Bishop Channing Moore Williams, the Rev. Tad de Bordenave of Richmond dedicated his ministry to reach out to the un-evangelized of the world. So a new missionary organization Anglican Frontiers Mission (AFM) in the Anglican Communion was born. Father Tad felt strongly that since the Anglican Communion is now present in 160 countries, and in reality the established church is paying less attention to the un-evangelized areas in the world. Un-reached groups need advocacy and voice to remind the church that each human being on the face of this earth has right to hear the good news of the Gospel. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love. The Church carries

out its mission through the ministry of all its members.⁴

From the Atlantic coast of North Africa, across the Middle East, through Central Asia, and all the way to the furthest end of the Indonesian archipelago, lies a swathe of the planet where the Christian faith is making little impact- or has lost its grasp of ground once held. Except for pockets like Kerala in South India, Christians are no more than a tiny proportion of the population, and in some ethnic groups and megacities there are few, if any, believers at all.

This chunk of the planet has been dubbed “World A” by mission strategists, who believe it deserves the highest priority for prayer, mission, and evangelism. Some 2 billion people, perhaps 40% of the world’s population, are to be found in this zone, a vast majority of whom has never heard the Christian message.

Considerable numbers of Christians living and witnessing in World A live out their faith in an environment of constant harassment and persecution. They might be treated as second class citizens in their own lands, and often it is illegal for them even to mention the name of Jesus Christ with their fellow countrymen. One of the foremost champions of World A is Anglican priest, researcher, and retired CMS missionary, David B. Barret. For many years Dr. Barret has been summoning Christians to take seriously the challenge of these un-reached groups of people. While hundreds of thousands of evangelists and missionaries are working in places already heavily evangelized, a mere handful funded by less than 1 % of the

³ *The Hymnal Corporation, Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 1980 by the Church Pension Fund.*

⁴ *James Rosenthal, The Essential Guide to the Anglican Communion. 1998 by Morehouse Publishing. P.79. Chapter :What Anglicans Believe: The Catechism.*

world's missionary budgets are working among these un-reached people groups.⁵

Anglicans have been pioneers in taking the gospel to the ends of the world during the last two centuries. A thriving Communion of some 72 million members is the fruit of the labor of the efforts of men and women who have tirelessly obeyed the great commission of Christ. Yet today Anglicans/Episcopalians often seem so caught up in the complexities of being a worldwide Communion, that they are in danger of losing sight of those least evangelized people.⁶ Anglican Frontier Mission has responded to this challenge. AFM is dedicated to the planting of churches among the **25 largest and least evangelized people groups in World A.**

Yet, we sense the confusion in the local churches and at the judicatorial levels, trying to define theological distinctions between mission and evangelism. The very name of the church, *ekklesia*, means community summoned and commissioned to relay the Good News of the coming of Jesus Christ into human history to be a Savior to all humankind. Therefore, our calling is from God, the Father, the source of everything. God calls us out of darkness into the kingdom of his Son and sends us out in the power of the Holy Spirit to live and proclaim the good news of the kingdom. Our call and our sending do not depend on our resources or lack of them. All are called and all are sent.

Mission is not an option for Christians; it is simply part of being in Christ. And mission and evangelism are not two things but one: to be sent is to carry transforming life – good news. It is to truth. Sharing good news is always the goal and focus of the Christian's journey with Jesus Christ.⁷

Hendrik Kraemer, describes in his favorite phrase *SUI GENERIS*; that there is nothing that can be put into the same category as the incarnation ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is with this knowledge, the followers of Christ are called to witness – “witnesses not of our religious experiences, but of Jesus, his incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin has said, “We can not keep silent about this because it is truth that concerns every human being. It is the truth about the human story. And so it must be told to every human being. The obligation remains till the end of time.”

“How can we help Christians to understand that evangelism is the calling of all baptized members of the Church and not just a few enthusiasts? We have to confess that, in a Church with an excellent tradition of pastoral care, there is a real danger of marginalizing evangelism. I want to say to you clearly and unequivocally: evangelism is not incidental to the life of the Church, it is fundamental to it. A Church which does not engage in God's work of reconciliation is simply a disobedient Church.”⁸

⁵ *The progress of the spread of the Christian Gospel, and a detailed breakdown of these statistics can be found in the World Christian Encyclopedia (Oxford University Press, 1983), edited by David B. Barret, and in the AD 2025 Global Monitor, published bi-monthly by the GEM global monitoring network. For more information contact GEM@XC.org.*

⁶ *Richard Kew and Cyril Okorocho, Vision Bearers: Dynamic Evangelism in the 21st Century (Morehouse Publishing, P.O.Box 1321, Harrisonburg, PA 17106, Pp.19-21.*

⁷ *Lambeth Conference 1998, “Called to live and Proclaim the Good News,” The Rt. Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams and the Rt. Rev. Yong Ping Chung.*

⁸ *Archbishop George L. Carey, The Anglican Communion and Evangelism, address given at G-Code 2000, edited by Cyril Okorocho, London ACC, 1998,p.27.*

THE IMPACT OF THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is the agent of change in people's lives. Its message has challenged where there were unjust systems of oppression and degradation. Proclaiming and living the Gospel is always a risky business as it is going to challenge and change where one may have become comfortable or stuck by the circumstances of the environment. It has been our experience and the story of our faith in action. In 1998, the people of Central America, especially Honduras, had suffered greatly because of the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. Bishop Leo Frade told a story about a poor man who came to him with his dead child whom he had just pulled from the waters. He said, "Monseqor pray for him, he is my only child. Do something, please Bishop, do something!!!" Bishop Frade said that the only thing he could do was to cry and get really mad at God. Why? Why Lord? Where was God?

Bishop Frade said that midst my tears and anger when I consoled that poor desperate man. I cried with him the tears that God was also shedding for that dead baby. I hugged him with the love that God only can give us when we are embraced by his truth. This church is present with the people who are hungry, thirsty, naked and sick. It is this church which proclaims the message of reassurance that God cares for them. It is a ministry of presence and mission to heal the bodies, souls and spirits.

The Wichi are the indigenous people who form the majority membership of the Anglican Diocese of Northern Argentina. At the turn of the century 1914, Anglican missionaries made contact with the Wichi in the newly developing cane fields and went back to live alongside them in their traditional areas in

Chaco. They stayed, their children grew up with the Indian children. There were no converts for nine years. From the Central Mission (Algarobal) the seed grew and spread. Indians from all parts came nearer in search of these white people 'who told us we had a Father in heaven who loves us', as they still remember every day, adding 'They didn't bring money or clothes or food or projects, only the Word; they didn't deceive us.' Then these spirit worshippers discovered that the Holy Spirit was alive and powerful in the lives of these Christians who had come to live among them. The Wichi families started to come to know Christ among them and often ahead of the missionaries they preached the Gospel among their own people.

In those years the Wichi had no citizenship in their own country and no rights to the land they had occupied for centuries. They were the poorest of poor among northern Argentinians. The Anglican Church confronted the issues of poverty. In its social uplift program the church included health care, community education, land rights and economic development. The Anglican economic projects now focus on promotion of small scale agriculture, beekeeping and high quality craft work. The church is engaged in drilling for drinking water and another priority is support for indigenous young people entering elementary education. The Anglican medical team is working within the government health service and the church is supporting the Wichi leadership in a major land claim. The Gospel has brought transformation in the lives of those who had no identity in the larger society.

The Anglican Church arrived in South Asia along with the colonial powers. In the beginning, the East India Company would not allow workers to open a mission work to the Indians. Later they granted them permission and the Church reached out to mostly poor and low-caste Hindus. They were poor, untouchable and they were forsaken within their own social and religious system. The Church opened schools and health clinics and reached out to the downcast through *diakonia*, with Christian service. The higher caste Hindus and the ruling class of Muslims had the monopoly over religion. The Christian message of the Gospel was that God is incarnated in the human flesh in Jesus Christ. God's love is available for everybody and God cares for the poor and the untouchables. It was a revolutionary message for those who had no place in the Indian society. The poor and the humble responded to the liberating message of the Gospel, and it transformed their lives. Now, they could actually call the God of heaven as 'Abba,' Father. The message of the Gospel challenged the higher caste and the most powerful.

ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS WITHIN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

"...So that there should be no division in the body, but that its Parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part honored, every part rejoices with it." 1 Corinthians 12:25,26

In 156 AD, Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna, Turkey. He was arrested by the Roman proconsul who asked Polycarp to curse Christ. Polycarp said, "eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can

I blaspheme my King who saved me? Polycarp was burned at the stake. Many of us consider such accounts of persecution to be only in the past.

In the 20th century more Christians have been martyred for their faith than any other time in the human history. Right before the Lambeth Conference 1998 on July 9, ten statues of the Christian Martyrs of the twentieth century were unveiled by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen, on the west front of Westminster Abbey in London. Later during the Lambeth Conference, bishops from Iran, Nigeria, Sudan, Pakistan, India and several other countries shared the horrific stories of genocide and torture. We as a global family have within our membership the reality of that suffering, persecution, injustice, and oppression. All of these elements are alive and well in the Church today. They torment and tear at the lives of faithful members of the body of Christ of the Anglican Communion like you and me, day by day and hour by hour. Many of us in the West take freedom of speech and religious freedom as guaranteed. The accounts of persecution may only be stories of early church history. No, it is very much happening in our present-day history. Following are the recent most stories of the Christians who are suffering and even losing their lives because they profess Jesus is the Lord.

Pakistan

In modern history, Pakistan is the first theocracy created in the name of religion, on August 1947. In 1997 this Islamic state of 95% Muslims and 3% Christians celebrated its golden Jubilee of Independence from the British Raj. The founder of Pakistan

had assured Christians and minorities that all members of the newly formed nation will have equal rights of citizenship. “You are free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – it has nothing to do with the State.” (Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Constituent Assembly August 11, 1947).

Unfortunately with the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movement in the region “*Shari’ at Bill*” as the supreme law was passed on May 13, 1990 in the Senate. This has brought the reign of the blasphemy law for Christians to be tortured and punished if they are accused of insulting the name of the Prophet Muhammad. A progressive Muslim newspaper examining various cases of Christians accused of blasphemy sums up as follows: “in all cases an ulterior motive for the charge appears a distinct possibility. And religious fanaticism has been whipped up to such an extent that the accused may not be safe even if he is acquitted. It is very possible that local people and mullahs will remain determined to carry out their death sentence.”

In October 1997 in the city of Lahore, a seventeen-year old Christian girl named Saleema befriended an eighteen year old Muslim girl Raheela. Saleema shared her faith with Raheela and gave her a Bible. Raheela quickly learned Christian songs at Saleema’s house and began teaching them to her younger sister when her parents were not at home. Raheela’s parents learned of these songs and had her younger sister find out where she was getting this Christian influence.

Saleema invited Raheela to a Good Friday service where she heard the Christian gospel of saving grace and accepted Jesus Christ. She became very excited in her new relationship with Jesus Christ and saw many great changes take place in her life. But because Raheela continued to read her Bible and praise God boldly, Saleema knew that she would encounter opposition from her Muslim family.

Raheela’s parents became furious when they learned of her conversion. She refused to marry the Muslim man her parents arranged for her, so she took refuge in Saleema’s house and went with Saleema to her Pastor Salim Arthur for counsel. Raheela’s parents thought that the pastor and Saleema had kidnapped their daughter. Raheela’s parents had Saleema arrested on June 19, 1997, Saleema was slapped, beaten and tortured in front of her parents for over nine hours.

The Pastor and his family were arrested and taken to prison on the following day. Saleema and the pastor were taken to a torture cell where they were severely tortured. Saleema was whipped 16 times (5 times would make a normal man pass out). She could not sit for two weeks, and the pastor could barely walk from the bruises on his hips and thighs.

Around July 9, 1997, Raheela was mysteriously killed. Her family originally charged Saleema with murder, as their daughter was killed in their house because of her conversion to Christianity. The religious authorities have argued that if Saleema had not given Raheela a Bible, then the Muslim girl would not have become apostate and been executed. If found guilty, Saleema will also be executed. At present she is in a care facility for some time, and a recent

report said she is in great pain. During the week of January 17, 1999, she was supposed to appear in the Pakistani High Court. She was unable to attend court because of health problems due to police beating and torture in June 1997.

After her arrest the correspondent of Voice of the Martyrs interviewed Saleema and she said, "I have seen the world, and it has nothing good. Jesus is my only peace."

Pastor Noor Alam of the Sheikhpura district was killed in his home during the night of January 28, 1998. It is believed that a local Imam named Mullana Habib Ullah and two others are responsible for his death. His murder was a result of an apparent land dispute. Habib Ullah reportedly had been inciting local Muslims against the construction of Pastor Alam's church. December 1997, a Muslim mob demolished the partly finished church building. Allegedly, Habib Ullah had requested that his allies bolt the doors of about a dozen Christian homes in the area on the day that the church was destroyed.

India

Indian society is multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multi-linguistic. Hindus are 82.7%, Muslims (11.8%), Christians (2.6%), Sikhs (2%), Buddhists (0.7%), Jains (0.5%), Zoroastrians (0.3%), and Jew (0.1%) out of total population of 900,000,000. In the Indian constitution the Article 25 guarantees freedom of conscience, free profession and practice of religion, and also the right to propagate religion. Since the rise in power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), several

militant Hindu groups like RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak) and Shiv Sena have increased their activities to torture and kill Christians in India.

On January 24, 1999, Kenneth J Cooper of the Washington Post and Nellesh Misra of Associated Press reported from India the story of burning of an Australian missionary and his two sons. The Rev. Graharn Stewart Staines, 58, came to treat victims of leprosy in the isolated area of Baripada, 620 miles southeast of New Delhi. He was a secretary of the New Delhi-based Evangelical Missionary Society. This is an Indian church society and local charity. Church leaders have said Christian charity is made available to anyone regardless of religion. Staines was among a small number of foreign missionaries left in the country after the government stopped issuing them new visas in the 1960's. The Roman Catholic Church, the nation's largest Christian denomination, has counted fewer than 300 foreigners among 92,000 priests and nuns in India.

The Rev. Staines and his wife, Gladys, natives of Beaudesert, Australia, had adopted India and her people as their country of choice to live there since 1965. They raised their three children Esther 13, Philip 10, and Timothy 8, in Baripada near Manohapur, located 140 miles of south of Calcutta. They served the poor of India and had adopted Indian way of living. They spoke the Indian local language of Oriya, and Gladys Staines always dressed in the traditional Indian Sari and the children knew no other friends except other Indian children as their playmates.

On January 23, a mob of 40 people, some armed with bows and arrows, attacked Staines' Jeep as he and his sons slept outside a village northeast of Baripada, where they had attended a Bible study program. The attacker then doused the vehicle with gasoline and set it ablaze, beating up any bystanders who tried to rescue the family, local police said.

Roman Catholic Indian Priest Anand Pal said, "The way the Staines lived their lives has been an inspiration to us all." Mahapatra, a local Indian of Baripada expressed his sorrow and said, "People are filled with sorrow. He was loved and liked by all, not just Christians. When he spoke Oriya, you couldn't tell whether he was Oriya or English unless you saw him." Lepers were among hundreds who paid tribute to Graham Stuart Staines, who served them as their friend and healer.

In a national television interview, Mrs. Staines called for forgiveness. "We cannot demand a longer life span from God than what he has decided for each of us. I am grateful to God for giving him this long a life span to serve people."

Mother Teresa, the Nobel prize-winning Roman Catholic nun, was a national hero in India, but other Christians engaged in similar work have complained of harassment and hostility. Police arrested 49 Hindu radicals suspected of burning and most of those belonging to Bajrang Dal, an ideological affiliate of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's right-wing Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party.

On September 23, 1998, four Roman Catholic Indian-born nuns, all less than 35 years of age, were gang-raped by Hindu militants in

the Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh in central India. The assailants first knocked at the door of the convent pretending that they needed urgent medical help for someone. The nuns were unconvinced and refused to open the door. They barricaded themselves in a chapel but the assailants then broke into the convent and ransacked the whole building before dragging the nuns from the chapel and taking them to the field to be gang-raped. The nuns were working for FMS, a humanitarian medical organization, set up to provide medical help to people bereft of medical facilities in the remote rural areas of the country.

On January 1, 1999 a mob of 50 people set fire to two churches and several schools and community centers in the state of Gujrat. Several Christians were injured and a wave of anti-Christian violence in the region continues.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia does not allow any freedom of religion. They have hundreds of thousands of guest workers in the country. They are trying to weed out everybody who is a Christian. Christian believers would meet privately in their homes on the weekend for prayer and worship. The Saudi government has arrested many over the years and locked them in the Saudi jails. We hear horrifying stories how Christians have been treated in Saudi jails. Usually they have nobody to represent them.

Sudan

Recently I went to visit Southern Sudan with other five members of the Episcopal Church fact-finding team. We visited Kakuma refugee camp where there were 54,000

refugees. Later we flew into Southern Sudan and in all these areas we found meager supplies of food, hundreds of thousands of homeless, starving, sick people. We saw a modern holocaust happening right before our eyes. Let me share with you some of the messages we brought from the Sudanese people for our communities in USA.

Roda Akum, matron of Mother's Union said, "Our children and women need food and medicines." Mabior Bul, a wounded war hero said, "We are crying for our land. We are suffering for our land. When I see the suffering, I say let the earth open its mouth and swallow the whole world. Let God create a New World. Why are we suffering when God has created a new world? We are looking and praying for peace so people can enjoy the fruit of their land."

Chief Joseph Mawan said, "Our enemies took our cattle. Our women have stopped giving birth because there is not proper nutrition. We are suffering. We are crying. You have seen the nakedness of our people."

We hope our brothers and sisters shall feel our pain. When you go back, tell your people, 'let us see your Christianity in action.' We have no seeds, no tools to grow crops. Please give us SEEDS."

The New Yorker magazine of January 25, 1999 has an extensive article "*The Invisible War*" by William Finnegan. In this article he reports that the civil war in Sudan is a disaster of historic proportions. Altogether, it has killed more than two million people, more than any other conflict since the Second World War. The great majority of the dead

has been Christians in the south of Sudan. There are presently million and a half literally starving to death. Christian children and women are regularly' forcibly taken away and sold in the slave markets.

Before this century, the main basis of the relationship between the Muslim of the North and the non-Muslim of the South of today's Sudan was a busy slave trade: Some two million Southerners are thought to have been taken north as slaves during the nineteenth century alone. The Rizegat, cattle-herding Arabs in western Sudan, live just north of Dinka country. They sing, "*Shiil abu so/eel abu naar harraag al kubuudDar li rassaal min al abiid al suud*" ("Carry the jim gun whose fire chars the liver and the heart / For I need an errand boy from the black slaves"). And they sing, "*Ya rizeigi minawir al kay/Addaar bala siid siibu ley*" (Hey, Rizeigi, man, you are the burning iron rod! Give me the land without a people'). And "*Daar askun Buhuur at said*" ("I long to go and live by the rivers of the South").

The Rizeigat, like their Arab neighbors to the east, the Misseriya, covet the Dinka Christians' and Animists' pasturelands, which are lusher than their own. Historically, Rizeigat were energetic slavers, preying on their black southern neighbors until the British finally stamped out the practice in the nineteen-thirties. Under the present Islamic regime they have been encouraged to revive the tradition of enslaving the black Christian Dinkas. They are armed by Khartoum into P.D.F. units and tribal militias known as *murahalin*. And each year, during the dry season, the Rizeigat are sent southward on

Jihad, the holy war against non-Muslims.

Martim Mawiens Dut, a village magistrate in northern Bahar-al- Ghazal, tells the story of the looting of Arab raiders. It was in May 1998. The last time they came, I was out clearing land. It was in the morning. They came on horses, on camels, on donkeys, on foot, in Toyota pickups and trucks with machine guns. It was the Army and the P.D.F. and the Murahaliin, all together. They conquered the town, burning it down, taking slaves for six or seven days. They collected all the cattle and goats and people from the area, then drove them all to the North. Those of us who were not caught came creeping back from the bush. We found many corpses, mostly men. The women and children, they took. They took my wife, Adhal Akoom, and my daughter Amin, and my son, Kon. He is a five-year-old. They chopped down the mango trees. They broke the clay pots we use to carry water. They try to destroy everything now, so that we will not come back. So many young men have been killed in the war, leaving many unmarried young women. And now the Arabs have taken our women, too. And we've lost our cattle for bride wealth, so people cannot marry anyway. But when everyone is hungry and gloomy they don't feel like getting married."

When we asked Martin Mawiens Dut, to share his hope for peace, he said, "Only the Americans-sponsored, all-parties peace conference for Sudan can do it. We are all counting on them."

Other analysts have said that the West, for market reasons, would probably become interested in Sudan's oil reserves in about

thirty years and Sudan should therefore expect its civil war to last until then!

A Sudanese Pastor from the Bor County where I went to visit last year in February gives voice to some of his people's anguish:

*I am in the sinful land of Sudan,
The birds in the sky are surprised
By the way I have been orphaned.
The animals of the forest
are startled by my skeleton.*

The Church in the southern Sudan is the fastest growing church in the Anglican Communion. This is the most persecuted church on the face of this earth. Sudan has more displaced persons than any other country in the world. In the north the local Muslim charities, which are favored by the government, are often trying to Islamize and Arabize the southern Christians and animists. The Sudanese Arabs belief that blacks belong to a lower order of being is very deep and very widespread.

Over 2.5 million Southern Sudanese have been annihilated in the modern genocide in this ongoing catastrophic civil war. So far, the world community has not paid much attention to the genocide of the southern Sudanese. No international war crime courts have been set against the Sudanese Arabs, who have committed crimes against humanity. There are no peacekeeping forces of the United Nations or No Fly Zones established or being monitored. Why?

Has Sadaam Hussein's Iraqi regimes committed more crimes than the Sudanese fascist regime? Are the Sudanese in the South

right in their estimation that the West only will speak if they have economic interest in Sudan. It is not human rights but probably Sudan's oil reserves in about thirty years would get the attention of the Western world. Sudan should therefore expect the civil war to last until then, I hope it is not true. I pray the hearts of the leaders in the West will be touched by the cry of the suffering, dying, starving, enslaved men, women, and children.

I want to share with you a story of hope how a small group of students helped to free slaves as told by Robert Unruh of Associated Press:

Aurora, Colo. (AP)-Barbara Vogel's class of fifth-graders had just finished studying slavery in American history when they were shocked by a newspaper article written by Karin Davies, press writer of Associated Press.

It said trade in human lives was still going on in the Sudan. Slave trade has resurged with civil war in Africa's largest and poorest country. Local militias, fighting without pay for the Sudanese government, claim booty in human lives. "When we read the article, it just hit us. I was wondering what are we supposed to do? I just got the feeling I've got to stop this," said Highline Community School student Kyle Vincent.

Vogel's students started collecting change in jars to purchase the freedom of one or two slaves. The publicity started – newspaper stories, radio features and checks began pouring in. And upwards of 100 requests for more information arrived each week from people who have heard about their campaign.

One year later, they've sent more than \$50,000 to an international group Christian Solidarity International, who sent emissaries to Sudan to purchase and free more than 1,050 slaves. Prices per person vary from roughly \$70 to \$100. This is the only school in USA participating in the Christian Solidarity's work to free slaves in Sudan. It is common people who have helped the students. A retiree from Texas who enclosed a check for \$100 and promised another \$25 every month, and a Mississippi pastor who wrote, "It is the ring of voices like yours that can end an evil."

Some classmates thought getting involved in an issue that involves humanitarian, religious, social, military, economic and tribal issues on the other side of the world would be too complicated. "(But) it is never too complicated to help another person," Vogel said.

I bring to you the voice of the voiceless and pray that you shall hear their cries. It is my prayer that you shall become the voice of those, whose voice can not reach to the international community.

Even though heartache confronts us time and again, but as the children of God we are disciples of hope. Our role must be not to perpetuate heartache, but to be purveyors of hope. We are not to hate but to love, not to hurt, but to heal. Rather than squander our time and energy recounting transgressions and harboring grievances, we must strive to forgive, to reach out in faith, and to build bridges of understanding.

I encourage you to know new communities of other faiths in your area and learn about their ethnic background, and faith. We must develop a constructive dialogue in the prayerful hope that we can help foster a future of tolerance and mutual respect.

Now I like to close this with quotations from the letters of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397 A.D:

The Church of the Lord is built upon the rock of the apostles, yet among so many dangers in the world it remains unmoved. The Church's foundation is firm and unshakeable against assaults of the raging sea. Waves lash at the Church but do not shatter it. Although the elements of this world constantly beat upon the Church with crashing sounds. The Church possesses the safest harbor of salvation for all in distress.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are for me medicine, when I am sick; you are strength when I need help; you are life itself when I fear death; you are the way when I long for heaven, you are light when all is dark, you are my food when I need nourishment.

It is my sincere prayer that in the world of violence and oppression the peace of God may visit the victims of suffering. A transformation and change may come to the hearts of the perpetrators of injustice and cruelty. God's beautiful children of different races, cultures, religions, and languages may live in harmony where their laughter and joy is restored. That these may be transformed communities of compassion, caring, sharing and of reconciliation, where all children of God live in PEACE.

Prayer for Peace

O God, lead us from death to life.
from falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope,
from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to Peace
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our
universe.
Amen. *(Satish Kumar)*

Annual Cathedral Forum
St. Joseph's the Workman Cathedral
La Crosse, Wisconsin
March 13, 2004

CRY FOR PEACE

Omnia vincit amor" (Love conquers all)

Pope John Paul II on January 1, 2004 in his message of World Day of Peace said, "At the beginning of the New Year 2004, peace remains possible. And if peace is possible, it is also a duty! We Christians see the commitment to educate ourselves and others to peace as something at the very heart of our religion. For Christians, in fact, to proclaim peace is to announce Christ who is "our peace" (Eph. 2:14); it is to announce his Gospel, which is a "Gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15); it is to call all people to the beatitude of being "peacemakers" (cf. Mt. 5:9).

We live in uncertain times. We hear about war, political unrest, terrorist attacks, poverty, disease, oppression and violation of human rights of people live on our planet earth. But as a Christian I also believe God has created a wonderful world. A wonderful world, a beautiful world, God's world. And God is still in control of this world. No true Christian ever despises the world. We love it; we exalt in it; we cherish it. And we love humanity made in God's image. Fallen, yes – but always loved by Almighty God and therefore loved by us. Always open to new possibilities and always open to redemption and regeneration.

But, alongside all these things, the world is certainly a broken place. We all know it and even the most skeptical and most irreligious person we shall ever meet knows it. Not for nothing did Sir Isaiah Berlin speak of the "the broken timber of humanity". As a lapsed Jew, he knew that the magnificent capabilities of human nature had been shattered as he surveyed the world around him.

As we survey the world around us today we see the images of "the broken timber of humanity" in the rise of violence in Haiti today. On going war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Religious persecution of Christians in Sudan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Burma, India and Laos. Terrorist attacks in the USA and now in Spain. Can we separate ourselves from the war, economic injustice, spread of HIV/AIDS and the uncertainties in the geo-global daily affairs of our world? Not really!

Famous English poet John Donne has said, "No man is an island entire of itself", he wrote, 'every man is a piece of the continent, part of the main; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.'" What a remarkable challenge to our shared humanity. The words of John Donne are telling us that we are vulnerable because we are all connected.

The interconnectedness of our modern world is, in a superficial sense, something of a commonplace. It's simply part of what we commonly understand by globalization. Well, it is certainly much easier to make links – hyper links, air links, road links – between people and places than it was in the past. But Donne is talking about something more; not simply our interconnectedness but also our interdependence: the interdependence of the whole human family – every one of its members made in the image and likeness of God, made to reflect God's glory. Because, as the Good Samaritan parable in the New Testament reading recognized so completely, like it or not, we are involved in one another, caught up in one another's sufferings and joys, triumphs and tribulations. And this is as true of nations as it is of individuals; we belong together and we can only truly flourish when we are living in the light of that truth.

This is why this morning we want to together journey together in few places of the world where members of human family are living under persecution and political unrest. Personally, for me and each follower of Christ the inspiration comes from the teaching of the Holy Scriptures to work as peacemaker to cry for peace and seek justice among our human family as in the Old Testament prophet Micah said, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). I have been for the last many years a pilgrim to seek the path of peace as Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). This morning I shall share with you my journey of

peace to few areas of the world. First Nigeria, Sudan and Pakistan, a country of my birth and then Sudan, the largest country of the African continent:

In the 20th century more Christians have been martyred for their faith than any other time in the human history.

Nigeria:

March 13, 2004, The Church of England Newspaper reports: Nearly 50 Nigerian Christians were 'axed' to death by Muslim extremists last month, many of them at an early morning prayer meeting in Church.

Armed Muslims invaded the service, ordered the congregation to lie face down and proceeded 'to machete and axe them to death in their house of worship' according to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The victims included women and children.

Sudan

Sudan is Africa's largest country. The civil war in Sudan has claimed around 2.5 million lives since 1983. Now there are some 4.5 million people believed to be internally displaced within Sudan and some 500,000 are thought to have sought refuge abroad. It is a conflict which has been characterized by mass human rights abuses, including abduction, rape and arbitrary killings. Thousands of people, particularly women and teenagers, have been abducted and allegedly forced into unpaid domestic labor in conditions reminiscent of slavery.

The poverty and desperation of much of its population stands in stark contrast to the wealth of Sudan's natural resources. The UN Development Program's Human Development Index ranks Sudan among the world's poorest countries - 138th out of a total of 162 countries. And yet Sudan has vast oil reserves that have the potential to transform the lives of its people in a positive way. Sadly the experience of many Sudanese has been that the oil industry has contributed to their suffering rather than their well-being.

Many Sudanese are dependent on food provided by relief agencies; tens of thousands face starvation when relief supplies are disrupted by the fighting. It is equal to modern holocaust and the international community has not much done to resolve this conflict.

Pakistan

In the modern history of nations, Pakistan is the first theocracy created in the name of religion on August 14, 1947. The founder of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah, assured the tiny minority of Christians 2% and others that all members of the newly formed nation had equal rights of citizenship. "You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—has nothing to do with the State." (Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Constituent Assembly August 11, 1947). Unfortunately with the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movement in the region on May 13, 1990 Shria Law was passed in the courts of Pakistan. This has brought the reign of the blasphemy law for Christians to

be tortured and punished if they are accused of insulting the name of prophet Muhammad and Holy Qu'ran. There are hundreds and thousands of Christians who have been harassed, displaced and killed because of this law.

People in Pakistan do not favor US bombing Afghanistan and Iraq, their brotherly countries. Islamic Mullahs immediately passed a religious decree, Fatwa, "If Americans shall kill one Muslim in Afgishtan, then two Christians shall be killed in Pakistan." And immediately attacks on churches during the Sunday morning worship services and on Christian schools started. Let me quote exact words of these terrorist: October 29, 2001, "Pakistan and Afghanistan, graveyard of Christians. Allah is Great. This is just the start." Four gunmen with these words opened fire on the innocent men, women and children praying inside St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church in Bahawalpur. There have been numerous such incidents where Christian worshippers have been killed while worshipping.

Kashmir

Conflict between India and Pakistan started as a political conflict but now has turned into clash between two religious communities - Hindus - Muslims. I grew up with this conflict and since childhood learned the stories of the suffering of the 13 million Kashmiris. India and Pakistan both are nuclear powers and have been treading on dangerous grounds as they have been bitter enemies and it has led both countries to three wars. Because of this on going conflict the common man in both countries received nothing but poverty,

disease, illiteracy and hunger out of this unwise belligerency of fifty five years of rigid political postures and bloated egos.

President Clinton in 1999 during his visit to India and Pakistan called that area “the most dangerous place on earth.” I have personally felt strong call to work in this area of conflict where there is so much hatred among Hindu and Muslim communities and both governments of India and Pakistan. Thus in 2000, I went to Pakistan to meet with the President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf. I also presented a paper in Islamabad “From Conflict to the Road to Peace.” I met with Prime Minister of Asad Kashmir and Islamic militant leaders involved in Jihad against India and visited Kashmiri refugee camps. My simple message to the President of Pakistan, religious mullahs, militants, Pakistani and International Press and to the refugee community was, “I come to you from a far off land to join a group of peacemakers, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Hindus to work together for the peace of the region. Violence begets violence. Bombings, shootings, killings and all such violence serve only to extend and deepen conflict. Peace in this region can be achieved with peaceful means.”

I have continued as a fellow pilgrim to seek peace in the dangerous and difficult areas of conflict. I invite you to join me with your prayers and renewed commitment to work as agents and instruments of Peace.

Let me close it with a story which I read recently:

A Rabbi asked his disciples to define that moment we call dawn when the morning prayers may be said.

One disciple said: “It will be dawn when you can tell a horse from a donkey.”

Another said, “It is dawn when you can tell an olive tree from a fig tree.”

And the rest all offered their best guesses.

And at last the Rabbi said, “it is dawn when you can look a stranger in the face and see your sister or your brother.”

The dawn we all long as pilgrims of peace will come when we see not first and foremost the color, religion, race and nationalities of other people but brothers and sisters living in peace and harmony as dwellers of our planet earth our fragile home. As John Donne has said, “There is no man an Island.” We need each other for our safety, prosperity and health.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

“Vasudaiva Kutumbakam –The entire world is one family.

Impact of September 11—Pilgrimage of Peace to Pakistan

Terrorist's attacks on US interests have brought bad news for the small Christian minority in Pakistan. Fanatic Islamic leaders had issued a "fatwa" stating that two Pakistani Christians will be killed for every Muslim who dies during American strikes on Afghanistan and, as a result, there have been a series of attacks on Christian churches and institutions there. The first attack on St. Dominic Church, Bahawalpur, Pakistan was on October 29, 2001. Six men arrived on motorbikes at around 9 am during a Church of Pakistan (Protestant) service being held in the Catholic Church. They shouted, "Pakistan and Afghanistan, graveyard of Christians, Allah is Great. This is just the start." and opened fire killing 18 worshipers. Most of the congregation was women and children. "Some begged for mercy," said Elisha, a survivor, "they didn't listen." Another survivor, Shamoan Masih (who was himself shot in the leg and arm), described how, "They had no mercy for the children. They had no mercy for the women. They could see small children were being hit by the bullets."

Many struggled desperately to find cover behind the altar or under pews. Amongst the victims were children aged 8, 7 and 2 years old. In one family a father and mother were shot and killed alongside their 12, 10, 8 and 2 year-old daughters and 1 year-old son. Dozens were seriously injured. Father Rufus Tatrias, who ran into the church as soon as the gunmen fled, was confronted with a nightmarish scene. Shamoan further

said, "There was blood all over the church, over the altar where people had tried to hide, bodies lying on the ground, people crying and screaming. The church walls were peppered with gunfire. We have nothing to do with what's going on in Afghanistan."

Then, in August, 2002, there were attacks on Murree Christian School and Taxila Christian Eye Hospital. Both of these towns are in the vicinity of the Pakistani federal capital city of Islamabad. The present day city of Taxila is close to the ruins of the old city of Taxila, discovered in 1945 by British archeologist. Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, lived and preached there. It is said that he influenced King Gandaphorous of Taxila to embrace the Christian faith for his whole kingdom. That was a time long ago, and there are only traces of Christianity to be found in Taxila today. But the Taxila Christian Eye Hospital, Christian doctors and medical workers care for the sick, and terrorists struck many of them on August 9, 2002. This was done to encourage Muslims to hate Christians, and Christians to hate Muslims.

It is serious that hateful acts are increasing with the intention of creating conflict between Christian and Muslims. On August 9, 2003 evening I felt called to invite peace-loving members of Islamic and Christian communities to join me to promote peace and harmony between our faith communities. I asked the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the USA, the Archbishop of

Canterbury, and the Secretary General of Islamic Society of the North America to support my mission of peace to travel to Pakistan.

I arrived in Pakistan on August 14, 2002 and stayed there through August 18. August 14 is the Day of Independence of Pakistan. General Pervez Musharraf, the President of Pakistan in his address to the nation gave a strong message condemning the attacks on the Christian institutions. He said, The recent attacks especially directed at the places of worship of our Christian brothers and sisters are the most shameful and despicable example of terrorism. All this in the name of Islam these misled criminals and the terrorists patrons and tutors even have the audacity to think their actions are a route to Jinut [paradise]. Is this the true spirit of Islam? Is this the religion that we all are so proud of? Where is the tolerance, the magnanimity, the chivalry and the large heartedness that characterizes true Muslims.? We were never so cowardly as to hide and then try to kill children and women...Who is the loser? Nobody but Pakistan. We all have to put in a joint effort to root out those who are maligning religion and tarnishing the image of Pakistan while imagining themselves to be ultra Islamists...Our response to the Murree and Taxila attacks was swift and effective. All the perpetrators of the attacks have either been killed or all of them have been arrested...I appeal to all Ulemas, Mashaiskhs, religious political parties and organizations to come forward actively to protect Islam from such distortion and abuse.” President General Pervez Musharraf’s government is taking several measure to protect the Christian minority in Pakistan.

The government of Pakistan had also organized a visit for me to go to the Taxila Christian Eye Hospital. I was taken to the patients wards and prayed individually with 46 medical workers mostly nurses. I learned that the two terrorists attacked the 170 Christian medical workers as they gathered for prayers in the Chapel early morning. Many were injured, four nurses and a terrorist was killed. Police found an identity card and cell phone number in the pocket of another terrorist who died outside the hospital. Through these clues, investigative team was able to trace the leader of the terrorist cell. In his house they found 65 kilos ammunition to make bombs, weapons, and large amounts of cash. They also found his list of six churches to attack on Sunday services in the cities of Rawalpindi and Lahore. The police was able to arrest several members of the terrorist cell. Government of Pakistan in providing armed police guards to protect key Christian churches and other institutions.

On August 18 Christian-Muslim solidarity group organized an open dialogue dinner meeting at Shalimar Hotel in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. It was covered by the newspapers and Television. The Christian expressed their concern to the Islamic Ulemas that, during the Friday prayers, frequent messages of hatred are preached against Christians. The Islamic religious leaders were asked to help to stop such anti-Christian propaganda, which inflames hatred against the small Christian minority in Pakistan. The Islamic Ulemas expressed their deep sorrow for the present attacks on Christian institutions. They acknowledged that Christians are equal citizens of Pakistan.

At the end I was asked to give my remarks and I said, “Hurting a small Christian community in Pakistan or anywhere in the world does not hurt American government. America is not a Christian country. It is open for all religions, to any race and color. There is a common notion among a large number of Muslims that Christians in the West have plans to harm Islam. I assure you that there is no such conspiracy being cooked in Christian churches in the West. On the contrary, the Churches have welcomed the Islamic communities in their neighborhoods. My own church in Waynesboro, Virginia recently sponsored a Sudanese Muslim refugee family. I personally have helped several Muslim groups in northern Virginia to meet in church halls for Friday prayers and Islamic instructions.”

“In the United States and Europe, many Christian groups are engaged with Muslim communities to foster better understanding and build bridges between these communities. We need to celebrate our common heritage as children of Abrahamic faith and learn to live with our differences in harmony. Let us not stay silent spectators and ignore the religious hatred on the rise, but rather wage a common JIHAD against religious hatred, poverty, illiteracy and disease like HIV AIDS. Together we as people of faith can bring about harmony and peace into our war-torn world.”

I must thank the Pakistani government and people of goodwill for their hospitality. It provided many opportunities to build bridges and frank and open dialogues on religious intolerance and persecution. I pray for more such opportunities where we can work together at grass root level to share messages of hope and peace in churches and mosques.”



Canon Patrick Pervez Augustine visiting General Pervez Musharraf, accompanied by Col. S.K. Tressler, Federal Minister of Minorities Affairs and Tourism & Sports Ministry at President’s House, Islamabad, Pakistan. January 2, 2000.

A Call from North America to People of Faith

People of faith in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa have lived there for a long time. In some parts of the West, Christians, Jews and Muslim communities have lived and tolerated each other's presence for centuries. In the last half century the West has experienced a new wave of immigrants of many faiths. This has opened opportunities for people of faith to come out of their comfort zones and learn to appreciate each other's cultures and religions. This is a new reality that Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Bahais, Sikhs and agnostics can live together as one nation in present-day North America.

We can live in this new world reality, where we do not have to have colonial baggage. All of us can have a fresh start. As communities of faith we are given an opportunity to live together in one nation where we can celebrate our diversity. Together we can show the torch of liberty to a world where the majority is often intolerant of small minorities. There has never been such an experiment of the rainbow of nations, races, creeds, colors and languages in human history before. God Almighty has blessed us with this new reality of being a microcosm of the whole world.



Let us extend our hands as followers of Christ with full sincerity to the Muslim community of North America, so that with members of other faiths we can work together to be an instrument of peace. Let us hold assemblies together in mosques, synagogues and churches. Religion and ethics writer Richard Schemin commented about a conference on Faith in Dialogue held recently at Stanford University in California. He wrote,

“We are talking about calling the entire world of religion into a global dialogue,” said Episcopal Bishop William E. Swing.

He envisions a spiritual United Nations, where hundreds of delegates will sit down and wrestle with issues of war, poverty, environment and population. This visionary longs for peace for our war torn world. This could happen in assemblies of the United Nations and in university lecture halls. Mostly, we need to hold dialogues at the grassroots level. We should form a group of ambassadors of peace to travel together to countries where human dignity is crushed. Ours should be a message of reconciliation and harmony for the world. I am willing to travel to Mecca and other centers of Islam to seek peace in the name of those whose lives have been wounded and dehumanized.”

If we as faith communities fail to speak against injustice and bigotry, then we fail to live according to the precepts of our living faith. We shall continue to be spectators of brutal “ethnic cleansing” where human beings are slaughtered in the killing fields, where prejudice and hatred rules. It would be much like 1930s and 1940s, when the Nazis and Communists slaughtered Gypsies and Jews all across Europe.

We are being called to focus on breaking the isolation between faith communities, and to work towards harmony and peace. Is the human race ready to step into the new millennium as enlightened dwellers on this fragile earth when religious hatred is so strong among the children of God? LORD, MAKE US INSTRUMENTS OF YOUR PEACE.

Pakistan's Christians faithful and resilient in face of persecution

By Matthew Davies

April 14, 2015



The Very Rev. Patrick Augustine, rector of Christ Episcopal Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin, lays foundation stone for the new Christian church in Gulur, Azad Kashmir during a recent solidarity visit.

Pakistan is one of the world's most troubling epicenters for terrorism where minorities are targeted by religious extremists for having different beliefs or affiliations. Yet the persecuted Christian community – 1.5 percent of 180 million people – remains steadfast in faith despite the daily persecution they face.

Last month, two bomb blasts in a Christian neighborhood of the Pakistani city of Lahore killed 17 people and wounded more than 70 as worshippers attended Sunday Mass at St.

John's Roman Catholic Church and Christ Church, a Church of Pakistan church and a member of the Anglican Communion.

“Messages of love and support have flooded in, and churches and agencies around the Anglican Communion are working together to ensure an effective and coordinated practical response as well as continued prayer,” according to a news release from the Anglican Alliance, which connects and strengthens the development, relief and advocacy activities of churches, agencies and networks of the Anglican Communion.

On a recent conference call with representatives of Anglican Communion churches and agencies, Bishop Irfan Jamil of the Diocese of Lahore talked about the priorities for his church and community after the bombings.

Jamil and his team have been visiting the bereaved and those injured by the bomb blasts, the release said. Episcopal Relief & Development has sent a solidarity grant to enable the church to respond to those in need following the attacks.

The Church of Pakistan (United) and the Roman Catholic Church held a joint funeral service for the victims. Archbishop of

Canterbury Justin Welby joined the service by phone and his prayers were translated and shared with the mourners.

“Bishop Jamil inspired those on the [conference] call with his emphasis on the role of church leaders in building peace, harmony and mutual understanding and with his message to the Anglican Communion to continue to stand alongside the Church in Pakistan in these times of trauma,” the release said.

The most devastating attack in Pakistan happened in September 2013 when two suicide bombers targeted All Saints Anglican Church in Peshawar at the end of a Sunday worship service, killing 127 people and injuring 170. Many of the victims were women and children.

Bishop Samuel Azariah of the Diocese of Raiwind, moderator of the Church of Pakistan, spoke with Episcopal News Service shortly after that tragic day, saying that even after years of intense persecution from religious extremists, the Christian population in Pakistan is growing in numbers. “Nothing will dampen our spirits. Bombing, murder, burning, shooting will not dampen our spirits and our commitment to Jesus Christ,” he said.

Bishop of Peshawar Humphrey Peters said in an Easter message last week that the terrorist attacks “have left a permanent scar on the memory and soul of the Christian community of Pakistan ... On the one hand, all these threats, incidents of violence and targeted persecution dishearten the Christian

community of Pakistan. But on the other, it has strengthened the faith and ... their commitment of faithfulness with Lord Jesus Christ.”

It was this resilience and deep faith that the Very Rev. Patrick Augustine experienced when he visited Pakistan earlier this year as an expression of solidarity with the Christian community there.



Members of the congregation at All Saints Anglican Church in Peshawar.

The Pakistan-born rector of Christ Episcopal Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin, preached during Sunday worship on Jan. 25 at the now-heavily guarded All Saints, built in the ancient bazaar of the old city Peshawar in 1865. He found a church that is thriving and full of faithful Christians. “I was touched by the power and commitment of their faith,” he told ENS.

“The terrorists believe they have a cause to impose Islam by violent force, beheadings and detonating explosives to kill those whose belief systems differ,” he added. “Suffering is everywhere and it has overwhelmed our humanity.”

Christians in Pakistan are “pounded by Islamists in brutal suicide bombings, daily harassment and imprisonments,” Augustine said.

Following Sunday morning worship at All Saints Anglican Church in Peshawar, the Very Rev. Patrick Augustine prays with a family that lost several relatives in the bomb blasts of September 2013.

Following Sunday morning worship at All Saints Anglican Church in Peshawar, the Very Rev. Patrick Augustine prays with a family that lost several relatives in the bomb blasts of September 2013.

There is the prominent case of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman and mother of five who was arrested in June 2009 after being accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad – which she denies – and sentenced to death by hanging. She is still in a Pakistani jail despite almost 1 million people worldwide appealing for her release. Some blasphemy charge cases receive high profile in the media, but thousands more go unreported.

Pakistani blasphemy law identifies it as a crime to defile the Holy Quran, with a possible sentence of life imprisonment. But offenses against the Prophet Muhammad may be punishable by death.

“This draconian law is a sword hanging over every Christian’s head. Once accused, the individual is at risk from zealous Islamists who believe that they earn merit with Allah by killing a blasphemer,” Augustine said. “Thousands of innocent people have been imprisoned and killed on false charges of blasphemy.”

Augustine lamented the inaction of the Pakistan government, which, he says, “has allowed extreme Islamic groups to propagate hate ... violence, intolerance and spread extreme ideas into ordinary mosques and community centers.”

But Augustine – who in 2012 was awarded the Cross of St. Augustine by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams in recognition of his contributions internationally to evangelism, ecumenism, and peace and reconciliation between faiths – said that “people want peace. We live in a world fashioned by God so that we all need one another as members of the human family. There are people of goodwill among both Christians and Muslims. I beg all people of goodwill to speak out and not fall prey as silent spectators.”

The Episcopal Church’s Executive Council at its March meeting passed a resolution condemning the use of religion for the purpose of advancing political agendas “directed at terrorizing, victimizing, and oppressing individuals and communities and impairing their ability to enjoy basic human rights because of their religious beliefs and social, ethnic, class, caste, gender, and national affiliations.”

The resolution also calls on the world’s governments “to confront the reality of religious persecution, protect religious minorities and civilians within the framework of international and humanitarian law, address political exclusion and economic desperation that are being manipulated by the forces of extremists, scale up humanitarian and development assistance to host countries and

trusted NGOs, and accept for resettlement a fair share of the most vulnerable people where return to their countries of origin is impossible.”



Following Sunday morning worship at All Saints Anglican Church in Peshawar, the Very Rev. Patrick Augustine prays with a family that lost several relatives in the bomb blasts of September 2013.

The Rev. Canon Robert Edmunds, Middle East partnership officer for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, said: “We sometimes hear the term ‘Christian presence’ in the Middle East and it sounds passive and lacking in vitality when the truth of the matter for those who live there is quite different. The Christian presence throughout the region is about Christians whose family and religious roots reach back to the time of Christ. These are not sojourners in a strange and foreign land, but people whose lives are an integral part of the landscape, the history, the culture and the traditions which have and continue to shape each generation.”

The presence of the Christian churches throughout the region “provides the language of love of God and all neighbors which is in danger of being silenced,” Edmunds added.

“We in the West must continue to give these atrocities visibility both in terms of solidarity with our brother and sister Christians, but to encourage political leaders to seek lasting and durable solutions for peace for the benefit of all. To lose the Christian voice in the region would be catastrophic for the future.”

Augustine’s friends, family and parishioners expressed concern about him visiting Pakistan at such a volatile time. But on his journey, Augustine said that he found countless signs of hope and unexpected surprises.



The Very Rev. Patrick Augustine with youth leaders of the Diocese of Peshawar, some of whom were injured and lost family members in the bomb blasts at All Saints Anglican Church.

One early Sunday morning in February, Augustine and 20 Christians from Islamabad drove for four hours to be with a Christian family near Muzzaffarabad. The family has been living there since 1933, but they are the only Christians in an otherwise exclusively Islamic area. Augustine described it as a deep privilege and a historical day as he relayed how he was asked to celebrate Holy Communion and preach, then lay the foundation of a church that will seat 50 people.

On his first day of arrival in Islamabad, he visited a tailor's shop with a friend. One of the Muslim brothers who run the shop asked Augustine to pray for him. When Augustine told him that he prays in the name of Jesus the brother said that he had no objection to that.

As he was about to leave, the other two brothers approached Augustine and asked him to pray with them also. "I looked at them and saw in their eyes hunger for God for healing and blessing," he said. "I laid my hands on them and asked God to bless them, their shop and bless Pakistan to be a land with peace. This was an amazing opportunity to experience in a land where Christians are discriminated and persecuted on daily basis."



The Very Rev. Patrick Augustine prays with the displaced Christian community in Bannu.

Two days later, Peters, the bishop of Peshawar, received a phone call about an attack by a Muslim mob on a Christian-run school in the city of Bannu. The school has 1,800 students and 99 percent are Muslim. Peters and four clergy decided to leave immediately and Augustine was invited to accompany them. "It is a highly security-sensitive area and not many Americans would be able to make this dangerous journey. It was a privilege to go

... and stand in solidarity with a suffering church," Augustine said.

Inside the compound, there were 200 Christian families internally displaced from the Waziristan area, a stronghold of Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces and the region where American drones have targeted terrorists.

"One million are internally displaced," Augustine said. "Christian families were living in refugee camps ... and not given food and shelter. It has been an Anglican area since 1860s. The bishop invited Christians to pitch tents inside the church compound where the school and hospital are situated. They are able to provide education and medical help to Muslims and Christians in this city.

"I spent one whole day visiting these displaced people, listening to their stories, holding hands and praying with them. ... I did not get a sense that these people were ready to give up their faith, but that they were very strong, deeply rooted and committed to following Jesus in the way of the cross."

– Matthew Davies is an editor/reporter of the Episcopal News Service.

Reconciliation at heart of Pakistani Christian response to persecution

Episcopalians stand in solidarity, explore partnerships

By Matthew Davies

May 27, 2016



Diocese of Louisiana Episcopal Caroline Carson lights a candle in memory of the 72 people killed in the Easter Day attacks at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore, Pakistan. Photo: Diocese of Raiwind

The Easter Day suicide bombing at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore, Pakistan, that killed at least 72 Christians and Muslims and injured more than 300, sent shockwaves throughout the region.

But the March 27 attack did not deter Episcopalians Caroline Carson from leaving the Diocese of Louisiana for Pakistan the following day on an already-scheduled trip at the invitation of Bishop Samuel Azariah, Church of Pakistan moderator.

“I briefly considered not going, but ... I felt that having this chance to make a good connection was a priceless opportunity ... to stand up to society’s fears, bust through stereotypes, create goodwill, and see beyond the cover of the book,” said Carson, a lay deputy to General Convention and director of choral activities at the University of New Orleans. “I also felt very called to be there, even more so after the bombing. Pakistani Christians have been through so many bombings. I wanted personally to deliver the message that we also desire their peace and safety. I wanted to reach out and deliver messages of friendship.”

During the Episcopal Church’s General Convention in June 2015, Azariah had asked Carson to visit his Lahore-based Diocese of Raiwind to teach music, offer some of her NASA Solar System Ambassador presentations in the schools, and to learn about the Church of Pakistan. “While I did do all of these things, my visit gained an additional new focus in the light of the recent bombing and the fact that I was an American, coming to Pakistan against all U.S. Department of State travel warnings at a time of heightened concerns,” she said.

When Carson arrived in Lahore, Azariah had already held one meeting of local Christian

leaders and called a meeting of interfaith religious leaders “to discuss how to cope with recent terror events, how to move forward, and how to make an active difference that would reach beyond words.

“The Church of Pakistan had stepped immediately into action,” she said. “They would rather put themselves in danger and put their lives at risk for something good that to sit by idly in a corner, struck down by fear.”

In that spirit, local religious leaders decided that an interfaith prayer vigil at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park would take place on Sunday, April 3, at the same time as the Easter Day bombing one week earlier. It was an act that they defined as “defiantly holy.”

Despite security concerns, Carson joined about 200 local Muslim and Christian leaders, international guests, and some families of the victims at the vigil.



Diocese of Louisiana Episcopalian Caroline Carson joins a prayer service in Lahore in solidarity with the victims and families of those killed in the Easter Day attacks. Photo: Iain Cunningham

“I went. I prayed. I cried. I gave our condolences from the Diocese of Louisiana and from the Episcopal Church,” said Carson.

“Children are children and the horror of losing them in such senseless violence reaches a depth where no words remain.

“More tears came when I saw a little brother of one of the victims. He was too young to understand it all, but he was profoundly sad. I held a candle and the hands of my fellow humans – Muslim, Christian, Hindu – and I felt what it is to be in communion with each other. This is so important. God is so much bigger than all of our separateness. We are a human family.”



As an expression of solidarity, schoolchildren at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in New Orleans make messages and cards for their music director Caroline Carson to take with her to Pakistan.

Ahead of her trip, Carson had asked the schoolchildren at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in New Orleans, where she is director of music, to make messages and cards that she could take with her to Pakistan. “I felt that some of the families affected would appreciate these cards, but even more so after the Easter Day bombing,” she said. “My new Pakistani friends in the junior church in the

Diocese of Raiwind made some cards in reciprocation,” and Carson delivered them to St. Paul’s when she returned.

That need for connectedness was why the Very Rev. Patrick Augustine, the Pakistan-born rector of Christ Episcopal Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin, was even more determined to proceed with his April visit in solidarity with the Christian community there.



After the Sunday service at All Saints Church in Peshawar, the Rev. Canon Patrick Augustine lays hands on members of the congregation and prays for their healing.

Augustine was guest preacher on April 24 at All Saints Anglican Church in Peshawar, which was targeted in September 2013 by two suicide bombers at the end of a Sunday worship service, killing 127 people and injuring 170. Many of the victims were women and children.

“Although they lost a large number of their members in this bomb attack, on Sunday morning All Saints Church was packed and there was hardly any space left empty,” said Augustine.



Canon Augustine praying for Azra Janbaz, a registered nurse who is also a volunteer evangelist. She was blamed with false charges of blasphemy of insulting Islam. She was tortured and suffered much persecution from 2004-2014. The Pakistani court has cleared her from charges of blasphemy. She could have received a death sentence or life in prison. She is serving again as a registered nurse in Peshawar. Her kidneys now do not function well and she carries physical and emotional scars.

During the attack, 12 of the 15 choir members were killed. “Their choir members were now more than 20 with renewed faith to lead and praise God,” he said. “The man who plays tabla (drums) has been member of the choir for the last 33 years. He was severely injured. After two years of treatments he is back in the choir playing drums again. I had an opportunity to pray for him asking God to continue his healing.”



The Rev. Canon Patrick Augustine prays for healing with the tabla player of All Saints Church in Peshawar who was severely injured during the September 2013 bombings at the church.

After the Sunday service, many people asked Augustine to lay hands on them and pray for their healing. “Many suffer severe pain as pieces of ball bearings, blades and poisonous material still is in their bodies,” he said. “I observed there were several members of this congregation who could not kneel because of pain. I was amazed and blessed to experience their living and vibrant faith.”



The Rev. Canon Patrick Augustine dedicates a new church building in Gulpur, Azad Kashmir.

Evidence that Christianity in Pakistan is growing despite the persecution was seen one

week later when Augustine dedicated a new church building in Gulpur, Azad Kashmir. “It was a great day of rejoicing and celebration,” he said. “We pray many more blessings will be poured upon this land. It was a great privilege for me to be part of this historic day.”

Another aspect of the persecution faced by religious minorities is the draconian Pakistani blasphemy law, which identifies it as a crime to defile the Quran, with a possible sentence of life imprisonment. Offenses against the Prophet Muhammad may be punishable by death.

There is the prominent case of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman and mother of five who was arrested in June 2009 after being accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad – which she denies – and sentenced to death by hanging. She is still in a Pakistan jail despite massive rallying worldwide appealing for her release.

Some blasphemy charge cases receive coverage in the media, but thousands more go unreported.

The Anglican Consultative Council, the Anglican Communion’s main policy-making body, passed a resolution during its April meeting in Zambia standing in solidarity and prayer with Asia Bibi and urging “her case to be re-investigated and that she be honorably acquitted.”

Although the Christian minorities – 1.5 percent of 180 million people – face daily persecution in Pakistan, “a lot of good things are happening there. There is great faith and hope” and it is very important to think about, pray for, visit them and bear witness to their lives, according to the Rev. Khushnud

Azariah, vicar of St. George's Episcopal Church in Riverside, California, and the first female Pakistani to be ordained a priest.

Azariah hopes that collaborative partnerships and exchanges may emerge from a March trip she and other members of the Diocese of Los Angeles Program Group on Global Partnership took to her birthplace, Lahore.

The group said they visited Pakistan in response to the church's call to attempt partnerships and peace building in areas where Christians are minorities.

That call came last year, in the form of General Convention Resolution D035, which originated in the Diocese of Los Angeles. It charged the Episcopal Church to support and "to learn about the realities of the Church in Pakistan and the oppression of religious minorities in that country."

Their trip coincided with a conference that brought together representatives from the eight dioceses in Pakistan, and two minority populations: Muslims from Norway, and Christians from Pakistan, for peace building, reconciliation and experience sharing. It evoked the question of responsibility toward the Christians' neighbors, Azariah said. And while dealing with a Muslim majority may be tricky and even difficult at times, she said, "the church is called to love your neighbor. And who my neighbor is, in the context of Pakistan, is Muslims.

"The church is now trying to find ways to reach out to Muslims who are moderate and who also want to speak up for the rights of everyone," she added.



The Rev. Canon Titus Presler

The Rev. Canon Titus Presler, an Episcopal priest who served as principal of the Edwardes College in Peshawar, was all set to attend and speak at that conference until visa complications forced him to remain in the United States.

In February 2014, Presler experienced first-hand some the persecution faced by local Christians when he was beaten and threatened with death by Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agents on the outskirts of Peshawar as part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's drive to assert its control over Edwardes College, a liberal arts undergraduate and graduate church institution of 2,800 students, where 90 percent of faculty and students are Muslim.

"One immediate response I had was to realize anew that Christians and other religious minorities in Pakistan have been experiencing much greater abuse for decades, and so my first prayer was one of solidarity as we drove on to Islamabad," he said.

"Another initial response, however, was silence," he added. "I found it difficult to discuss the incident. In beating me, accusing me, tearing up my visa, threatening me with death, and so on, the ISI agents had treated me as rubbish. They heaped blame and shame on me. Cognitively I knew it all to be false.

Emotionally, though, some part of me was asking: Does this happening to me mean that they're right? I must have done something wrong to deserve this. I must be to blame. Maybe I am rubbish. I feel deeply shamed."

That experience has taught him the importance of "praying with our enemies on their knees," said Presler, who has served as academic dean at General Theological Seminary in New York, and president of the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas.

"Praying for the enemy is generous, but in doing so we can retain our distance, even our sense of superiority," he said. "Praying with the enemy is humbling, for it puts us alongside the enemy in a relationship of equality before God. It may mean joining an enemy who is already at prayer, and we must recognize that we have enemies who pray. It may mean inviting an enemy into prayer. In the natural course of things, none of that may be possible, as it has not been possible for me in Peshawar. But I have found that praying as though my enemy were kneeling and praying beside me has been profoundly edifying. Praying with the enemy forces me to open up to the other's full humanity."

From his experience, Presler said, Christians in Pakistan are willing to pray alongside their enemies. "In that willingness they are taking the first step in being open to the call to be reconciled," he said. "In that spirit they may be able actually to draw militants toward reconciliation when they take advantage of their ministries in education and healthcare."

In Pakistan, virtually all the outreach work of Christian churches can be seen as reconciliation work, he said. "They are an oppressed and persecuted minority community. Yet they do not withdraw into their shell to nurse their wounds and grudges. Instead they continue to support and build up their network of educational and healthcare ministries that serve primarily the majority community. Thereby they are every day extending the olive branch of service and peace to the Muslim majority, saying, in effect: 'You have hurt us, you are hurting us now, and we know many of you will continue to hurt us in the future. Nevertheless we continue to be open to you, we continue to serve you in the name of Christ. And we pray and hope that together we can be reconciled.' ... God's mission is to reach across those differences to discover one another, care and form relationships, liberate and work for justice, and finally to reconcile. God invites us to join in that mission."

— Matthew Davies is an editor/reporter of the Episcopal News Service. The Rev. Pat McCaughan contributed to this article.



Walking with the Persecuted

By Matthew Townsend

Friday, July 1, 2016



Father Patrick performing an adult baptism in Azad, Kashmir

Forty years ago, when the Rev. Patrick Augustine was ordained, he prayed that God would bring him to the far corners of the planet. Augustine's prayers have been answered again and again in his ministry, most recently during a spring tour of persecuted churches in Africa and Pakistan.

"I decided to take a pilgrimage and go to places where Christian churches are being

persecuted or have been persecuted and stand in solidarity with those brothers," said Augustine, rector of Christ Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Augustine flew into Nairobi, Kenya, and then traveled for eight hours to Garissa, near the Kenya's border with Somalia. This new missionary diocese is the region's first substantial Anglican presence in a century.

The missionary diocese has been planted "where Al-Qaeda Al-Shabaab rules openly," Augustine said, and has "attacked churches, colleges, and punished and killed many people."



April 6, 1st grade children receiving gifts.

Planted in 2008, the diocese started with two parishes and now has eight parishes, preschools, and clinics. Augustine said the diocese has helped Somali people with

medicine and schooling. A well has also been dug. “They may do acts of terrorism or acts of hatred, but we are gospel people and we reach out with the missionary Diocese of Garissa with the arms of Jesus Christ spread on the hard wood of the cross.”

After visiting Garissa, Augustine traveled to South Sudan. He had last been there in 2008, before South Sudan declared independence from Sudan, when he was Canon and Commissary to the Archbishop of Sudan in the U.S. He began his visit at All Saints Cathedral.

There, he met with four bishops and delivered a suitcase of medicines and bags of children’s toys donated by Emirates airline. In an area where so many parents were killed or in diaspora, support for orphans and young refugees has been a critical way of developing leaders in the region — even if the process takes decades, Augustine said.



April 11, Mothers Union Leaders spent a day in retreat with Patrick Augustine.

In 1996, for example, the dioceses of Bradford, Salisbury, and Southwestern Virginia helped develop three education

centers in Kakuma refugee camp, home to 100,000. In Bor, the largest diocese in South Sudan, Augustine met a parish priest who earned his high school diploma through these education centers. Other leaders who went through the camps had earned degrees in Kampala and returned to South Sudan to help with refugee resettlement.

“Now people have come back after 20 years, back because they are free people now, and I could see that they still recognize those scholarships, provided for children, helped them to get education,” he said. “One is a manager for the diocese, one is a parish priest in Andrew’s Cathedral, and one is a woman leader.

“They’re becoming leaders in the church because they’re rebuilding their lives, rebuilding their church, their institutions.”

Zimbabwe was next on Augustine’s pilgrimage — a place where persecution of the past has given way to a thriving church of the present. “Since this church had gone through exile, persecution — for five years their churches were taken, schools were taken, priests could not return to their parishes houses or to their churches — they spent time in exile, and there was quite a bit of persecution.



April 13, Mary, a Dinka Woman Leader at St. Andrew's Cathedral in the Diocese of Bor, presenting a cross to Augustine.

“Now they’ve received their cathedral, received their parish churches, their pastors’ houses, schools,” he said. “So, they wanted to have, really, a celebration and thanksgiving service.”



April 17, Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury, with Augustine and church leaders preparing for worship.

Augustine joined the Archbishop of Canterbury for that celebratory Eucharist. The service had as many as 10,000 people, he said, gathered in the open air for a three-hour Eucharist featuring a choir of hundreds and “as much incense as they could find.”

The priest addressed the crowd, sharing the purpose of his pilgrimage and saying he could see the resurrection present in Zimbabwe. “My whole purpose was to be there while

they were celebrating their returning from exile,” Augustine said. This visit was a highlight on the trip. “I could see beautiful churches, beautiful gardens, and they were pushed out and they were worshipping by the roadside for five years. And had no place to have proper weddings, funerals, or Sunday worship service.”

Augustine said this experience has made the church in this place, and in persecuted places, stronger.



April 17, Chad Gandiya, Bishop of Harare with Augustine at a worship service.

“That’s what I find in Kenya. That’s what I find in South Sudan: that these people are not

depressed because 2.1 million brothers and sisters have died. They are even more vibrant because they survived. They feel Jesus Christ has been present in their suffering.”

After visiting Zimbabwe, Augustine traveled to Islamabad, Pakistan. He first visited Christ Church in Rawalpindi, where he had previously been vicar. There, the Bishop of Lahore held a three-day evangelism conference. This caught Augustine by surprise. “This church has been under persecution; I’ve just arrived on the soil of Pakistan, and I would say, They will be talking about their survival and they will be depressed and they will be scared. And no.” The 175 people in the parish “were being equipped in how to reach out to their neighbor

— who may be Christian, who may be Muslim — but to proclaim the gospel, live out the gospel, share the gospel, and the bishop himself was teaching for three days.”



All Saints Church, Peshawar, Pakistan

Next, he went to Peshawar near the Afghanistan border and capital of the northwest frontiers of Pakistan. Frequently invaded and a hotbed for terrorism, Peshawar has seen incredible violence inside and outside of churches. At All Saints on Sept. 22, 2013, two suicide bombers came and detonated explosives just after a service, killing 127 and injuring around 250 of the 600 gathered that morning. “The church, their walls are white, and so the flesh of human beings was hanging on those walls for several days,” Augustine said.

“It was powerful to be in a church which is a church of real martyrs, and the blood of the martyrs is really soaked into that soil where I was standing and preaching. Feeling their presence, feeling their cries, feeling their prayers.”

On the morning Augustine visited, the church was full from the altar to the entrance with 500 to 600, some of them still suffering

from injuries during the explosion and from persecution for their faith. While there, he met a nurse who had been falsely imprisoned for blasphemy after praying in the name of Jesus Christ for patients in her hospital. “She was arrested, put into jail, tortured for ten years,” he said. “It has affected her kidneys, her hearing, and she was very badly beaten many times. But she’s not given up. She was present there. She had a smile on her face. She asked me, ‘Lay your hands on me and pray for me that I can continue to be a nurse and an evangelist, and be the healing hands of Jesus Christ.’”



Sunday, April 24th, Augustine, greeted by the church leaders, preached at All Saints Church, Peshawar, Pakistan.

Members of these churches face the threat of violence and death every day. But, as he said, they are not under the ground yet. “They’re above the ground and living their faith, and witnessing for Jesus Christ.”

Augustine then went to the Diocese of Lahore, where he was ordained, in the week after his 40th anniversary of ordination.

“God has opened so many doors,” he said, reflecting on conversations with Pervez

Musharraf (president from 2001 to 2008) about building peace in Kashmir, his travels around the world, and his work within the Anglican Communion.

From Augustine's perspective, churches in North America may struggle to understand persecuted churches because life is so different.

"We are a church in a place of affluence," he said. "Our culture's issues have sometimes taken over, and we have not been able to see very clearly, with compassionate heart and eyes, our brothers and sisters who do differ with us."

Augustine said those cultural differences are causing Anglicanism to struggle in preserving its identity and unity. "What has happened is that sometimes we don't know their issues are ... persecution, safety, security. The issue is poverty, lack of jobs, hunger, and nakedness. Not enough clothing, no housing, no electricity.

"In some places, their issues are survival," he said. "Last week, 13 Christian girls were raped in a certain area of Lahore, and nothing has happened."

Getting bogged down in debates in North America, he said, may cloud an understanding of people facing these dangers. During these visits, Augustine made it clear that he was not there to sort out disagreements, telling bishops, "I'm here only with the Gospel, and I'm here to stand in solidarity. I'm here to pray with you in the name of Jesus Christ."

The goal is to rebuild trust through these relationships and through prayer. Indeed, Augustine suggests that Episcopalians pray

for persecuted churches if they cannot visit: "Take one country at a time and share one or two stories and ask people to listen to the cry of these people, learn about their living faith, and pray for them during the prayers for the people.

"This is a reality," he said. "We hear about Syria, we hear about Iraq, we hear about Iran ... Pakistan, the Sudan, Nigeria. There are so many places.

"We should know that the most persecuted community in the world is a Christian community. Every day, Christians are killed. Dozens and dozens every day," he said. "It's not just a myth. It's not just a made-up story. It's a reality" in which girls are raped, boys are killed, and work is impossible to find, even with an education.

"Churches can be the advocates. We're not demonizing any religion, not Islam," he said. "We are gospel people. We reach out our hands of love with everybody, even to our enemies. But I think we should accept reality ... that Christians are being severely persecuted and discriminated at present in Islamic countries.



May 1, Augustine dedicated a new church building in Gulpur in Azad, Kashmir.

"The Episcopal Church can be the advocate for the suffering church."

A mission journey of peace

Among Churches in Pakistan, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia

The Very Rev. Canon Patrick P. Augustine, D.Min. DD.
Rector and Dean, Christ Episcopal Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin
October 2017

“Why does Father Patrick travel to such distant places?”

This is a very good question, and a question that I hope to answer with this journal of my recent travels to visit and meet with Christians in Pakistan, Malaysia and Thailand. I hope as you journey with me through these words you will come to understand the workings of Christ as I carry your hopes and your strength as my Christian brothers and sisters far and wide to other sisters and brothers who need to hear the good news.

Here is how my personal commitment to mission began

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (John 20:21).

I was studying at Lahore Divinity School in Lahore, Pakistan, from 1972-1976, I read the following statement of Emil Brunner, which had a great impact on me:

Mission work does not arise from any arrogance in the Christian Church; mission is its cause and its life. The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is neither Church nor mission, there is no faith. It is a secondary question whether by that we mean Foreign Missions, or simply the preaching of the

Gospel in the home Church. Mission, Gospel preaching, is the spreading out of the fire which Christ has thrown upon the earth. He who does not propagate this fire shows that he is not burning. He who burns propagates the fire. This ‘must’ is both things – an urge and a command. An urge, because living faith feels God’s purpose as its own. “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel,” says Paul. (1 Corinthian 9:16)

In 2001, the Archbishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, 21 Sudanese bishops, and the bishop of Salisbury, United Kingdom, laid hands on me in Kampala, Uganda to appoint me Canon and Commissary in North America. In my appointment letter, which was read aloud in a public worship service, Archbishop Joseph Biriangi Marona wrote: “You are the voice of the voiceless people and an apostle of peace. You are our friend.”

On December 16, 2012, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams granted me the Cross of St Augustine Award. His citation called me an “Ambassador of peace” and “Voice of the Voiceless.” Because I take these discernments of the Church seriously, I willingly follow where the spirit of the Lord sends me to be with suffering people. It is a privilege and a humbling call.

God has used me to carry good news of the Gospel with a message of encouragement, peace, and solidarity with the suffering churches of Pakistan and Sudan. The faith of the Church is strong and vibrant in the face of the daily challenges Christians experience in countries dominated by Islam.

Jesus Christ is the heart of this mission journey. I have crossed land and sea, continents and cultures as His servant. What on earth impels me to do so? I am not here to commend a certain way of living, or an ideology to follow, but to present the person of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who embraces all humanity through his saving work, grace and love – to share his message that we all matter...that God loves us all.

While traveling in South Asia, I was reminded of the story of Sadu Sundar Singh, born in 1889 into an affluent Sikh family in India. Sundar Singh embraced Jesus Christ. On one occasion, he visited a Hindu college and was accosted rather aggressively by a lecturer. “What is unique that Sadu has to offer students?” Sundar Singh replied with humility: “I have Christ.”

The lecturer continued impatiently: “Yes, I know, but what particular principle or doctrine have you found that you did not have before?”

“The particular thing I have found,” Sundar Singh replied, “is Jesus Christ.”

Our world is marred with violence, racial hatred, terrorism, religious divisions, economic disparity, poverty and growing numbers of refugees seeking shelter and acceptance. I know the world needs Christ.

His arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross are open wide so everyone might come within his saving embrace. “But I am only a little wire — God is the power,” said Mother Teresa. Like her, I simply follow the paths of the apostles to be an instrument of peace, to release the good news of the Gospel among those to whom and with whom I journey.

I give thanks to God for providing me with this ministry of listening, encouragement, teaching, preaching and laying on of hands in healing services. My own faith has been refreshed, and I pray I have been a source of blessings to those to whom I have ministered.

A Mission Travel Journal

Sunday, October 8 - From La Crosse, Wisconsin, to Rawalpindi-Islamabad, Pakistan

I left the morning of October 4 and traveled via Doha, Qatar. I arrived at the airport in Islamabad, Pakistan, at 1:30 a.m., Oct. 6, after a 26-hour journey. It was the first of eight days I would spend in Pakistan with little more than 3 to 4 hours of sleep each night.

After a couple of hours of rest, I was invited to lead a worship service in a Christian colony called Bait-e-saida in Rawalpindi. The families of my brother, Rev. Peter Augustine, and sister, Avais Sarwar, lived here before they migrated to the United States. After the worship service, I was invited to visit a few homes to pray for people living there.

Later in the evening, I was invited to the home of Syed Faiz Naqashbandi, the convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a political party seeking justice for Kashmiri Muslims.

Until midnight, we shared political views and food and found common threads in both faiths to work for peace and justice for the oppressed.

Meeting with Christians who worship at great risk

Sun., Oct. 8, 2017. All Saints Church, Khoti Gate, Peshawar, Pakistan

All Saints is an historic church built in the mid 1800's in the old part of the city of Peshawar. On September 22, 2013, the church was attacked by two Taliban suicide bombers. The attack left 137 worshippers dead and more than 200 wounded.

Since the attack, I have come each year to this church of the martyrs. I thank the Most. Rev. Humphrey Peters, Moderator Bishop of the Church of Pakistan, for inviting me to preach and serve as concelebrant during the Holy Eucharist. Every time I come to worship at All Saints Church, I find a vibrant faith of the living church. On this Sunday, worshippers filled the church from the entrance to the altar area.

Throughout the past 40 years, I have come to know the persecuted church. It helps me understand what it looks like to take up one's cross today. The living faith of persecuted Christians has grown out of the risky choice each has made to align themselves with the cross of Christ. Their cross is a daily struggle to follow Christ amid threats, suffering and persecution. Their commitment is the source of their extraordinary perseverance and power.

These Christians embody the truth that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those

who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the Power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Every year it is an honor and blessing for me to be with our brothers and sisters whose members were killed or wounded during the 2013 attack on All Saints Church.

My La Crosse, Wisconsin, congregation at Christ Episcopal Church has been sending funds for the education of orphan children and treatment of the wounded for All Saints Church. Again, this year funds were provided for children and young men and women for education and medical treatment.

After church, Archdeacon S.P. Asghar and I visited several victims of the attack. I prayed and laid hands on them to bless and anoint them to receive healing and the peace of God. I was truly touched by the depth of their faith. Amidst suffering and loss of lives, they still pray for peace to live in harmony with their Muslim neighbors.

Witnessing Christian ministry amidst the Taliban and Al-Qaeda

Mon., Oct. 9. Peshawar, Youngsonabad and Martinpur

Bishop Peters invited me to meet with him and his staff to learn about the work of the Diocese of Peshawar. It is the largest diocese of the Church of Pakistan. It is situated uniquely, as its role is to minister on the borders of Afghanistan where there is a strong presence of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. The Church is present among them with strong and visible ministry through churches, schools, hospitals and services to

the refugee community. Bishop Emeritus Mano Rumlshah of Peshawar has said: “We are being killed, in pain and suffering, but we are a church above the ground, not under the ground.”

After the meeting, I left at 5 p.m. for a 5-hour journey by car to visit two Christian villages, Youngsonabad and Martinpur. When we arrived at midnight, village leaders warmly welcomed us. We had late-night and early-morning visits to their churches, high school and with community members.

In Youngsonabad, I learned a unique story of communities helping each other: A living example of providing resources for a Christian ministry by Dr. Sarah Safdar’s family members. The Pakistani Church is striving to be self-sufficient. They have built a beautiful center where old folks of their community can gather for lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. A full-time nurse provides nursing care, which is funded through generous gifts of Dr. Sarah Safdar’s extended family.

We visited a water purification plant run by Chinese Christians in Youngsonabad. This is a very good development as it will bring jobs for the villagers. The Chinese Christians, who did not speak English, put my hand on their heads to bless them and their water plant.

Revisiting my childhood parish

Tues., Oct. 10. Diocese of Fasilabad

We left Martinpur at 11 a.m. and drove 3 hours to Gojra, my home town, in the Diocese of Fasilabad. The Rt. Rev. John Samuel and the clergy of the diocese were present in

the Bishop’s House in Gojra. They gave us a warm welcome and shared with me the various ministries in this rural diocese. My father served St. John’s Church as Rural Dean and Archdeacon of the Diocese of Lahore.

A new cathedral for the diocese of Fasilabad is being built in Gojra. My La Crosse congregation sent a large brass cross and candlesticks for the high altar of this church. The Augustine and Mall families donated financial gifts toward the support of the new cathedral. I presented these gifts to Bishop John Samuel and diocesan clergy.

At 4 p.m., I left with Bishop Samuel to visit the Christian village of Montgomery Wala. This Anglican village was founded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1864. In the 1950’s, while my father served here as parish priest, I completed my 1st to 5th grade education at CMS high school. I attended daily evening prayer with my father in the old church. In 1956 a great revival occurred. Each evening, the church was filled with hundreds of people for a one-hour praise and prayer worship service.

Today at least 6,000 Christians live in Montgomery Wala. With their own resources, they recently built a new church that can seat 1,500. We held an evening worship service there at 5 p.m. It was a privilege and honor for me to preach to a couple hundred parishioners at the church of my childhood and then visit several homes to pray with families.

At 7 p.m. we left Montgomery Wala for Satrah, where 55 Christian families live in a large Muslim-majority village. After arriving at 8:30 p.m. and eating a quick

dinner, we joined eight diocesan clergy and 400 Christians from surrounding villages for a watch-night praise and prayer service. Worship began at 9:30 p.m. and continued till 4 a.m. The service included a healing ritual for the sick. I also preached for more than an hour and celebrated Holy Eucharist. At least 45 children attended. I was moved by their presence throughout the service.

After barely 3 hours of sleep, on the morning of October 11, a steady stream of close to 100 persons came to the house where I was staying for prayer and to receive unction for healing. Anointing is precious because the grace of God flows from head to the body for healing of mind, body and soul. The Holy Spirit brings cleansing and healing.

Before leaving Satrah at 2 p.m., I presented money donated by my family for scholarships and Sunday School activities to the local vicar and senior elder of St. Augustine Parish Church.

My next stop was the city of Faisalabad, which is an industrial hub and the third largest city in Pakistan. We held another worship service and laying of hands for several families gathered in the Christian colony of Warrispura in Faisalabad.

Finally, at 8 p.m., I boarded a public bus from Faisalabad and rode to Lahore, arriving around midnight. The bishop of Lahore, the Rt. Rev. Irfan Jamil, and Pastor Ifrahim Matthew received me at the bus station. I stayed overnight at the bishop's house in the cathedral close.

Lahore: 3 generations of Augustine pastors

Thurs., Oct. 12. Diocese of Lahore

The Diocese of Lahore is the mother diocese of the Church of Pakistan. Out of a single original diocese, seven more have been formed. My grandfather, father and I served in this diocese for three generations. My father was the senior clergyman as diocesan Archdeacon.

I spent many years here in the formation of my faith and ministry. I first went to Cathedral School and then, after earning my bachelor's degree from Punjab University, I entered the Divinity School for ordination training from 1972 to 1976 at St. Hilda's House in the cathedral close. I was ordained here in April 1976 in the Cathedral of the Resurrection.

Under Bishop Jamil's leadership, the Diocese of Lahore is engaged in evangelism, education and ministry of feeding the poor in the second largest city in Pakistan. During my visit, I was invited to lead devotions and to pray with diocesan leaders.

A remote church doubles in size

Fri., Oct. 13. Azad Kashmir

We left Lahore during the night of October 12 and arrived in Rawalpindi early in the morning. After three hours of rest, we left at 9 a.m. for Gulpur, Azad Kashmir. In April 2016, I was privileged to dedicate the first church built in the state of Azad Kashmir in 2,000 years. This small church is the only Christian place of worship in this entire state. In 2016, about 20 people attended the first service. This afternoon, 49 were present.

I give thanks to God for the ministry of Pastor Ifrahim Matthew. He is a dedicated servant of God with a passion to reach the unreached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the last 35 years, he has often accompanied me during my travels in Pakistan. Without his help, I could not carry my mission of peace and healing in these distant lands.

This is a mountainous area. Not far from this church, a new dam is under construction. The Gulpur Hydro Power Project is a hydroelectric generation project on the Poonch River, a major tributary of the Jehlum River near Gulpur in the Kotli District.

Kotli is the only small city in this mountainous area. Evangelist Arshad Masih leads the Gulpur Evangelical Church. He is the only Christian lay evangelist serving a ministry area of several hundred square miles. Please remember him and his young family in your prayers.

The Gulpur Hydro Power project site is 167 miles from the Pakistani federal capital city of Islamabad. Before the project began in 2014, there were no job opportunities in this area. Now hundreds of people have migrated here to work on the dam.

In exile: 5-year-old Charlotte and her family's story

Sat., Oct. 15, Bangkok, Thailand

Yesterday I flew from Islamabad to Bangkok, where several thousand Pakistani Christians have sought asylum. After I arrived in the morning, it took me almost two hours to get out of the airport, exchange currency and reach my hotel in central Bangkok. It felt

good to take a shower and change clothes before I took a sky train to Bearing, an area outside Bangkok.

There I met with families who have fled from harsh conditions in Pakistan. Several were accused under the Blasphemy Law. Others who feared persecution came to Bangkok on three-month tourist visas. Although many have professional degrees, their applications for refugee status have been denied. They live in dire poverty without any help from United Nations Refugee Services. I spent a whole day in a high-rise building visiting these families. I listened to their stories, shed tears with them and held Sunday worship service with them.

The plight of a young couple seeking asylum in Bangkok exemplifies the absolute hopelessness they and others like them endure each day. Sonia Esther, her husband, Amber Shajeel, and their five-year-old daughter, Charlotte, have lived in Bangkok since the fall of 2013. Sonia is a registered nurse with a bachelor's degree in English. Her husband has an accounting degree.

Sonia was a nurse-in-charge in a social work office in Lahore, Pakistan, when a clerk in her department (a Muslim religious fanatic) falsely accused her of desecrating the Quran. She had not committed this crime, but still the rumor spread. A group of religious fanatics in her office wanted her to be charged and imprisoned for life. Because there was a good chance she could have been killed by a mob even before she was arrested, she went into hiding. After four weeks, she and her family received a tourist visa and escaped to Bangkok.

The Shajeels enjoyed a middle-class income in Pakistan and had decent accommodations. For four years in Bangkok, they have lived in constant fear of arrest in a high-rise building in a poor neighborhood. Their single room has no furniture. For fear of arrest, their daughter, Charlotte, doesn't go out to play or go to school. She stays in her room and watches cartoons on a laptop. After she was arrested last year, her father accompanied her in jail for three days. Having overstayed their expired tourist visa, the Shajeels are illegal aliens. Thai police can arrest them and demand fines and bribes.

As I left the last meeting of my brothers and sisters who seek asylum, they made this plea: We do not want to only go to America or Australia. Please be our voice to convince the UN of the truth of our story. Help us go where we can breathe freely, taste freedom and live in dignity.”

The next morning, I shed tears in my hotel room. To this day, the face of five-year-old Charlotte is constantly before my eyes. Yet, my journey in southeast Asia was not yet done...

Global Mission Consultation Roundtable

Tues., Oct. 17 – Sat., Oct. 21, Singapore

Lay leaders, clergy, bishops and mission societies from all around the world attended the Anglican Mission Consultation Roundtable in Singapore. As one of the three founders of a missionary society, I represented Anglican Frontier Missions. We spent time with church leaders from Myanmar

and Karen people living on the border of Myanmar and Thailand.

Thurs., Oct. 19 - The Roundtable continues

Our day began with a 7:30 a.m. breakfast meeting and morning prayer. The first speaker was the Most Rev. Datuk Ng Moon Hing, archbishop and primate of southeast Asia. He gave a powerful and deep theological teaching on how to share the Gospel with the unreached world.

During three workshops about mission work in Nepal, Myanmar and Indonesia, I learned God is doing amazing things through His Church. Anglican churches in these countries are dealing with natural disasters, helping refugees, teaching English classes and planting new churches. Throughout the roundtable, I observed:

- **The power of intercessory prayer** - Prayer goes on throughout each day.
- **Biblical teaching on mission and discipleship** - There is a firm commitment to evangelism.
- **Church planting** – There is an Anglican way of formation and church planting.

This meeting provided the opportunity for participants to connect with each other and discern God's call to engage and support each other as members of one Holy Catholic Church.

After dinner, there was a worship service with a band leading praise music. There were opportunities to pray and lay hands on each

other. Several Anglican bishops came forward and knelt before the altar, asking participants to lay hands on them. They in turn laid hands on Consultation participants. It was not planned this way, but the Holy Spirit led this evening into prayer for each other for an hour.

Rev. Chris Royer, director of Anglican Frontier Missions, did a terrific job of teaching for an hour on “Empower Me.” As he was teaching, I could see he was being empowered by the Holy Spirit to empower us to take the Gospel and share and make disciples. This man is truly anointed with tools to teach and preach the Word of God.

At 11 p.m., I was both exhilarated and exhausted. It felt good to rest for a few hours.

Sat., Oct. 21. Johor Bahru, Western Malaysia

On October 21, at 1 a.m., in the middle of night, I left with Archdeacon The Venerable Edward M. John by car to travel across the Singapore border to the third largest city of Malaysia. We arrived here at 2 a.m. at St. Christopher (Anglican) Church, Johor Bahru, Western Malaysia.

After traveling for three weeks in different countries, cities and villages, in hot and humid weather, all my clothes were dirty. In fact, my black suit was unwearable in hot weather. I was grateful for Archdeacon to put me in the guest house of St. Christopher church. The first thing I did at 3 a.m. was wash my clothes before I went to bed. I was so grateful for the four hours of sleep. After breakfast, Ven. Edward and I returned to St. Christopher Church.

St. Christopher Church was built on March 24th, 1918. Ven. Edward has been Vicar here for the last 10 years. He is the senior priest of the diocese of Western Malaysia, with sixteen parishes to look after. In some of these parishes, lay persons lead Morning Prayer on Sundays.

The Anglican Church came to the Malay Peninsula in 1786 after the British East India Company built a settlement on Penang Island. This area was administered by the See of Calcutta where the Metropolitan was situated. The Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta oversaw India, Burma and Ceylon - all the way to churches in New Zealand.

Because this large area was difficult to manage from Calcutta, the Diocese of Singapore, Labuan and Sarawak was created in 1855 as a missionary diocese of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1971, Western Malaysia became an independent diocese. Now the Bishop of Western Malaysia, the Most Rev. Datuk Ng Moon Hing, is also elected as the Primate of the Anglican Province of South East Asia. In this diocese, there are more than 20,000 members. A number of new church plants have sprouted throughout the diocese over the last 10 years. The diocese now has 46 parishes, 32 Missionary Districts, 55 outreach churches with 20 non-recorded outreach churches. The diocese is divided into six deaneries. I was invited to visit the Southern Deanery of the Diocese. The Ven. Edward M. John is the Dean of this Deanery.

St. Christopher is a very active place. I met this morning with the Tamil youth group.

These young people were studying the Word of God and had an excellent praise band.

After lunch, Ven. Edward took me by car to visit another church where another large youth group from all over the Deanery were meeting. They had another large praise band and youth prayer leaders who led this youth worship rally. I was invited to share a message from the Gospel. It was very refreshing to stand among over 100 youth members of several churches to share God's word. Some of the young members were wearing shirts with a message "Lord is our refuge." It is a theme they have adopted from Psalm 100.

Christians in Malaysia are 10% of the total Muslim-majority population and face challenges. The Malaysian government has forbidden them to use the word "Allah" in their worship. "Allah" has been the word for God in the Malay Bible. I shared with them my visit to churches in Pakistan and South Sudan. There was a large wooden cross hanging behind me on the Altar. I invited their attention to St. Paul's teaching to the church in Corinth: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Corinthians 1: 18).

Later that evening, we went to another church to hold a worship service. Finally, at 10:30 p.m. we headed back to St. Christopher Church. The Malaysian government does not permit building new church buildings. The diocese buys stores or warehouse facilities in shopping mall areas and turns them into worship centers. The last two worship services were held in these store-front churches. It was very hot here and made me sleepy.

I tried to remain awake during all these worship services. I preached in English, and a priest and a lay evangelist in each of these congregations translated my message into two different languages.

On Sunday morning, I was invited to preach at the mother parish, St. Christopher Church. The church was full, and worship was alive in the Spirit with beautiful singing and prayers offered by many parishioners. It really inspired me to be steeped in deep engagement with the Scripture to love and embrace God's people in these lands.

Hope for current times

In a world with so much negative energy, it gives me joy he gives me the joy to share the Gospel message that God's searing mercy through the crucified and risen Christ will not be defeated by all the issues our world is facing today. It is a Gospel of hope to the world. With St. Paul I say, "I am under obligation both to [educated] Greek and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish; so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. *For I am not ashamed of the gospel...*" (*Romans 1:16*).

I had finally completed my mission of peace and healing. What a journey in the power of the Spirit of the Lord. Churches in all four countries offered me such warm hospitality, fellowship and opportunities to pray and proclaim the Word of God. I thank the Lord and for my brothers and sisters whom I met on this journey. They have truly blessed me. I pray to be a "Little Wire" with the power of Lord to serve God's people from everywhere to everyone. Thanks be to God for this privilege.

What must I do? What can YOU do to help?

My journey is act of faith of Christian ministry. Jesus calls us, “to attend to and respond to his Word sounding in all human hurt, to be wounded and find out our helplessness – and there to meet the absolute gratuity and unexpectedness of his measureless compassion. But he will not wipe the tears from our eyes until we have learned to weep.”¹ I weep for the oppressed, refugees, persecuted, sick and suffering. My call is to bring hope and peace to them. I beg you to listen to my people’s cry. Please write with me letters to ask the Congress, the President and churches here to sponsor families living in constant fear and abuse. Pray with me and stand in solidarity. Add your voice to mine. Together we can become “the Voices of The Voiceless.”

As Moses stood before Pharaoh, I stand and plead and pray before the leaders of today: “Let my people go.” We need your financial support to support our work in Pakistan, Garissa, Kenya, South Sudan.

You can send your gifts to:
Help with Compassion
427 14th St South
La Crosse, WI 54601

¹ Rowan Williams, *The Christian Tradition for Today*, Bloomsbury, p.12. 2017.



Mission of Hope

Missionary Journey to visit churches in Pakistan and South Sudan

December 2019-February 2020

“The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.” (Emil Bruner)



A mother with her son in front of Bishop Augustine's residence came for prayer.

Introduction

Jesus called me on a path to be his witness in my high school and college days while I lived in a Islamic country in Pakistan. In high school, I was associated with Scripture Union and our local church youth group in Gojra, Pakistan. During my four years in college I was a member of Student Christian Movement, an ecumenical organization.



At the same time I participated as a member of Campus Crusade and inter Varsity (Pakistan Evangelical Fellowship) student organizations. On occasion, I would join other young people to witness among non-

Christians. Our father was an Anglican priest and received Decision magazine from Billy Graham's organization. He would read articles about world evangelization and translate them in Urdu to our mother and my two other siblings. I remember while sitting at the feet of our beloved father telling us about Dr. Billy Graham's worldwide ministry. I blurted out and said, "Papa Ji, can I become like Billy Graham to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the world." Sitting on a floor in our living room in Pakistan that ambitious aspiration seemed a fanciful dream but non-achievable goal. During my college days on my days off, I would ride on my bicycle, and visit Christian homes to hold Bible Study and prayer meetings. In 1972, after I finished my four years of college. I entered Lahore Divinity School for four years of theological and ordination training at the Cathedral of Resurrection, Lahore, Pakistan. In 1975, I had an opportunity to attend the World Assembly of Students Christian Movement in Colombo, Sri Lanka. My father was at the same time attending an international gathering of evangelists in Colombo. He was invited by the Open Door organization of Brother Andrew. I had read his book "God's Smuggler" bringing Gospel into closed door countries. In both of these international assemblies I had the first time an opportunity to meet the global church. I came there from a small minority church in Pakistan surrounded by 95% or more of Muslim majority. It was the first time I realized that God will open doors for me to be his ambassador/evangelist for sake of good news of the Gospel.

This boy from a small town in Pakistan finally came to the United States in 1983 where I



served in churches in Chicago, Virginia and Wisconsin. During these years of ministry the Lord provided me numerous opportunities to take the message of the Gospel to the ends of the world. Finally, after 44 years of active parish ministry it came to an end on June 2, 2019. God had opened a new door for me to serve as an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Bor, South Sudan. I had just turned 69 years old and was dreaming of my retirement at the end of 2020. The church leaders in Sudan, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal in USA and my diocesan Bishop Jay Lambert after long period of prayerful negotiations released me of 17 years of serving as Rector of historic Christ Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin. It was difficult deciding to leave a position of a cardinal rector, comfort and support of many people here. In this new position there will be no salary or funds provided. I will have to raise support for mission work. My beloved congregation sent me out in the world with thunderous praise and prayer.

A new transformation was happening in my life. I felt quote from John Wesley speaking to me directly as being sent to the ends of the world:

"I look on all the world as my parish; thus

far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.”

The next day, I along with my wife, Bishop Jay Lambert, and brother Peter Augustine left for my new assignment and consecration as Bishop in South Sudan. It took us four days of travel to reach in Bor, South Sudan. On Sunday June 9, 2019 I was ordained as Bishop in St. Andrews Cathedral in Bor. This particular church in South Sudan had gone through great suffering. They have remained faithful followers of Jesus Christ. It is a Confessing Church where 2.1 million believers have been martyred. Four million are uprooted from their land. Over the last thirty years I have been the witness and voice of the voiceless of this persecuted church on the world stage. Now I have been called to be a servant Bishop to the flock of Christ in Bor, South Sudan. My present call is to take the Gospel to the least of Christ’s people to the ends of the world. I invite you humbly to join me in this new endeavor for the sake of the Gospel. This hymn from Wonder, Love and Praise speaks well of my Missional Call:

Lord, you give the great commission:

”Heal the sick and preach the word”

Lest the church neglect its mission,

And the gospel go un-heard,

Help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity.

With the Spirits’s gifts empower us For the work of ministry.”



Pakistan

Dera Murad Jamal, Baluchistan



I spent the first three weeks in December in Pakistan. I had invitations from church

leaders to visit them. I started visiting churches in the South and ended up traveling twelve hundred miles in the north of Pakistan. In the Southern Province of Baluchistan there was a large area where there were no church buildings, cemeteries, or Christian schools. With the local lay Christian leaders we met with District Commissioner and other Muslim leaders in that area and were successful in obtaining land to build in future a church, Christian school and cemetery in the city of Dera Murad Jamali. The small Christian community had to carry their dead thirty miles away across the provincial border in the city of Jacobabad in the Province of Sind. I had the privilege to dedicate land for all three purposes. I also was able to bless the marriage of a Christian couple while in Jacobabad.



of St. Thomas parish in Islamabad until December 1982. St. Thomas parish has flourished and now has over 1000 members of the Pakistani and diplomatic community who regularly attend service.

I had the honor to preach on Christmas Day at Christ Church, Rawalpindi. Churches all over Pakistan, including Christ Church, were protected by police and armed soldiers of the Pakistan Army. In the past there have been numerous attacks on churches by Islamic militants. Although security was tight, there were several thousand Christians attending worship services at Christ Church on Christmas Day.



Meeting with the District Commissioner for Dera Murad Jamali, Pakistan



Islamabad-Rawalpindi

Traveling north from the south of Pakistan, I arrived with Myra in the capital city of



Islamabad-Rawalpindi. These are twin cities. I previously served churches in both cities, serving as a curate and then rector of Christ

Church in Rawalpindi and founding priest

Additional Photos From Christ Church, Rawalpindi



All Saints Church, Peshawar

From Islamabad I went to visit All Saints Church, Peshawar in the northwest of Pakistan. Peshawar is the gateway to Afghanistan. All Saints Church is remembered for the horrific attack that was carried out by Al-Qaeda/Taliban militants in September 2013.



The attack occurred after Sunday worship service and 137 Christians were killed and close to 200 were wounded. Six years ago I raised funds to help this church to build a memorial to the martyrs.



I was asked to preach and celebrate Holy Communion. After Sunday worship service I was asked to offer prayers standing next to the memorial erected in remembrance of martyrs of All Saints Church, Peshawar.



Gulpur Evangelical Church, Azad Kashmir

I travelled from Islamabad to visit Gulpur Evangelical Church in Azad Kashmir on my next visit. Azad Kashmir is an area of dispute between two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. It is a journey of four to five hours through a scenic mountainous area. Prior to the formation of Gulpur Evangelical Church, there was no church presence in the area for the last 2000 years. We found in 2012 only one Kashmiri Christian family in the whole state of Azad Kashmir. They had land and we were given by this family a small piece of land at the end of their property. In 2015, I dedicated this land and in 2016 we completed a structure of a small building. I dedicated this building in 2016 as a church and put a sign of the cross on its door. We were a bit afraid that the local majority Muslims would oppose or attack. Thank God every Friday

30-45 Christians from an area of 30-40 miles gather there for worship and fellowship. The Living Word Christian Church in La Crosse has partnered with me to build this church and to support their Pastor Arshad John.



Additional Photos From Gulpur Evangelical Church

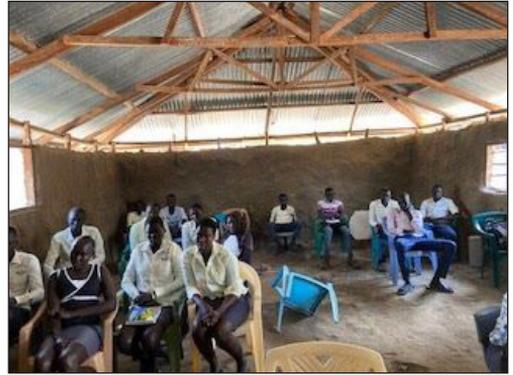


South Sudan

Welcomed by Archbishop Akurdid and St. Andrews School

On New Year's Day, I left Pakistan for Nairobi, Kenya. After a night's stay in Nairobi, I took a flight to Juba, South Sudan. I stayed one night in Juba in a hotel. Next morning I flew to Bor, South Sudan where Archbishop Ruben Akurdid received me.

I was given a warm welcome by clergy, lay leaders and school children from St. Andrews primary and high school. This time of the year the weather was a bit cool and it was a pleasant time of the year for me to visit.



Three Day Retreat for Diocesan Bishops

The next day, I had a long visit with the Archbishop and his staff. They had planned a busy and well-thought program for me to lead worship services, preach, teach and conduct clergy and Mother Union members retreat. The Archbishop informed me that there are three candidates to be consecrated as diocesan Bishops next Sunday. I was given the job to conduct their three days retreat before their ordination as Bishops in the church of South Sudan. I had no prior knowledge of this assignment but after visiting churches for the last 35 years I have come to accept such surprises. I accepted my call and challenge to prepare myself in the next 48 hours. I had no library or notes to prepare for such an important retreat to spiritually prepare three candidates to be ordained as bishops. I went into my room and had a small solar light charged with sunlight. I turned it on in the evening and knelt on my knees to seek wisdom, guidance and knowledge to plan spiritual teaching retreat for three days. I started going through various passages of the Bible, liturgy from The Book of Common Prayer and mental notes of forty years of preaching and teaching as a parish priest.



Consecration of the new Bishops

Three bishops were consecrated by the Archbishop under great celebration of thousands of faithful who came from far and near places. After three consecrations of Bishops, Archbishop and I with a large number of lay leaders and clergy visited their individual dioceses. I was asked to preach at these celebrations. At each three celebrations thousands of members of their respective dioceses came to attend these worship services.



Without much exaggeration, it took me most of the night in serious prayer and study to wait upon the Lord. In my previous parish cure, I had a large library, computer, and other resources. Now in my African hut with dim light I had my iPhone, Holy Bible and Book of Common Prayer and over and above total dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Truly, when you allow the Holy Spirit to be your guide and teacher, great things happen. Before the sunrise I had a complete teaching schedule for three days to lead a retreat for three candidates to become Bishops in the Episcopal Church in South Sudan. Jesus Christ is a faithful companion to our needs and intercessions. The four of us had three great days of mutually spending time at the foot of the Cross of Jesus and enthused by the joy of the resurrected Lord. Alleluia!



Clergy Retreat (January 20-23 2020)

Every morning at 10:00 a.m. 60 pastors from three dioceses gathered inside St. Andrews Cathedral in Bor. We started each day in silence and then morning prayer.

Our first three devotions from the Holy Scripture were:

1. Our God is Holy. Isaiah 6: 3, Isaiah 43:15, Psalm 77: 13, Revelation 15:4
2. Our call is Holy. 2 Timothy 1:9, 1 Peter 1:14-16
3. We proclaim the Holy Call to people to follow Jesus. Acts 3:11-26, Colossians 1:28.

We took a break at 11:30 a.m. for tea. Many of the pastors had walked on foot for several miles to join us. It was a short break for tea and fried bread to eat breakfast. We returned to the cathedral at 12:30 noon. For three days we had a crash course to study the Gospel of Mark. I finished everyday teaching on the Gospel of Mark at 2:30 p.m.

We took a break for lunch. This was the only meal all of us eat every day.



We returned to our third session and met under a large Neem tree as it was very hot inside the cathedral. There was no electricity or air conditioning available. Our third session was the study of the first three hundred years of early church. I provided time every day for pastors to give their input and share their thoughts with us.

Many stood up and were thankful for this opportunity of renewal and fellowship. They expressed to me that it is very difficult for them to come together as their Dioceses lack resources and they live in far distances. They wanted me to thank all those who helped me to provide resources for this clergy retreat. Because of war and internal crisis many have been displaced and churches burnt and destroyed. Many pastors were not able to finish their Bible school education. They shall appreciate if there are more opportunities for their training and theological education. I asked them to pray for me to invite others to join me in my team work. These Pastors requested Bibles in English and theological commentaries and books.

One Pastor said, “many years ago we learnt about persecution of Christians in Pakistan. Some of the Pastors in their congregations started praying for church in Pakistan. They wished if they shall meet a Christian from Pakistan. God has answered their prayer as you are Pakistani American.”

A female priest Mary Luelth said many Pastors and their families are suffering as they do not have salaries to support them financially. She further asked me to bring eye

glasses as there is a great need for them. I have done it in the past and brought used eyes glasses for people to test and wear them.



Canon Samuel, a senior cleric of Bor diocese said that God has prepared you over thirty two years to work with

Bishop Nathaniel. He quoted 1 Timothy 4: 11-16. Now Bishop Nathaniel has grown old and you are the evangelist bishop among us. We pray that God will keep you strong and healthy.

At the closing another priest said, “Bishop Patrick, in America when people grow old they are sent to nursing homes. They live away from their families. If it happens to you, you come to Bor and live among us. We shall take care of you.” I had tears in my eyes and hugged him and hugged 60 of them as we had formed a bond of affection as brothers and sisters. Alleluia! Praise God for such blessed time.



Mothers Union Retreat (30-31 January)

Mothers Union Retreat. St. Andrews Cathedral. Diocese of Bor, South Sudan. For the last two days 43 members of Mothers Union (MU) met here in the compound of St. Andrews Cathedral. Seven members were on the cooking team. They have their own building to meet and conduct business of the MU. Mothers Union is the backbone and one of the most organized and strong groups in the African churches. Yesterday, we opened with praise, prayer and devotion at 10:00 am. I gave a meditation on the call, life of holiness and obedience of Mother Mary. Later, we had two sessions to study the book of Esther. When Queen Esther’s people were in trouble. Her uncle reminded her: “Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14). People of South Sudan are anxiously waiting for the end of February unity government to be formed so that people can live in peace without fear of war and conflict. Many shall return to their villages and farms and plant crops. God has brought us this far to this free new nation that as church leaders we may pray with great force and passion that peace may come. People of South Sudan may live in harmony in the spirit of reconciliation.

On day two, we also started with lots of praise and prayers. MU members have the greatest harmony as they sing and are prayer warriors. My second devotion was on Blessed Mother Mary’s song/Magnificat:

My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced
in God my Saviour.



How do we magnify the name of the Lord in our lives? Mary was a simple peasant girl. God chose her to be the mother of our Saviour. God has called each one of us in His church and in our communities to share the good news about God's goodness. Members of Mothers Union Shared several examples as they bless and praise God to magnify His name in their community and churches.

Later, after lunch I gave 45 minutes of introduction to the Gospel of Mark. We are the society of Good News to share the saving grace of Jesus Christ in Bor, South Sudan.

At 4:00 pm Bishop of Makuch, James Deng Akeer who also translated me from English to Dinka for two days distributed 2000 South Sudanese pounds (7 US dollars) to 43 members of Mothers Union for their transport. Some of them had walked long distances to attend these two days of retreat. Between last June and this January I have contributed \$1700.00 for the work of MU. \$500.00 was spent on feeding us for two days' retreat. They have now \$1200.00 in their account. This afternoon MU members decided to use this money to build two simple rooms with their manual labor on the compound of St. Andrews Primary and High School for

girls who attend senior high classes. Several of them travel long distances and return home in the dark late afternoon. MU will give these two rooms that girls can sleep there and study in the evening to appear for the diploma of senior high. MU also believes that some of these young ladies shall also join the ranks of MU in their churches.

Martha Nyariak, head of the Cathedral's MU shared with us her vision she was given on the night of June 8, a day before my consecration on Sunday June 9 2019. She said that in her vision she saw that Bishop Patrick Augustine was presented with three heads of Sorghum in a bundle. (Sorghum is the staple food for South Sudanese). Also was given three canes of Sorghum in a bundle tied together. These were gifts for Bishop Patrick. Bishop Nathaniel Garang was given a crown of gold. I was told that the Word of God is here. You will begin your work to plant the Word of God in our lives. She said this is what you are doing preaching in our churches, teaching our priests and members of Mothers Union. God has sent you to a difficult place to love us as we have gone through years of suffering. Please do not quit. Come back and teach and preach the Word among us. It was a powerful moment to hear confirmation of what God has called me to do among my brothers and sisters in South Sudan.



Leading Additional Prayer Retreats and Teaching

I led two more spiritual teaching and prayer retreats for clergy of three dioceses each week for three days. I had a Priest of the Diocese of Bor who had studied in an episcopal seminary for two years in Chicago. He translated my preaching and teaching from English into the Dinka language from 10-a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day.

I met for four days for two hours each day with teachers and community leaders to learn and discuss the needs of St. Andrews Primary and High School.

Every day in my room or under the shade of a tree I met clergy and lay members of the diocese of Bor for prayer and fellowship.

I was also taken in the diocese of Bor to visit churches and to meet with local leaders.



St. Thomas Church, Bor

One church that I visited in Bor was St. Thomas Church. I was driven by Archdeacon Rev. David, Rector of St. Thomas Church in Bor to this parish to visit them as their Bishop. They started building a new church with cement blocks in 2016. They have completed its walls but have exhausted all their resources. Poverty and joblessness plague the region and it is a testament to the



I preached and celebrated Holy Communion at St. Thomas Church. Church service went on for three hours. 1300 people were counted inside the church and several hundred were standing, singing and praying outside this church. They have a separate building for more than 300 Sunday School children. After Church service I met with their parish council. They need to put a roof before the rainy season which starts in June. They appealed to me to help them. This congregation has raised quite a large amount to build this church but needs help to complete their church.

During the service a woman brought a goat at the altar to add money to the construction. Another person gave a cow today. I am really proud of these people for their self help to build such a large worship place. On Christmas, Easter and other major festivals have more than 3000-4000 worshippers. I presented a red stole to the Archdeacon who is rector of this parish. They entertained me with a very nice lunch cooked by ladies of Mother's Union. There are many people after church who came forward for blessing and laying of hands for healing.



Consecration of St. Peter's Church, Bor and the Flourishing Christian Community

Bor was filled with celebrations and the Christian community is thriving and flourishing after years of persecution.



Three new dioceses were formed out of the mother Diocese of Bor and three new Bishops were consecrated. Another event

that occurred was the consecration of St. Peter's church. Archbishop Ruben Akurdid,

Bishop Nataniel Granang, Bishop James Deng Akeer and myself were welcomed by thousands of Parishioners, large contingent of Mother's Union, youth members, deputy governor of Jongeli State and large number of Government high officials at the church, which has been constructed over the last six years. This is a Christian nation and government officials attend churches and convey greetings and messages from their respective ministries and departments Christian faith is not a private matter. As we arrived flags with crosses, hundreds of crosses in the hands of parishioners were raised high with songs of welcome and praise: Alleluia! Yasu Christo.



This church has been built among all the challenges and crisis people in this area have suffered. In 2013 the center of town, every shop in their downtown

market was burnt down. Hundreds were killed and thousands ran for protection across the river Nile reaching to Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda and displaced people's camps inside South Sudan. These people suffered fifty years of war and internal conflicts. Nathaniel Garang, the first Bishop of Bor, shares the history of the suffering of his church. Many of his priests, lay evangelists and parishioners were killed by Arab soldiers. They also shot at him in St. Andrews cathedral compound but

God saved his life. He reminded people of the prophecy of prophet Isaiah in chapter 18: 7. In fact he mentioned the whole chapter about people of South Sudan in Dinka land. They are people with tall and smooth skin who will establish a free nation on Mount Zion. They are descendents of lost tribes of Israel. And Mount Zion is here in Dinkaland. In fact 10 miles away they have built another large church named Mount Zion as fulfillment of this prophecy. Arab soldiers learnt about building this church in the bush and they killed many there, but Mount Zion church is built and stands there. Wow! What a claim.

It is a testament to their living faith and in the power of the resurrection in the face of death and suffering. Over these years in a town where 80% are jobless, people contributed human labor and 5,054'556 (\$200,000) to build this magnificent house of prayer. In 1996 when I came here with Bishop Nataniel Garang and Rev. Marc Nikkel, a missionary from Episcopal Church, USA. Bor town was occupied by Arab soldiers and thousands upon thousands were suffering, homeless and without food. Because of the war there was no UN presence on the ground and only the World Health and Food program occasionally dropped food from the air. As I wrote, "we walked for thirteen days on foot through the war zone area. I documented the stories of their suffering and living faith. I put it in a book form: Hear My People's Cry. Now here I am as an eyewitness to their returning back to their land and building this huge church."

The recent contribution of this community was to purchase a generator, install lights and fans inside this church. After three hours



of worship we were entertained with great hospitality and delicious lunch. I walked around the church and found thousands of people eating together. Several bulls and goats were slaughtered and a number of members of the congregation had brought food to cook and shared with thousands without any problem. I was impressed by their organizational skills and hundreds of volunteers to serve food and water. After two hours of break we returned back inside the sanctuary and resumed the celebration part. Church was dedicated in the morning service. Sunday school children, young members of Mothers Unions and youth members presented beautiful gospel songs and liturgical dances. Congratulatory messages were given by bishops, government officials, and senior clergy giving thanks to God. We were there from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm. Attendance was announced and there were 5,360 members of church and visitors were present. During time of praise, dance and shouts of Alleluias at one time I bitterly cried with tears of joy for this church in South Sudan and sadness for church in the west. We have achieved every materialistic, technological success and we are recognized as first world people.

South Sudanese, we call these people third world people. With political correctness we now know them as the developing world. We have large and beautiful beautiful houses of worship, Cathedrals, ministry departments, offices and endowments. Our churches are half empty and some are almost empty. Several churches have been sold to turn

them into mosques and Hindu and Buddhist temples. We are wedded with the issue of secular society of our time. Evangelistic zeal has evaporated and the “E” word is dirty and foreign to our ears. I literally cried before the Lord to ignite in our hearts fire for the love of Jesus and Gospel. I pray we may repent and come back to our roots at the feet of Jesus.

Photos from St. Peter’s Church Celebrations



Closure



I left on this mission journey with prayers, and financial support of individuals and churches. My sending church “The Living Word Christian Church” in La Crosse, Wisconsin had commissioning service Sunday before I left. During these three months of mission and ministry I give thanks to God for many opportunities to preach the Gospel and bring hope in Jesus name to the least of Christ’s people. I have seen among oppressed and poor people remarkable joy and hope. In Pakistan they are a minority church with draconian laws such as “blasphemy law” under which they live under discrimination and fear at times. In Sudan tribulations of forty years, the church has remained faithful and steadfast. For both churches the story of the liberation of People of Israel is a source of comfort and encouragement. God led them through the desert by a pillar of cloud and fire and fed the manna from heaven. Divided the waters of the Red Sea to arrive in the Promised Land. I am an eyewitness to their

living faith to the crucified Christ. I truly believe time after time I along with them seen and met in their praise, prayer and fellowships the victorious risen Christ faithful to His flock assuring them:

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom” (Luke 12: 32).

Following were opportunities for me on your behalf to bring hope, encouragement to people that “Jesus loves them”:

1. Purchased a motorbike for A priest-in-charge for evangelism ministry to plant and to grow new churches. This priest walked on foot long distances to reach mission stations in the diocese of Bor. This gift was given to me by Pastor Dr, Ifrahim Matthew, director, Potohar Evangelical mission in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
2. \$4000.00 was given to St. Andrews School. Children in grade 1-3 had no class rooms. \$2000.00 were used to build three very simple structure classrooms for grade 1-3 students. High school children had no chairs and benches in their classrooms. \$2000.00 was used to build class room furniture for two classes.
3. \$1000.00 each spent on clergy and Mothers Union retreats to provide one meal a day, tea and travel assistance.
4. \$300.00 For three days of retreat held for three candidates to be consecrated as Bishops.

5. \$500.00 for travel from Juba to Bor- Juba, travel with the Archbishop within the diocese of Bor, office expenses, food etc,.....
6. \$200.00 for diocesan Peace Radio to broadcast daily messages of peace and reconciliation and for spiritual care of the Bor area. My sermons were recorded every week and broadcasted on Peace radio over the Bor area. People in this area have suffered so much over many decades of internal tribal conflicts and persecution of them through Khartoum, Sudan Islamic government. The Diocese of Bor has started ministry through Radio to promote peace and reconciliation.
7. \$2000.00 Scholarships provided for children at All Saints Church, Peshawar Pakistan.

My brothers and sisters, join me as witnesses to save souls and bring hope of the love of Jesus Christ. We can't ignore or keep silence because it is Truth that concerns every human being. It is the truth about how the incarnate Christ redeemed humanity through Cross and resurrection. And so it must be told to every human being. That obligation is ours and remains till the end of time. Let me close it with the words of great apostle:

“For this I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings,

becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Jesus Christ has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on onward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ“ (Philippians 3: 8-14).



Partners in Mission, Florida



Clergy Retreat Diocese of Central Florida.



St. Anne's Episcopal Church. Annapolis, Maryland.



Church of the Redeemer, Sarasota, Florida.



Trinity Episcopal Church. Vero Beach, Florida.

Partner Churches



Two Lost Boys from South Sudan. In the middle employed by VTS as Technician and on the right final year student completing Master of Divinity at Virginia Theological Seminary.



Grace Church, Ocala, Florida



Living Word Christian Church, La Crosse, WI



Meeting with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry About Mission to South Sudan

Blessed Are The Peacemakers!

“Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God”
(St. Matthew 5:9).

I am a pilgrim of peace. I extend my hands to my brothers and sisters of all faiths, colors and races. We are created in the image of God for goodness not for hate. When we ask God to help us to overcome our prejudice what separates us as human family. We shall hear God’s voice, and see with God’s eyes, we shall be able to see that we are brothers and sisters created in God’s image to live in peace and harmony.

If you visit the United Nations building in New York City you will see a nine-foot-tall bronze statue by sculptor Evgeniz Vuchetich. It portrays a man holding a hammer in one hand, and in the other hand he is holding a sword which he is pounding into a plowshare. The statue symbolizes humanity’s desire to make an end to war and convert the means of destruction into creative tools for the benefit of humankind. The inscription on this gift to the U.N., from what used to be the Soviet Union, has these words, paraphrased from Isaiah (2:4): “We shall beat our swords into plowshares.” It is a dream as old as humanity.

For it seems that war has always been with us. A few years ago, a Norwegian statistician computerized every war that had ever been fought. His study indicated that, during the past 5,560 years of recorded history, there have been 14,531 wars, which averages to more than 2.6 wars each year. In our 185 generations, only 10 of those generations have witnessed unbroken peace. Throughout history, war has been the rule and peace the exception.

Thus Jesus’ words strike a very appealing note: “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.”

Let’s begin here: Who are the peacemakers?

PEACEMAKERS ARE THOSE WHO HAVE A VISION OF A BETTER WORLD. Peace does not just happen. War happens. War is the natural state of a fallen humanity. But peace has to be worked at. And it begins with a person or a group of people with a vision -- a vision of nations

A Voice from the Sudan

*This poem was written by Mary Achol Deng,
President of Mother's Union, Bor Diocese,
October 26, 1997, Kakuma.*

Peace exists across all the earth
but the peace of Sudan is being clawed to
shreds by birds.
This is how such great numbers of our people
die.
They expire, bereft of a just law to oversee the
land.
Black people exist in the very habitation of
evil.
The deceiver is evil, and the person who
doesn't grasp the law is like the jok,
the one who doesn't know the truth that
animates another human being.
If we are killed to the last person, and every
one of us is gone, can you accept that, you
who abide with us upon the earth, if we no
longer exist in this world?
Isn't it God who has created us?
We are speaking, we women: Who knows
what is good? Is it God who has this
knowledge, or is it we human beings?
Who was present when God created the earth?
Raise up your hands, you who hear me
Or have you yourselves died, all of you?
You Peace, are you deaf, or are you blind, or
are you mad? You, the wives of those who are
still living! We are speaking to you!!
Peace is the life of those who have not
encountered death. The birds have their
leaders, but the leader of the black people
does not exist,

Our leader, death, he is the one who abides
with us.
I am weeping, lamenting over my people who
have perished, ah, how wonderful they were!
My children have all been slaughtered.
They pass away with no one to help them.
They are abandoned, without any kinspeople.
They have no one to stand judge over the
forces that oppress them.
America has gone to the moon but leaves
suffering people below with no one to
cultivate peace upon the earth.
You have succeeded in placing people on the
moon,
but you are miserly about the peace of Black
people. People are killing themselves out of
sheer arrogance
So their own home land is raided and laid
waste! Let us cry out, "Oayo! Oayo!" to Jesus.
Our brothers, the Arabs, are killing us!
Those who have life, those who have wisdom:
You women, have you heard?
You must pray recently for us! Pray for those
who kill their own brothers.
Pray for those who are sick, and those whose
legs have been cut off,
and for the aged, mid for the fetus still
unborn.
We are dying because of the laws our brothers
are trying to impose on us!
They have killed our pastors with the bullet.
Jesus Christ, hear me, bear me, me, me.
I am a feeble person, and I am being killed by
one who is powerful.
Oh, good people of Jesus!

(adapted from Episcopal Life, April 1998)

Song of Living Faith

Let us give thanks;
Let us give thanks to the Lord
In the day of devastation,
and in the day of contentment.
Jesus has bound the world round
with the pure light of the word of his father.
When we beseech the Lord
and unite our hearts and have hope,
then the jok has no power,
God has not forgotten us.
Evil is departing and holiness is advancing,
These are the things that shake the earth.
(This is one verse of a song composed by
Mary Alueel of Sudan in 1992, adapted from
Episcopal Life)
Mary Alueel is a young Dinka woman Dow
studying in Nairobi. She has profound
theological insights greatly respected by
her people and by Marc Nikkel, who has
documented her work.

Complete Confidence

Lord, help us to see in your crucifixion and
resurrection
an example of how to endure
and seemingly to die in the agony and conflict
of daily life, so that we may live more fully
and creatively.
You accepted patiently and humbly
the rebuffs of human life,
as well as all the tortures of your crucifixion
and passion.
Help us to accept the pains and conflicts
that come to us each day
as opportunities to grow and to become more
like you.
Enable us to go through them patiently and
bravely,

trusting that you will support us.

Mother Teresa

“Be of Good Courage”

“First, then, let me tell you that I know your sufferings. I know there are thousands of people who have been displaced from their homes, who have left behind them all that they own and all whom they loved. Many of them live on day to day, month to month, year to year, not knowing whether their loved ones are dead or alive. There are many thousands of orphans and widows. During this short visit to Sudan, I am visiting three camps for displaced people, one of them here in Juba. I want them to know of our support and prayer for them in their plight. I too hear terrible stories about the persecution of certain groups of people in different parts of your country, in the Nuba Mountains and elsewhere, of torture, rape, destruction of property, of slavery and death. I ask those who are able to take this message to them: ‘YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.’”

“We beyond your borders must also commit ourselves much more firmly to support you and care for you, and I assure you again that I seek to do so as a result of my visit here.”

(The Most Rev. George L. Carey, The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in Juba during his last visit to Sudan.)



Canon Patrick with The Most Rev. George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, at Episcopal General Convention, Denver, 2000.

10 Ways You Can Help Persecuted Christians.

1. Share the story of the persecuted church at the grassroots level—tell your friends, your church, and your work place.
2. Inform your local newspapers; request that they write about persecuted Christians.
3. Invite international students from countries where Christians are suffering and host them in your parish.
4. Write your congressional representatives about your concern for those in persecuted churches.
5. Budget funds for the support of the persecuted church.
6. Pray every day and adopt countries for prayer on Sunday morning in your parish.
7. Build relationships and friendships with Muslims in your area. Share your concern with them.
8. Learn about countries where Christians are persecuted. Write to their embassies about your concern.
9. Find out which multinational and U.S. businesses are doing business in those countries. Write them about your concern and ask them to raise their concern for human-rights issues.
10. Provide practical help for Christians in the most difficult countries, including funds and know-how for small-business ventures, help in getting visas, materials for Sunday schools, and sharing information that will break the isolation they feel.

(These recommendations were presented as part of the testimony by Patrick Augustine before United States Congressional Hearings of Caucus on Human Rights, Washington D.C. on April 29, 1997)

Rev. Patrick Augustine leaving La Crosse Episcopal Church after 16 years for position in Africa



After 17 years of serving the La Crosse community, Rev. Patrick Augustine is leaving Christ Episcopal Church in early June to serve as assistant bishop of the Diocese of Bor in South Sudan. (Photo Credit: Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune)

It was a magazine article that kept the Rev. Patrick Augustine awake at night, that brought tears to his eyes, that shaped the course of his life.

Augustine was serving at a parish in Virginia in 1992 when he received a copy of “Yes” magazine from the Church Missionary Society in London, a photo of Bishop of Bor Nathaniel Garang on the cover.

Inside, Garang had detailed the plight of the Sudanese, who were suffering through decades of war, genocide and religious oppression under the reign of the National Islamic Front.

The Second Sudanese Civil War had begun nine years earlier, after the First Sudanese

Civil War of 1955 to 1972, and by its conclusion 2.5 million lives would be lost and 4.5 million citizens would be displaced, among them Christians refusing to accept Sharia law.

“When I read that story, it really touched my heart,” Augustine said. “I was very much disturbed by what was going on.”

The cause has remained near to his soul for the past 27 years, and after 14 visits to Sudan, visiting refugee camps, speaking with residents, preaching and offering aid, Augustine will leave his 16-year post at Christ Episcopal Church June 2 to serve as assistant bishop of the Diocese of Bor, set to be consecrated next month in South Sudan. An interim priest will take over his role in La Crosse.

“At age 69, I never thought in my wildest dreams I would be called to be a bishop in South Sudan,” Augustine marveled. “God has called me to leave a very comfortable, beautiful place to be in a very challenging, difficult place. God is calling me to serve the least of Christ’s people, where there is hunger and suffering ... and provide them hope and give them a voice.”

Augustine, who has aided in settling thousands of the Lost Boys of Sudan to the United States and was bestowed with the Cross of St. Augustine Award by the Archbishop Canterbury in 2013, was planning to retire in two years when he received a letter

of appointment last August from Reverend Ruben Akurdid Ngong.

Bishop Michael Curry drew up an agreement of Augustine's position as assistant bishop in Bor, which will go into effect June 9. The multi-year commitment (the exact duration is dependent on his health) will bring Augustine to South Sudan for four to six weeks at a time, thrice annually, to help the country rebuild after its 2011 independence from Sudan and bridge communication and create relationships between South Sudan and the U.S.

"Our people in South Sudan know about your work as our brother advocate in the Anglican Communion and on the global scene," Ngong wrote in his invitation of consecration dated March 3. "You were part of conversation of our church in bringing peace and liberation of South Sudan as an independent nation. You have been (an) advocating voice of the voiceless of Sudan...our people are suffering because of war and internal conflicts. We lack resources and our people are hungry, suffering from diseases and many are living in refugee camps and displace(ment) camps. We need the world community to stand in solidarity with us to help God's children who are suffering. Your role will be our voice and representative to the world to seek help in the continuing work of peace and resources for development to empower our people to live in harmony."

Born and raised in Pakistan, Augustine, the son of a priest and grandson of a minister, had experienced religious persecution himself as a Christian in a predominantly Islamic region.

After coming to the U.S. in 1983, Augustine served as a pastor first in Chicago before relocating to Virginia.

Upon reading Nathaniel Garang's account of Sudan, Augustine began seeking ways to help and spread awareness. In 1994, congressman Frank Wolf, who four years earlier became the first U.S. representative to meet with John Garang, the head of the southern Sudanese rebels, was in the pews when Augustine spoke, and the legislator invited him to Washington D.C., to meet with government officials.

In 1998, Augustine was among six officials of the Episcopal Church invited to South Sudan by Nathaniel Garang and Rev. Marc Nikkel of the Bor Diocese.

There, Augustine met some of the 54,000 residents of the Kakuma Refugee Camp, where food rations were meager and people were starving. He visited a group of men from the Nuba Mountains, a poor area cut off by the Khartoum government.

He witnessed the lack of educational opportunities, the schools without books or libraries.

He saw the pain of a young Episcopal Evangelist, paralyzed from the waist down after being shot at and recently released after months of recovery in a rudimentary hospital.

The suffering brought Augustine to tears. There were new mothers so malnourished they were unable to produce milk for their infants, people dressed in rags or nothing at all and the ashes of humans and animals,

burned alive by Sudanese security forces, covering the fields. He later recounted his experience in the book “Hear My People’s Cry,” distributed to churches and organizations.

“I decided I can never be silent,” Augustine said. “Because if I’m silent, I’m agreeing with the oppressor. It is a modern holocaust. I asked God to give me the courage to speak up.”

In 2001, Augustine, who has testified on human rights violations and religious persecution four times at U.S. congressional committee hearings, was appointed as the Canon and Commissary to the Archbishop of Sudan.

Two years later, he left Virginia to become rector at Christ Episcopal Church, his brother and sister both located in the Coulee Region.

Augustine brought awareness to the congregation of the suffering in Sudan, as well as that in Garissa, where a 1980 massacre by the Kenyan government left thousands dead, and Pakistan, where human rights violations are rampant and brutal. Church members responded generously, helping fund schools and clinics in ravaged countries.

“This church has been working with me all around the globe,” Augustine said. “The greater La Crosse community has supported me in so many ways.”

Augustine says he has lost sleep over his acceptance of the assistant bishop position.

His wife, Myra, will only be joining him for a week, and he is saddened to leave the “beautiful church and loving La Crosse community” as well as the comforts and climate of home.

Augustine will arrive in South Sudan during the mosquito-heavy rainy season. Despite vaccinations and medications, he has contracted malaria and other diseases during past visits. To help prevent food poisoning, he plans to subsist largely on protein bars.

Augustine’s intensive plans for South Sudan include creating vegetable gardens, helping families acquire chickens, starting and stocking a library and installing solar panels in the schools.

For his first trip, Augustine will bring three donated laptops for the 1,500 students, who have no computers, and he would like to set up pen pal relationships with American youth to encourage global communication and understanding. Augustine hopes to bring along doctors and teachers on subsequent trips, as well as flying South Sudanese educators to Wisconsin for a few weeks to learn new curriculums and teaching tools.

To help fund these projects and to purchase supplies for the residents of South Sudan, Augustine aspires to raise \$20,000 before his departure. He requests checks be mailed to Help With Compassion, 427 14th St South, La Crosse, WI 54601, memo “Help With Compassion Ministry.”

“I have become God’s beggar for the poorest of the poor, and I feel no shame when I ask people in my community to please give your financial help and support me with your prayers,” Augustine said. “I have every hope the people of La Crosse will support me.”

“At age 69, I never thought in my wildest dreams I would be called to be a bishop in South Sudan. ... God is calling me to serve the least of Christ’s people, where there is hunger and suffering ... and provide them hope and give them a voice.” Rev. Patrick Augustine



Pakistani Priest Lived to 'Lift High the Cross'

By Patrick Augustine

February 9, 2022



Mourners carry the casket of the Rev. William Siraj | Photo: Alamay

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." (Psalm 116:15)

On Sunday, January 30, the Rev. William Siraj was driving home after preaching at a church in the Gulbahar district near Peshawar, Pakistan. This was a mission church planted by All Saints Church Khoti Gate in Peshawar.

It is a region where Christians have been subject to violent attacks. More than 120 people were killed in a suicide bombing at All Saints Church in September 2013. Siraj's son-in-law was among those who died that day. Since then, the church has been called Shaheedan-E-All Saints Church, meaning "Martyrs and All Saints Church."

Siraj led services there every Sunday since the church was started more than 10 years ago. He was passionate about sharing the Word of God. His favorite hymn was Anjeel Ko Phelana Ye Kam Humara Hai (Spreading the Word of God is Our Work).

Siraj had had an accident on Saturday and was not feeling well. On Sunday morning his wife had asked him not to go to church but to rest at home. He told his wife, "Please don't stop me from going, because I have prepared, and I have to preach the sermon."



William Siraj and Patrick Naeem | Photo: World Watch Monitor

Siraj and a colleague, the Rev. Patrick Naeem, were driving home together, when gunmen on a motorcycle shot at them through the car window. Siraj was shot in the head and died on the spot. Naeem was miraculously

unharmd as a bullet merely passed through his clothes.

Naveed Walter, president of Human Rights Focus Pakistan, said the gunmen appear to be from an Islamist group. The border of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan is only a few dozen kilometers from Peshawar.

The faith of the persecuted church arises from holding on to the cross of Jesus Christ. The daughter of William Siraj and widow of another martyr said, "I praise God and am so proud that I am the daughter of a martyr and the widow of another martyr."

His brother Wilson Siraj testified to his faith, "I am very humbled and I praise and thank God that I belong to a family of martyrs." He has lost five relatives as martyrs including his brother William.

One wonders where such faith comes from as they face daily threats of death, persecution, and insults. The principal reason for their living faith is that Jesus is their risen Lord. On the cross, he has defeated the powers and principalities of death and evil. On Good Friday 2,000 years ago, a revolution began and continues now through modern day disciples of Jesus that the cross is the "Power of God."

Siraj fully understood that on the cross Jesus had given him life by his death. He understood the call of Jesus, "As the Father has sent me, so I'm sending you" (John 20:21). Siraj's martyrdom is a living testimony for us all to be faithful witnesses. St. Paul writes to Timothy, "Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our

Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God" (2 Timothy 1:8).

The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. "This martyrdom is another step towards the survival of Christians in this country. The local church faces many challenges. We are very sad," said Church of Pakistan Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peters of Peshawar.

The Church continues to be the faithful disciples of Jesus and "to lift high the cross whatever befalls": "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)

The Rt. Rev. Patrick Augustine, a native of Pakistan and former rector of Christ Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is a missionary bishop in the Diocese of Bor, Episcopal Church of South Sudan. Parts of this account are drawn from a tribute published by the Barnabas Fund, an organization that supports persecuted Christians throughout the world. Wilson Siraj, the brother of the deceased priest, serves the Barnabas fund as a regional coordinator for Pakistan and other south Asian countries.

Prayers and Reflections

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Book of Common Prayer)

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(Good Friday liturgy, Book of Common Prayer)

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

(A prayer attributed to St. Francis)

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God throughout the world, which He hath created according to His will. May He

establish his kingdom during the days of your life and during the life of all the house of Israel, speedily, yea, soon; and say ye, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and ever.

Exalted and honored be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, whose glory transcends, yea, is beyond all blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world; and say ye, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us and for all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

Peace unto us and unto all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

(Kaddish)

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. Amen

(Book of Common Prayer)

Prayer for the International Day of Prayer

Almighty God, we pray for the suffering people of Sudan, for orphans, starving young children, the widowed and those whose

homes are broken or torn by strife. Lord, we know you are in pain with the suffering people of the world. We beseech you to bring transformation and change in the hearts of the perpetrators of violence and oppression, that they may cease to do evil and learn to do right, pursue justice and champion the oppressed; give the orphans their right, plead the widow's cause. Lord, have mercy on your children in Sudan.

Mantra:

YASU, YASU, YASU

Shalom, Shalom, Shalom

YASU, YASU, YASU

Shalom, Shalom, Shalom

Lord, we thank you for the steadfast faith of those who suffer for your sake. Help and guide us and our nation to be the instrument of your peace. Make us your agents of peace to create a world of beautiful people of different races, cultures, religions and languages so that it will be a world of laughter and joy, of justice and reconciliation, of peace and unity, of compassion, caring and sharing. Lord, have mercy on the children of Sudan.

Mantra:

YASU, YASU, YASU

Shalom, Shalom, Shalom

YASU, YASU, YASU

Shalom, Shalom, Shalom

(Prayer written and offered by Patrick Augustine for the National Service for the Persecuted Church, held at the National Presbyterian Church Washington Church in Washington, D.C. on September 28, 1997)

Collect for the Persecuted Church

We give you thanks, O lord of glory, for the first martyr Stephen, who looked up to heaven and prayed for his persecutors. We remember before you this day the blessed martyrs and saints of your present day church around the world, who suffer for acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord. Inspire our hearts that we may share their steadfast faith to imitate their loyalty to the Crucified and the Risen Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

(Written by Patrick P. Augustine for the National Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, Christ Church Cathedral, Lexington, Kentucky, October 26th, 1997)



Man holding two grenades thrown into a Sudanese home. Bor Country, Sothern Sudan.



Fr. Patrick holds Sudanese Cross during his testimony before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus on April 29, 1997, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

About the Author

Father Patrick P. Augustine is a third generation Anglican Priest native of Pakistan. He has been ordained in the Holy Orders for forty five years. In Pakistan he served as a Vicar of Christ Church Rawalpindi and St. Thomas Church Islamabad. Since 1983, he resides in the United States as a naturalized citizen. He served as Rector of Churches in Virginia and Wisconsin for thirty-seven years. He has dedicated his life to speak for the poor and oppressed people. Archbishops of Canterbury and Sudan has called him "The voice of the voiceless." He was appointed in 2001 as Canon and Commissary for Sudan in the USA. Father Augustine has carried several peace missions to Sudan, Pakistan, Kenya, India and Israel/Palistine. He has a call from God to promote peace and to build interfaith bridges among faith communities. He earned Doctor of Ministry from Virginia Theological Seminary in 2008. He was given Cross of St. Augustine Award by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2012. He received Honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees from Nashotah House Seminary, Wisconsin in 2013 and Virginia Theological Seminary in 2015. He received the John Nevin Sayre Award by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship at General Convention in 2018. On June 2, 2019 he retired from Christ Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin after serving there for seventeen years. He was consecrated as Bishop in the Diocese of Bor, South Sudan on June 9, 2019. He has a call from God to proclaim as an evangelist the Gospel to the ends of the world. He promotes peace to build inter-faith bridges among faith communities.

Hear My People's Cry!

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