

Partners in Mission with Sudan

Cairo, Egypt 5-6 October 2011

"For we are co-workers in God's service" 1 Corinthians 3:9

Introduction

The birth of the independent country of South Sudan in July 2011 has its implications on the Province of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan. In South Sudan, the church is expected to play a crucial role in the development of the new State. This includes a huge work for unity among the Sudanese communities in the south. On the other hand, the dioceses in Sudan (North), which are part of the Province of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan, need to reflect upon their future mission and presence within its context after the separation between the two countries.

Conscious of the great history and similar contexts that the dioceses in the north of Sudan and the Diocese of Egypt share, the bishops in both countries thought it would be appropriate to meet and reflect together.

After consultation between The Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul, Primate of the Province of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan and The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis, Bishop of the Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa, it was agreed to hold a consultation in Cairo, Egypt from 5-6 October 2011 to reflect on the current challenges and to discuss opportunities for partnership in the mission of the Gospel.

The bishops of the dioceses of Khartoum (The Rt. Rev. Ezekiel Kondo), Port Sudan (The Rt. Rev. Yousif Abdallah and The Rt. Rev. Abdu Elnur Kwadi), El Obeid (The Rt. Rev. Ismail Gebriel Abu Digin), and Wad Medani (The Rt. Rev. Samaan Farjalla Mahdi) met with mission partners from CMS Ireland (Mr. David Gough), the Anglican Relief and Development Fund (Canon Nancy Norton), Brot Für die Welt (Mr. Bob Hedley), as well as The Rt. Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali, representatives of the Anglican Province of South East Asia (The Very Rev. Kuan Kim Seng), the Anglican Church in North America (The Ven. Canon Dr. Jon Lumanog) and the Diocese of Egypt (The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Anis, Rev. Mike Parker and Rev. Drew Schmotzer).

We have greatly missed the presence of Archbishop Daniel Deng who could not join us because of urgent peacemaking missions within the south of the Province. We were sorry that The Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, and The Rt. Rev. Azad Marshall, bishop of the Diocese of Iran, could not join us because of emergency situations in their dioceses.

We gave thanks for the life of Bishop Yousif Abdallah who during the consultation entered into the joy of our eternal kingdom. We expressed our condolences to his family, the Diocese of Port Sudan, and to the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

In reflecting on the challenges that are facing the northern dioceses of the Province of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan, we found that the main challenges are:

- Wars and unrest, especially in the Nuba mountain and Blue Nile areas. This resulted in internal displacement of people, loss of lives and inability to produce food products.
- Insufficient education and training of future leaders.
- The presence of undeveloped areas, in spite of the fact that Sudan is a country rich in natural resources.
- Inadequate theological education and preparation for clergy

In view of the above challenges, we identified the following priorities:

- The urgent need for peace and reconciliation
- The immediate need for relief work especially in the areas of wars and conflicts
- Developing education and vocational training
- Community development and promoting projects that lead to self-supporting of the churches
- The absolute necessity of interfaith dialogue
- The great importance of ecumenical works and Christian unity

Having the above priorities in our minds,

1. We call upon the international community to continue negotiations for lasting peace in Sudan and we appeal for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) for Abyei. Popular Consultation to be implemented, and for measures to strengthen peace-making and peace-keeping in Sudan.
2. We urge the international community as well as relief organizations to work for the relief of the victims of wars and unrest in the abovementioned areas and to release funds designated to meet humanitarian needs of the people of Sudan.
3. We encourage businessmen and church organizations to invest in Sudan, not just to give aid. In order to develop the different communities within Sudan. Our hope is to see many income-generating projects, especially farming and food producing projects which will eventually help the church to be self-supporting.
4. We call for emphasizing education by developing the current schools as well as establishing new schools. It is a necessity to train teachers in order to adopt new ways of education which will ensure the development of a new generation of leadership.
5. We are aware that the Episcopal / Anglican dioceses will not be able to do this on their own, but with collaboration with other churches and other faith communities. This makes interfaith and ecumenical relations a vital necessity for the dioceses in the north of Sudan.

We committed ourselves to hold a follow-up consultation that may involve the whole region of the Middle East in the future. We trust that that God, who began the good work within us, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.