

## Report to the 230<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Convention

### Sudan Committee

The Diocese of New Jersey and our former Bishop The Rt. Rev. George Cuncell, convened what initially was called “The Darfur Committee” in the fall of 2008 to implement resolution 2008-1 of the 2008 Diocesan Convention which charged, “The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New Jersey to join with the government of the United States, the United Nations, and a host of other countries, organizations and individuals around the world to call and work for an end to the violence in Darfur.”

This resolution called the Diocese of New Jersey to establish a committee to “study the situation in Darfur and provide information to members parishes and others about the crimes against humanity taking place there along with the recommendations of actions that can be taken by parishes and individuals to bring these violations and actions to and end at the earliest possible opportunity and to provide support for Darfur refugees and other displaced persons.”

This Committee, now **The Sudan Committee of the Diocese of New Jersey**, has been meeting for *approximately five years*--beginning on February 2 of 2009-- and consists of the following persons re-appointed by our new Bishop, Chip Stokes for the 2014 year: The Rev. Dr. Hugh E. Brown, III (Chair), the Rev. Canon Dr. Martin Oguike, the Rev. Sharon Sutton, the Rev. Jane Brady, Ms. Alicia Graham-Hicks, the Rev. Nancy Hite Speck, the Rev. Deborah Piggins, and the Mr. Marcus Gales.

In February of 2010, then Bishop Cuncell approved the expansion of the Committee’s advocacy and work to include the whole of Sudan.

This deepened and enhanced mission has enabled the Sudan Committee to provide a visible witness for justice and peace in Sudan around issues such as the January, 2011 Referendum for Southern Sudanese independence and the campaign of the Episcopal Church, USA on behalf of Sudan entitled, “A Season of Peace for Sudan.”

The Committee’s charge has indeed now become that described by our Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, “to create projects of peace, study, prayer and action on behalf of the people of Sudan.”

The people of Sudan, including the Darfur region of Sudan, the largest country in Africa, have experienced decades of slaughter, poverty and utter instability.

This is true even with the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace agreement of 2005—and, in keeping with this agreement, the birth of the new nation of South Sudan in July of 2011.

As I write this report, civil war has erupted in the new nation of South Sudan, threatening more intense violence, renewed sectarian warfare, and the beginnings of genocide anew in yet another chapter of Sudan’s painful history.

And, as I write, violence directed by the government of Sudan continues to engulf the Nuba Mountain region of the border of Sudan and South Sudan—and continues, even with some improvement, to plague the Darfur region of Sudan.

However in the words of Richard J. Jones, the outgoing president of the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, “God is still at work in Sudan; God’s Church in Sudan walks, sows, and lives in hope.”

At Diocesan Convention in 2014, we celebrate the reality that even though the largest nation of South Africa continues to experience deep and profound suffering--**the Episcopal Church of Sudan**, encompassing both Sudan and the new nation of South Sudan, remains strong and united, committed to the work of mission, ministry, empowerment and human rights

For example, in our new Sudan Committee companion Diocese of Wau in South Sudan, Bishop Moses Deng Bol is offering awesome leadership and vision, with the birth of a new theological seminary in the Diocese of Wau, St. John’s Theological College, with which the Sudan Committee and Diocese of New Jersey is a new partner.

Bishop Moses recently addressed a gathering sponsored by Episcopal Relief and Development in New York City this past July-- and offered his vision of the renewal of the church and people of Sudan through theological education.

In the most recent issue of **Renew**, the newsletter of the Diocese of Wau, Bishop Moses describes thousands of new Confirmations during his Episcopal visits to congregations this past spring and notes that the Episcopal Church of Sudan is the most powerful non-governmental organization (NGO) in South Sudan!

So, at this Diocesan Convention of 2014, we do celebrate the work of the Episcopal Church of Sudan in promoting peace and the welfare of the Sudanese people, and we give witness to our new partnership with the Diocese of Wau in the ministry and work of theological education described below.

The Sudan Committee has focused on the following projects during 2013, our 5th full year of advocacy for the people and Church of Sudan:

**\*We have established a Scholarship Fund** for the education of one future indigenous Sudanese priest for the Episcopal Church of Sudan, to be an advocate for peace, justice and an end to the human rights abuses within the nation of Sudan.

The Church of Sudan is unmatched, in terms of resources and credibility, as an organization working on behalf of the people of Sudan and we believe it to be THE key to the work of reconciliation, the building of infrastructure, and the providing of social services and education to further the work of Christ in Sudan.

**\*Beginning with Diocesan Convention in March of 2010, we have raised approximately \$14, 000 towards the Scholarship Fund!**

We offer our profound thanksgiving to all congregations and persons throughout the Diocese who have offered donations to our scholarship fund.

Please prayerfully consider a donation to the Sudan Committee for the Scholarship Fund! Checks should be marked to the Diocese of New Jersey and marked, "Sudan Scholarship Fund," or contact The Rev. Hugh E. Brown, III, D. Min., Chair at [rector@allsaint.org](mailto:rector@allsaint.org) and/or 609-921-2420 at All Saint's Church in Princeton.

**\*We are pleased to announce, as noted above, the beginning of a partnership with St. John's Theological Seminary in the Diocese of Wau in South Sudan, and Bishop Moses Deng Bol, Bishop.**

We are offering three, full, three year scholarships to three students of St. John's Theological College: Peter Ngot Achien, the Rev. Santino Opio Madhieu, and Emmanuel Madhang Mayiok.

**\*We created a "spirit-filled" African Evensong Liturgy at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton on October 27, 2013, our third festive African Evensong, which drew almost 200 participants—and we raised over \$2,000 towards the work of the scholarship fund.**

We thank all who participated in, and, or supported the event. We were supremely honored to have the presence of The Rev. Canon John Mbiti termed "The Dean" of African Studies and author of the seminal work, *African Religions and Philosophy*; Dr. Mbiti, gave a powerful sermon.

The youth choir of Urban Promise International once again rocked the Cathedral! Trinity Cathedral sponsored an amazing reception with an array of African dishes from many nations! This was a truly marvelous and inspiring event.

**\*The people of Grace Church, Pemberton, and our colleague, the Rev. Jane Brady, Rector of Grace Church, hosted a wonderful breakfast in honor of Canon Mbiti and his wife, Vera--the Monday following the African Evensong—on October 28, 2013.**

Bishop Stokes and many in Diocesan leadership attended—including the leaders of our Diocesan committees related to outreach, service and justice and peace.

Canon Mbiti described his work and project of translating the New Testament into the Kiikamba language

**\*We created a March 16, 2013 Lenten Retreat on African Spirituality, and attained full funding for this retreat with a generous grant through St. Martin's House of the Diocese of New Jersey.**

The retreat was held at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Princeton and featured noted African speakers of the Diocese of New Jersey, inspiring worship, and prayerful experience.

We had over 60 persons representing dozens of congregations in the Diocese attended.

**\*We continue to offer forums, workshops and events** at parishes and congregations throughout the Diocese, for example this year at Trinity Church, Princeton, Trinity Cathedral, All Saints' Church, Princeton, St. John's Church, Fords and St. John's Church, Sewaren.

**\*We continue to maintain a visible witness** through our work through our Web site and Blog at: <http://focusondarfur.blogspot.com> and through our space on the Diocesan Web site at [www.newjersey.anglican.org](http://www.newjersey.anglican.org) (click on "Outreach" and it will bring up our Sudan/Darfur work and ministry, including pictures, events, our brochure, our blog, and upcoming projects and notices).

May the work of the Sudan Committee continue to join in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Sudan, who suffer and witness to the love of Christ.

Once again, we invite your contributions to the Scholarship Fund of the Sudan Committee in support of our partnership with St. John's Theological College in the Diocese of Wau in South Sudan-- and the work of the Episcopal Church of Sudan in South Sudan.

Please, once again, make your gift or check to The Diocese of New Jersey, marked, Sudan Committee Scholarship Fund and send in care of the Finance Office of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, 808 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey, 08618 and write Father Hugh Brown, Chair, Sudan Committee at [Rector@allsaint.org](mailto:Rector@allsaint.org) with questions.

As the Episcopal Church of Sudan offers a witness and struggle for human rights, human welfare and peace with justice and the Gospel of Jesus Christ among the martyrs of Sudan—we invite you to support the Church and Christians of Sudan in this struggle.

We offer thanks to former Bishop George Councill; to our new Bishop, Chip Stokes, for all of his support in these first weeks as our Diocesan Bishop; we offer our thanksgiving to the staff at Diocesan House who have labored for our Committee in many ways; we offer thanksgiving to the Dean, staff and lay leadership of Trinity Cathedral; and we offer our appreciation to all those who have supported the ministry of the Sudan Committee through gifts of time, talent and treasure; above all we offer thanks to Almighty God for the work and mission of the Episcopal Church, the wider Christian Church and the people of Sudan and South Sudan.

We also offer our deep appreciation to the Rev. Kent Walley and the Board of St. Martin's House for all of the funding for our programs and events; without the support of St. Martin's House, our Mission and Work over these past five years would not have been possible!

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Hugh E. Brown, III, D. Min., Chair,  
Sudan Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey  
February 28 and March 1, 2014