SUDAN CHURCH REVIEW

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supporting the Episcopal Churches of Sudan and South Sudan

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

Anglican Discipleship Programme Commissioning in Yambio, South Sudan.

Credit: John Inglis-Jones

Chair's introduction

Revd Ian Wallace, Co-chair

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" – Isaiah 9: 2 & Matthew 4: 16

I write this introduction at the start of Advent when we are reminded of the darkness in the world and look to the coming of Christ, the light of the world, to dispel that darkness and bring hope. There can be no doubt that the people of Sudan have been walking through a time of great darkness over the past two-and-a-half years, living in the land of the shadow of death, and the storm-clouds of on-going conflict have also gathered over South Sudan as the trial of Vice President Riek Machar moves towards its conclusion. Yet even in the depths of the darkness a light still shines.

On pages 5-9, you will be able to read about the Bishops' Retreat that took place in Kampala in late October. That retreat was made possible through your generosity as the trustees decided that it was a good use of the funds that you have donated to enable the Bishops to come together after 3 years of separation to discern how God is leading the ECS into the future. Archbishop Ezekiel has spoken about how valuable that meeting was for the on-going work of ECS.

Some two weeks later, we were privileged to host a visit to the UK by Archbishop Ezekiel, his wife Suria and Bishop Hassan (see pages 27-29). It was a timely visit and Archbishop Ezekiel's advocacy on behalf of the people of Sudan was powerful and effective. Some of you may have heard him being interviewed on Radio 4's Sunday Programme. Following that he was able to speak to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sudan where he attracted so many MPs and Lords that the room booked was scarcely large enough. He also met the Head of the

Sudan Unit at the Foreign Office and the Minister for Africa and Development and received assurances that bringing peace to Sudan is one of this government's foreign policy priorities. However, the thing that impressed me most was the stories that Archbishop Ezekiel told of the courage and tenacity of the clergy and members of the ECS. Following Ezekiel's example, most have remained in post and have been beacons of hope in their communities providing both spiritual encouragement and relief supplies to the displaced and starving. Until late October there was an ECS pastor in El Fasher. When the fall of El Fasher became imminent he withdrew with many displaced people to the nearby town of Tawila where he continues to minister. As you will read on pages 22 & 23 our appeal is still open and provides a vital life-line to those pastors who really are on the frontline of a most destructive and bitter conflict.

Archbishop Ezekiel also told us that in the midst of this conflict people are turning to Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to find hope. In the last few years several Dafuri congregations have emerged among the displaced in South Sudan among people groups who were thought to be closed to the Gospel. He is very keen that we use this time, when people have no employment, to train and equip the future leaders for what we believe will be a stronger and larger Christian presence in Sudan. That is why the work being done by Andy Wheeler, along with the Relay Trust (see pages 24-27) is of such importance. The same challenge exists in South Sudan and it is encouraging to see the first graduates from Archbishop Justin's Anglican Discipleship Programme being commissioned for service in the ECSS (see pages 12-13).

In the midst of the darkness there is light but we must continue to join with our Sudanese brothers and sisters in persevering in prayer for peace with justice and a new era of stability to dawn. We hope that you will get a lot from this edition of the Sudan Church Review and be inspired by what you read.

ECS BISHOPS MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR

by Doug Ingram, Relay Trust

In October of this year, many of the bishops from Sudan met in Uganda over the period of the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA) Bishops' Retreat in Lwesa, Uganda. This was the first time in over three years that these leaders had been able to gather. Also, this was the first time Bishop Ismail had left El Obeid since the war began, travelling through Khartoum to Port Sudan to come to the conference. They were joined by Assistant Bishop Hassan of Kadugli and three Provincial Office staff. For Bishop Elsir of Heiban, it was the first time he had met some of them.

The Episcopal Church of Sudan continues to face severe challenges due to the ongoing conflict. Fighting between rival military factions has displaced millions and destroyed much of the country's infrastructure. The fighting in recent months has moved west into Darfur and Kordofan, and so some of the other dioceses are now experiencing slightly more stability, although long range missile attacks are becoming more common. However, amidst the devastation, the Church continues to stand as a source of stability, hope, and spiritual leadership.

CASSS Trustee John Poole, who was present, writes the following:

'The meeting, held at the Church of Uganda's Lweza Conference Centre, took place in peaceful, green surroundings—a striking contrast to the parched, war-torn land of Sudan. Shaped as a retreat, each day began with Bible studies on Christian leadership followed by sessions of study, discussion, and planning.

The bishops spoke frankly about conditions in their dioceses. Three have been devastated by the war, while the others are overwhelmed by displaced people seeking refuge. Income streams have collapsed, and many skilled clergy and lay leaders have fled. Without functioning synods, the Church's constitution cannot operate, and three bishops are at the point of retirement. Yet there is growth: many are coming to Christ and being confirmed. Congregations long to rebuild vitality through renewed Mothers' Union work, youth ministry, and training for ministers.

Discussions drew on Roland Allen's mission principles—that a mature Church must

be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. The bishops considered how to work out these ideals amid conflict and scarcity. They also faced sobering questions about the future—what if Sudan remains divided and people of Nuba origin are expelled from government-held areas?"

Photo (l to r): Bishop Hassan, Bishop Samaan, Doug Ingram, Archbishop Ezekiel, Bishop Ismail, Bishop Abdu

Diocese of Wad Medani – Bishop Samaan.

Bishop Samaan described a diocese transformed by the influx of people fleeing from Khartoum and other conflict zones. The city of Wad Medani itself has become a centre of refuge, but also of strain. Local congregations, already stretched by poverty, now share their limited food, shelter, and resources with displaced families.

Despite these pressures, the Church continues to meet and minister. Clergy and lay leaders have turned their parish compounds into informal relief centres, providing spiritual care and practical support.

“The Church is poor,” Bishop Samaan said, “but it is alive.”

The main challenges in Wad Medani are food insecurity, inflation, and the lack of safe travel routes for clergy visiting rural parishes. Communications are unreliable, and the cost of transport has become prohibitive. The Bishop expressed deep gratitude for the ongoing support from Relay Trust and others involved in the ECS SURVIVE appeal (including CASSS) which has enabled some of this ministry to continue under extraordinarily difficult conditions.

Bishop Samaan highlighted that the conflict has had one thankful consequence. Blue Nile State, which has traditionally been a very difficult place to evangelise, has become much more open to the Gospel, with the churches planted there still functioning. He is keen to try and reinforce these churches by running focus evangelism training amongst Christians who have fled to northern South Sudan (Upper Nile area). His plan is then to send those people back into Blue Nile, to reinforce and grow the church.

Bishop Samaan is currently working from Juba, as he is completing the translation of the New Testament into Bura, his heart language.

Diocese of El Obeid – Bishop Ismail.

The Diocese of El Obeid remains one of the most isolated and dangerous areas in Sudan. The city has been under siege, with major supply routes cut off and continuous fighting in the surrounding regions. The road to Khartoum became temporarily open earlier this month, but it is unclear if it still is. Bishop Ismail was intending to return to El Obeid in early November.

Bishop Ismail shared that his own home was struck by bullets during an outbreak of violence. Movement within the city is perilous, and church property has suffered damage. However, he continues to minister to his clergy and congregation as best he can. When asked where do you see God in this, his words were, “God is always there.”

At times, it is too dangerous to go to church; the people just meet in houses, in small groups gathering quietly to pray. Despite the destruction, he said that faith has not weakened, it has deepened. For many in El Obeid, the Church has become the only visible sign of order and peace. The needs in this diocese are critical: food, medicine, and basic security. The clergy themselves are vulnerable and in need of

ongoing support to sustain their families and ministries.

Bishop Ismail mentioned that, further west in Darfur, the fighting was worse. Until recently there was a Vicar and church in El Fasher. He also indicated that there are three people who have been going through ministry training at Heiban, who have returned to El Obeid and have now left to plant another church in Darfur. They are Darfurians, but moving to the heart of the fighting and of the RSF for the sake of the Gospel requires unbelievable conviction and courage.

(Note: After the recent complete overrun of El Fasher by the RSF when they slaughtered many of the people trapped inside, we subsequently received an update re. the vicar in El Fasher, Revd Daramali, as follows: "Bp Ismail says he has got out and is in touch. He's 35 miles west, in Tawilah. The Samaritan Organization have connected with him. He's now helping South Sudanese get out to South Sudan.")

Diocese of Port Sudan – Bishop Abdu.

Port Sudan, on the Red Sea coast, has become a refuge for thousands fleeing the violence in the interior. Bishop Abdu reported that his diocese is now host to many displaced families from across Sudan. Churches, schools, and even clergy homes are being used to house those who have lost everything.

This has created both an opportunity and a challenge. The Church is at the forefront of humanitarian response, but resources are severely limited. Inflation and food shortages have made it nearly impossible to meet basic needs. Many clergy have taken in multiple families, sharing whatever provisions they can find.

Bishop Abdu expressed deep appreciation for the spiritual and financial support from various agencies and requested ongoing assistance for relief and clergy stipends. Despite the strain, he remains hopeful: “People come to us because they trust the Church. It is the only place where they feel safe.”

Diocese of Khartoum – Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo.

Archbishop Ezekiel’s account of Khartoum was perhaps the most sobering. The city has been devastated by the conflict, with widespread destruction, looting, and displacement. Many of the churches have been damaged or stripped of their contents.

The cathedral compound itself was looted; crosses, chalices, and vestments were taken, but the building stands, which he visited earlier in October. And yet, in his words, “the Church is still there.” Services have resumed at the cathedral after a period of closure. Congregations meet in small groups, often in private homes, to pray and worship together. The clergy continue to serve those who remain in the city and those displaced to other regions.

Archbishop Ezekiel emphasised that while physical possessions can be taken, the spirit of the Church cannot. He spoke with quiet determination, reflecting a faith forged in hardship. His leadership continues to provide hope for clergy and lay people across the country.

The Diocese of Kadugli – Assistant Bishop Hassan James.

Bishop Hassan outlined the situation in the Nuba Mountains. He said very many Christians had fled to the two dioceses (Kadugli & Heiban) and it was having an impact on resources. The Nuba Mountains are one of the safest parts of the country and where most of the Christians in the church now reside. He was thankful for the investment in Korkel Theological Institute.

Two working groups were formed to take forward the outcomes of the retreat: strengthening ministry training, supporting women and youth, planning for sustainability, coordinating leadership, and preparing a joint Statement. The bishops left encouraged and united, trusting that even in hardship, God is at work.

In summary, the situation in Sudan remains extremely fragile. Conflict, displacement, and economic collapse have placed enormous pressure on the Church, but its faithfulness has not wavered. Across every diocese, clergy are continuing to serve their people under conditions most of us would find unimaginable. The bishops expressed deep gratitude for the partnership and fellowship of many agencies that are walking with the ECS at this time.

Please continue to pray for the bishops, clergy, and people of Sudan—that the Church will remain steadfast and hopeful, a sign of Christ’s light and peace in a land still longing for both.

Korkel Theology Institute Teacher Training in Juba

Korkel Theology Institute (KTI) is based in a the Nuba Mountains, a relatively peaceful area of South Sudan. Earlier this year, a number of agencies supported a programme to train teachers and others in the ECSS Guesthouse, Juba. These teachers will return to Sudan to teach, in their turn, the 60 students enrolled at KTI. The report on this programme is as follows:

“First, we want to express our deep gratitude to everyone who stood with us and made this training possible. Your support allowed us to take an important step toward equipping leaders and teachers in one of the most challenging times in Sudan.

Our main goal for this meeting was:

> **to help teachers build a strong foundation in understanding the structure of the Bible, its main themes, and essential theological concepts.**

We also wanted to meet the teachers who will become future leaders and understand their academic strengths and teaching abilities. Moreover, we aimed to provide them with an introduction to various subjects and demonstrate how to create virtual libraries, allowing them to establish a shared resource base moving forward. This year, Korkel Institute welcomed 60 students, which is the maximum the institute can currently hold for the duration of their training.

Upon arrival, we quickly realized the incredible potential that lies in the Nuba Mountains. The church there is growing fast. Many believers are hungry for God’s Word, and countless displaced and unreached people are waiting for ministers and leaders in their churches. The teachers we are training now will play a critical role in shaping the next generation of leaders and ministers in Sudan.

- **We trained:** 10 teachers and 2 bishops
- **Who taught:** 5 faculty members from Alexandria School of Theology (AST) and the Nuba Mountains Bible Institute, all holding PhD or Masters degrees in Theology
- **Duration:** 10 days of intensive sessions, both practical and theoretical

Photos: (left) Korkel teachers group photo (right) Old Testament lecture

Needs and Goals

This training was only the beginning of our journey with Korkel Institute. We plan to:

- **Better Resources:** Install internet access to help teachers and students with research, resource preparation, and homework submissions (Preferably Star Link).
- **Strengthen Subject Coverage:** Provide access to qualified instructors for areas where additional expertise is needed. This can be achieved by establishing a smart classroom at Korkel Institute so teachers from AST in Egypt can teach remotely when needed. This will help us fill the gap while reducing long-term costs compared to frequent travel.
- **Finish the Journey:** We prayerfully plan to do two more trainings in 2026 and 2027 to cover the remaining subjects.
- **Stay Connected:** Keep communication open to monitor progress and continue supporting Korkel Institute.

This training was more than a meeting and training; It was a glimpse of how God can use us for His Kingdom in Sudan. Thank you for making this possible.

The ECSS's Anglican Discipleship Programme goes from strength to strength!

We first reported on the Anglican Discipleship Programme in our Autumn 2023 issue. Developed & led by the ECSS Mission & Evangelism Team & supported by the Relay Trust, the programme has been running in all 61 dioceses of South Sudan for over 2 years, as well as Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya.

The ADP is also a key plank of Archbishop Justin Badi's 'Decade of Discipleship'. Each week, groups meet in their local areas to study discipleship material developed by Study by Extension for All Nations (SEAN), a UK charity which develops its material in Uganda. The first step in the programme is for students to study foundational books, including 'Abundant Life' (teaching about how to transform our everyday lives) and 'Pure Gold' (teaching about the meaning and value of the Bible), before moving on to looking at Christ's life. Once 3 books have been completed, the disciples are 'commissioned' - recognised as being able to lead others in their communities to Jesus, as well as being encouraged to take up more responsible roles in their local churches, which are in many cases vibrant but lacking in leaders.

Since its inception, the programme has been rolled out widely and now comprises of 352 groups involving a little over 7,000 students. Some areas of the country have been affected by violence earlier this year, meaning that some groups that were originally established have been unable to continue.

The afternoon of Monday, 3rd November saw a joyous event in Yambio (see front cover photo) as 91 disciples in the Diocese of Yambio were commissioned. Presided over by the Most Rev'd Samuel Enosa Peni, the Archbishop of Western Equatoria, it was an amazing event and the enthusiasm of the disciples was evident. Each received a certificate recording their achievement. CASSS trustee Rev'd Graham Buttanshaw was also present.

All were encouraged by the presence of the Speaker of the Transitional Western Equatoria State Legislative Assembly, Rt. Hon. Wakila Ngamunde, *(top right photo)* who encouraged the disciples to remain faithful to God and to tell others about Jesus. "As soon as I heard this celebration was happening," she said, "I changed my diary and came down here to see you all."

One of the commissioned disciples, Mama Modi Philip Joshua, gave her testimony at the ceremony (*bottom right photo*). "We thank God for whoever started the

programme," she said. "The books have been wonderful and the lesson I have appreciated most has been the first one of all – The New Birth."

We thank God for this programme and the encouragement that it has brought to so many. We pray that the disciples will go on to further study and to be leaders for Christ in their communities.

Churches in South Sudan carry out 70 days of peace prayers and fasting

(adapted from an article on the World Council of Churches website: www.oikoumene.org)

Earlier this year, churches in South Sudan held peace prayers for the country that lasted for 70 days. Rev. Tut Kony Nyang Kon, general secretary of the South Sudan Council of Churches, announced the prayers on 9 June, as a complex crisis, underlined by armed conflicts, food insecurity, and displacement continued to unfold in the world's youngest nation.

All member churches of the council and the entire body of Christ in the country were expected to pray continually from 10 June-18 August under the theme: "Fulfil your good promises; oh Lord."

The churches held the prayers in partnership with the faith networks, the Intercessors for South Sudan, and the Prayer Network for South Sudan.

"Please ensure that your members commit to pray…for South Sudan to overcome the challenges and steps to development and prosperity of its citizens and institutions," Kon told the churches in a statement on 9 June.

The prayers come amidst intensified political tensions between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and his first Vice-President Reik Machar Teny. President Kiir has detained Machar over allegations that he was attempting to start a rebellion.

Kon, a pastor of the South Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church, urged the churches to pray everywhere, continually and strategically, as the country marked 70 years since the start of war in Sudan.

"Pray at home, local church, and on all occasions including at all platforms, whenever it is possible," he said, urging a focus on the seven spheres of influence, including the family, church, governance, economy, education, media (including art and entertainment), and health.

On 18 August 2025, it was exactly 70 years since the start of the war that later resulted in the secession and independence of South Sudan. On 18 August 1955 in Torit, Equatoria State, the Equatoria Corps, a unit of the

Prayer

FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

70 DAYS FASTING & PRAYERS

Day 17

June 26th, 2025

This year, on August 18th, 2025 marks 70 years since war broke out in Sudan on August 18, 1955 in Torit. This marks the first Sudanese Civil War. The Anyanya I lasted for 17 years followed by the launch of Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army on May 16, 1983, and in July 2011 the nation gained independence. Sadly, the war broke out in December 2013 and June 2014 and to date the reason is still unstable. Therefore, we need to put the boot to the heads of God through fasting and prayer.

Heavenly Father, I come before you with a grateful heart, acknowledging the blessings of community — the community you have created for us to live in fellowship with one another, to support, encourage, and uplift one another in times of joy and sorrow.

Lord, I ask for your protection over our church and our community. Guard us from harm, violence, and discord. Let your peace reign in our streets, our homes, and our hearts., through Jesus christ our Lord, Amen.

Matthew 5:14, Jesus declares, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." This verse, part of the Sermon on the Mount, uses the metaphor of light to describe Jesus' followers and their role in the world. It signifies that believers are to be visible, impactful, and a source of guidance and hope, like a city on a hill that cannot be concealed.

South Sudan Council of Churches in Collaboration with Intercessors for South Sudan, Prayer Network for South Sudan, Christ's Ambassadors for Peace and South Sudan Renewal in Christ ....

August 18, 1955 - August 18, 2025 (70 Years)
June 10, - August 18, 2025 (70 Days)

7 Thematic Prayers: Family, Church, Governance, Economy, Education, Health and Media.

Sudan Defence Force mutinied against the British-administered Sudan government, marking the start of the first Sudanese war.

This war ended in 1972, but a new one broke out in 1983 and went on for 21 years. It ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which paved the way for South Sudan's independence in 2011.

Referring to the book of Jeremiah, on God's promise to Jewish people that, "when 70 years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil my good promise to bring you back to this place," Kon highlighted a similarity with the 70 years of conflict in South Sudan.

"Since then and during the recurring 21 years of war and after independence, South Sudan has been yearning for peace," he said.

The final prayer for the 70-day period, prayed on 18th August 2025, was as follows:

> *'The LORD is my high ridge, my stronghold, my deliverer. My God is my rocky summit where I take shelter, my shield, the horn that saves me, and my refuge. O Lord of mercy and justice.'*
> Psalm 18:2

Lord God, you are refuge, you are our deliverer, you are our protector and provider. We thank you for keeping us hopeful since 1955.

Today, we remember seventy years of gunshots, of struggle, of sacrifice, of suffering, of longing for freedom to become independent like other nations. We honour the lives lost, the tears shed, and the hopes carried through generations. Yet even now, the gun has not fallen silent. Violence still echoes through our land, and suffering remains our daily friend. People die every day due to gunshot wounds, hunger, and disasters. An unknown gunman is still controlling our roads and our farms. We are still living in fear and anxiety.

We cry out to You, O God, for peace.

Let Your spirit move across our nation to soften the hardened hearts, to silence the weapons of war, heal the wounds of trauma, the hearts of division, the hearts of tribalism, and the hearts of hatred.

Bless our leaders with wisdom and courage to choose reconciliation over revenge, unity over division, and compassion over power. Strengthen the peacemakers, the mothers who mourn, the youth who dream, and the elders who remember.

May the bloodshed end. May the land be restored. May our people rise in dignity and hope. May today mark a new beginning. May today mark the end of the suffering of the people of South Sudan. May today mark the end of unnecessary killing. May today mark the beginning of a new chapter in our book. May today mark the end of wounds created by selfish ambitions. May today mark the beginning of Prosperity in the Republic of South Sudan.

God, we thank you for healing, for peace, and a future full of life. Amen.

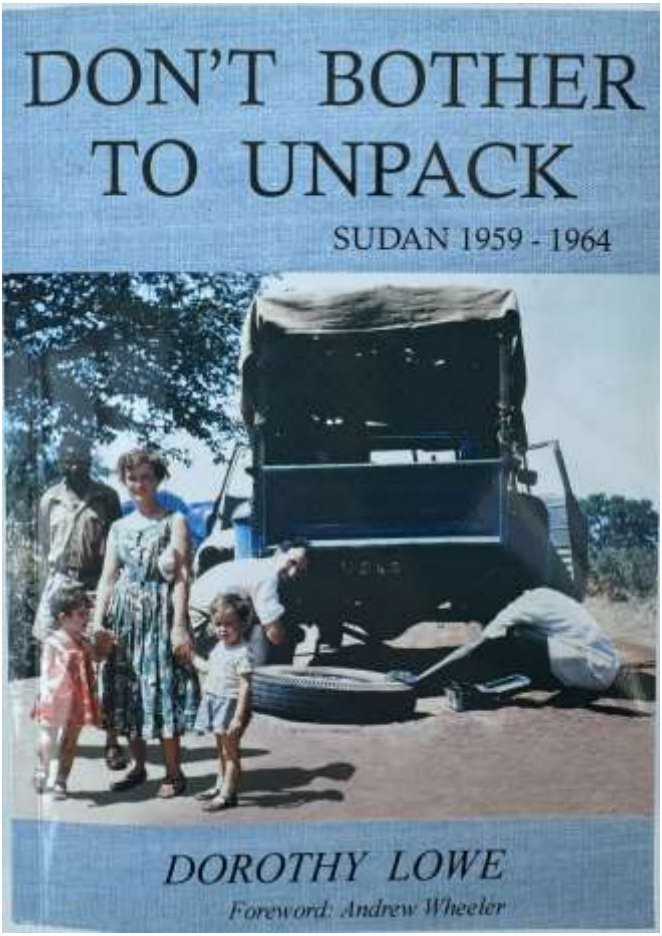
Dorothy Lowe (1931-2025)

We were very sad to learn of the death of Dorothy Lowe earlier this year. Dorothy, as well as her husband, the Rev'd John Lowe, were members of CASSS (and previously the Sudan Church Association), following their 5 years in Sudan. Their son, Michael, writes:

> *'Our mother Dorothy Lowe has sadly passed away on 3rd July. Dorothy and our father John Lowe, who passed away in 2013, were well connected to the Sudan Church Association. They were together posted to the theological college in Mundri by CMS from 1959 until 1964. Dorothy died peacefully, surrounded by love in her final days by her family and the loving carers at Gloucester House Care Home. She was 93 years old.'*

The Rev'd Andy Wheeler, a CASSS trustee, remembers her life, as well as that of her family:

> *'John and Dorothy served, with their 3 children (Patrick, Katherine and Michael), as CMS missionaries at Bishop Gwynne College in Mundri, South Sudan from 1959-1964 until they were expelled by government troops together with all missionaries in South Sudan. Dorothy was the last surviving member of that group of CMS missionaries who served in Sudan / South Sudan after the Second World War, through Sudanese Independence (1956), and through the subsequent years of descent into civil war. An era ends with her passing.*
>
> *'Following their expulsion from Mundri, the Lowes moved to Bishop Tucker Theological College in Uganda where they welcomed Bishop Elinana and Bishop Yeremiah also as refugees from the war, together with Canon Ezra Lawiri, by then principal of BGC, and the students who came through the bush to Uganda when the college was destroyed.*



'In Mundri and in Mukono, John trained many of that generation of Sudanese church leaders, some of whom still serve the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, and Dorothy served the students and surrounding communities as a medical doctor. They remained friends and encouragers to many Sudanese, particularly when they were studying in UK, and had a rich correspondence with many over many years.

'In recent years, Dorothy had actively supported Bishop Bismark Avokaya and Mundri Diocese, enabling a number of young people to get important educational opportunities. Bishop Bismark sent a full and eloquent tribute to the family following her death.'

Many others will be familiar with the work of John & Dorothy whilst they were in Sudan, not least as a result of Dorothy's book, '*Don't bother to unpack – Sudan 1959 -64'*, published in June 2002. In her acknowledgements, Dorothy wrote the following:

'You will know from a glance at the photographs that this book is a personal account. At first, I wanted simply to describe our journey to Mundri for Michael & Katherine who, only twenty months old at the time, remembered nothing of it. Before long, I recognised that the geography, no matter now interesting, wasn't enough except as the setting for why we went to Sudan and how we lived for the five years we were there. So here it is, the experiences of that time, a special account for our much-loved Michael and Katherine and Patrick. It is for others too who may like to read about an ordinary family living in a way that was not exactly ordinary.'

Dorothy asked Andy Wheeler to write a forward to her book ahead of publication. Here is an extract:

'"Don't bother to unpack," they said to Dorothy & John Lowe as they arrived in Southern Sudan with their young twin children, Michael & Katherine. "Don't bother to unpack," because we don't know how long you'll be here, "Don't bother to unpack," because the political and social situation here is so unstable, "Don't bother to unpack," because you don't belong here. Well, the Lowes did unpack – not only their belongings, but also their hearts and minds, their compassion and their commitment. They made Mundri and Bishop Gwynne College their home for five years until the expulsion of all missionaries by the Sudan Government in 1964. Their lives were filled with Sudanese friends, and shaped by encounter and immersion in a young and vibrant African Church. Mundri became their home and it provided the contours of a lifetime of Christian witness and service that unfolded thereafter in Uganda and in South East England.

The legacy of what John & Dorothy helped to nurture continues to this day; now renamed, the Bishop Gwynne School of Theology is thriving as part of the Episcopal University, based in Juba, training students for ministry across South Sudan and beyond.

A number of Sudanese-connected people attended Dorothy's funeral, including Roger and Jos Sharland (with their strong Mundri connections - astonishingly, Jos had helped the Lowes as a child-minder, and was present when troops arrived) and Elfrida Calvocoressi (who grew up in Kajo-Keji, as the daughter of CMS pioneers, Dermot Kerr and his wife), as well as Andy himself.

If you would like to (and have not done so already), please consider making a donation to the Diocese of Mundri, South Sudan. Donations can be made through CASSS, marked in memory of Dorothy, and will be sent on to the Diocese of Mundri.

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Sudan Link 2026 calendars are now available to order. Please do also consider supporting the work of the Diocese of Leeds Sudan Link this Christmas.

All enquiries to sudanlinkcontact@gmail.com

Calendars cost £2 each and 2nd class postage is 87p.

Very many thanks!

STAMPS by Jill Parry

For those of you who don't already know, I sell postage stamps on behalf of CASSS, not for your albums but for your letters and birthday cards and this raises funds for the church in Sudan and South Sudan. We have been buying our stamps from the same international stamp dealer for well over 30 years.

We supply to customers and churches throughout Great Britain - many have been buying stamps since we started, and they overwhelmingly express appreciation for the service we provide (see comments below).

So please do buy stamps from CASSS. You can have any number of stamps, any value and even request preferences to reflect your interests, and all profit goes

directly to CASSS. The stamps are all valid commemoratives - the Royal Mail still sells special stamp issues which are not bar coded. I am holding large stocks at present and hope that this next month will see them shrink as people order their Christmas stamps.

I started buying stamps about 25 years ago, previously my knowledge of the Sudans began with meeting a student at Wye College, later I listened to Baroness Cox. Then I was introduced to the Church Association of Sudan & South Sudan now CASSS. Stamps fascinate me, dealing with them is a joy.

Comments from customers:-

The bonus being able to support those who are less fortunate than I am. (Milngavie)

I have been buying stamps from CASSS for many years and selling them to family, friends and church members. Sadly there seem to be fewer Christmas cards sent, as this is my busiest time, but I also have some constant purchasers throughout the year. I do it because I KNOW that the money raised will go straight to the most in need in Sudan where there are the most dreadful things happening at the moment. I just hope and pray that the little we do will make a real difference to those real need in Sudan. A brilliant way of giving! (Tunbridge Wells)

It's always exciting to receive an envelope with unusual well-chosen stamps on! Some of my customers prefer to use just one stamp per envelope, but others prefer to put together 2 or 3 to make the appropriate amount for postage, representing the recipient's hobbies or landmarks in their life. It's good to know we are doing a little bit to support the devastated citizens of Sudan in the process, and to keep them in our thoughts and prayers. (Bradford)

I love buying my mint stamps from CASSS. It really is a joy to use beautiful, commemorative stamps to liven up the letters and cards I send. It's so easy to order and they always come quickly. And knowing that every stamp I buy supports churches in Sudan and South Sudan is an added benefit. Which reminds me, I need to order my Christmas stamps! (Swansea)

To order stamps use the website https://www.casss.org.uk/mint-stamps/

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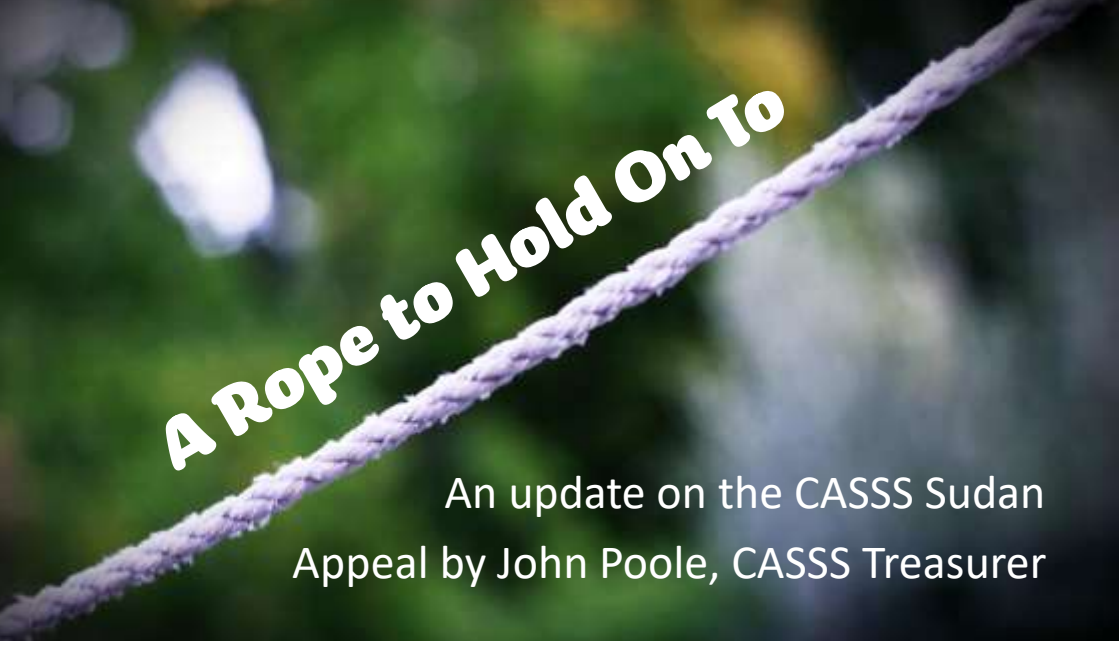

A Rope to Hold On To

An update on the CASSS Sudan Appeal by John Poole, CASSS Treasurer

Imagine climbing a steep, rugged hill, clinging to a rope—only to have a bully come and cut it.

Life in Sudan was never easy for African Sudanese, but there were jobs to earn wages and markets where families could buy food. In an instant, the war swept all of that away. Jobs vanished, markets collapsed, and people were left facing acute food shortages. From the earliest days of the conflict, CASSS has appealed for support to help the Church in Sudan provide the most basic necessity: food for survival.

This year, we pledged £75,000 to ECS—a significant increase in our commitment. Our supporters have responded generously. Up to the end of October, individuals have given £15,000, trust funds associated with our members have contributed £17,000, and congregations have added £1,100.

The bishops of Sudan have expressed deep gratitude that we, along with other partners, continue to walk with them through this crisis. "*We are suffering, but have something on the table.*" "*You are Good Samaritans.*"

At the Provincial Office in Port Sudan, plans are already being drawn up for next year's survival budget, to be presented to UK partners in January—

another humble request for a lifeline while the devastation continues. In areas where the fighting has ceased, CASSS will also begin to consider reconstruction.

But our appeal must continue. Please keep giving, standing alongside our Sudanese brothers and sisters in their hour of great need.

Lord, bring peace to Sudan, relief to the suffering, and compassion to our hearts. Amen.

NEXT STEPS FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SUPPORT OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SUDAN

Photo - STC, NBIC staff and visitors at NBIC

Theological education in the Episcopal Church of Sudan has faced serious disruption over the past two years. In February 2023, at a conference held in Khartoum, the Church launched a long-term strategy for training, beginning at the parish level and progressing through diocesan training centres to higher education via the BA programme at Shokai Theological College (STC).

Tragically, the civil war broke out shortly after this plan was adopted. As has been well reported, the conflict has caused immense suffering across the country, displacing communities and affecting every aspect of church life. STC staff relocated to Cairo, and the ECS established its headquarters in the comparatively safer city of Port Sudan.

By November 2024, ECS leaders agreed it was critical to resume training to prevent the loss of an entire generation of untrained church leaders. Rev. Simon Musa, Principal of STC, returned to Sudan to assess the possibility of reopening the college in Port Sudan from October 2025. Meanwhile, his colleagues remained in Cairo and began developing a four-year BA programme with support from the Nuba Mountains Bible Institute (NBIC).

However, in early May 2025, a shift in tactics by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led to drone strikes on key infrastructure in Port Sudan. This escalation has made it clear that reopening STC in Sudan is not currently viable.

In response, Rev. Canon Andy Wheeler (CASSS Trustee & Advisor for Theological Education to the ECS) and Doug Ingram (Relay Trust) travelled to Cairo later that month to explore alternative pathways for training during the conflict, while laying the groundwork for long-term curriculum development once peace returns.

During the visit, they met with staff from NBIC, Shady Anis, Principal of the Alexandria School of Theology (AST), Archbishop Samy Shehata (Diocese of Egypt, Province of Alexandria), Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo (Sudan), The Shokai Theological College (STC) team in Cairo and Makki Al Doonqi, Director of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) for ECS.

It was agreed that theological education should resume at four distinct levels:

1. Foundational Training through TEE - TEE will raise basic theological and biblical understanding across the church and equip lay leaders. This grassroots training will lay the foundation for future sub-diocesan training, in line with the 2023 strategy.

2. One-Year Certificate Programme - This course will be modelled on NBIC's existing Diploma in Church Leadership (Intensive Programme), currently taught at NBIC and at Korkel Theological College in the Nuba Mountains. NBIC staff are already programmed to train Korkel's faculty during sessions in Juba. STC staff in Cairo will assist with teaching in NBIC, as several already do, and help develop the existing

course further. This Certificate will eventually become the first year of the STC BA and will be taught at regional centres, enabling broader access to pastoral training. Once STC has been re-established, some students may then progress to years two, three, and four, preparing them as theologians and future church leaders. Once conditions allow, this Certificate will be delivered in Sudan.

3. BA Years Two to Four - Curriculum development for these later stages of the BA will continue in the background. However, delivery will be postponed until STC can operate safely in Sudan. In the meantime, suitable students may continue their studies at AST, Uganda Christian University, or other regional institutions.

4. Postgraduate Training (MA and PhD) - Advanced theological training will take place at external institutions, depending on the availability of students and funding.

Agreed training progression

The Agreed Next Steps are that STC and NBIC staff will prepare to launch the Certificate course at NBIC in September 2025, with suitable students from Sudan being identified to attend NBIC. In the meantime, STC staff will familiarize themselves with the TEE materials, visit existing TEE groups in Cairo, and explore how TEE after the war will expand in Sudan, providing a foundation for the re-establishment and development of STC in Sudan. All above activities will be supported by current Relay Trust funding.

Please continue to pray for the re-establishment of theological training in Sudan.

Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo visits the UK

The trustees of CASSS were extremely fortunate to have played a part in hosting the Most Rev'd Ezekiel Kondo, Archbishop of Sudan, during his 20-day visit to the UK from Wednesday 5th to Tuesday 25th November. In particular, we were honoured that Archbishop Ezekiel, Mama Suria and Bishop Hassan, Assistant Bishop of Kadugli, were present at the meeting of CASSS trustees on Thursday 13th November, as well as the Sudan Roundtable meeting earlier that day.

During the meeting, Archbishop Ezekiel updated CASSS trustees on the situation in Sudan and on how the churches are managing to endure & carry on with their ministry despite the turmoil.

For Archbishop Ezekiel, this visit, following on from a few days' stay in Uganda, was his first time out of Sudan for 3 years. He is now based in Port Sudan, which is more stable but is receiving many displaced from other areas of the country. "Thank you to CASSS and others who have been standing with us for almost 3 years," he said. "We want to describe you as Good Samaritans. The closest people to us (in Africa) were not able to help, but someone from far off came to help. This has meant that bishops and pastors have been able to remain in their places, continuing their ministry."

He gave his thanks that churches in the UK had been raising funds from Day 1 of the conflict and particularly thanked the Sudan Link in Leeds for sending funds quickly. The violence has been terrible and the Archbishop was aware that many would have seen reports of the recent atrocities in El Fasher.

"All the Sudanese people are scattered," he continued. "No families are in one place. My own family is scattered across 3 countries – Sudan, Egypt & South Sudan."

Looking to the future of his country, he said, "we do not know the future of Sudan. Whilst here, we have met with various leaders in your parliament & government. Our message to your leaders is that the Sudanese people want peace, not war. The UK has great influence and should find a way of stopping the war. The weapons used are being manufactured elsewhere and should stop coming to Sudan. It is clear that much of this is driven by wealth and that wealth matters more than human lives. We want the media to amplify what is being reported – no one knows about it – but we would like to ask you to continue to walk with us. In particular, we would like to give thanks for the support from CASSS, Salisbury Diocese, Leeds Diocese and Relay Trust."

In the midst of so much turmoil, there is hope emerging. “When peace comes, there will be a lot of rebuilding needed. Much has been destroyed – churches and schools. However, the cathedral in Khartoum is still standing and there are now regular services happening there. The Dean of the Province will be returning there shortly. The pews are intact but the elements of the communion are missing – we have been able to purchase a set of communion items whilst here in England.”

Bishop Hassan gave an update on the situation in the Nuba Mountains, where he is based: “CASSS is standing behind us and is supporting us. Whilst Kadugli and other areas are under siege, the Nuba Mountains are more peaceful, as they are under SPLA-N control. Life is still hard there – there is a lack of food and other necessities of life. Within this dark picture, the church is still continuing to carry out its ministry. Many non-Christians are coming to church and pastors are able to preach the Bible to them. Most pastors in this area are there with the people,” Bishop Hassan said. In another hopeful sign, he added that, “many areas that were not open before are now open to the Gospel and we are being asked to go to those areas. Christians in Sudan have seen themselves as the minority but now, because of the war, the Church is increasing in size.”

Much of the other work of the ECS has been displaced but is continuing. There are 2 translation teams active in Juba, as well as others in Port Sudan. A new translation of the New Testament was launched in Juba in June of this year and 4 congregations there are using this translation.

Mama Suria also gave an update on how women were enduring during the conflict: “We are happy that God has been able to bring us here to see you. The Mothers’ Union was very active previously but has now been divided due to the war. However, we are still continuing to meet monthly and, where we can, agree activities and financial assistance to help women who are suffering, in many cases because their husbands have been killed or because they are in hospital or in prison. God is always there. He provides in a way that people cannot see. Thank you for

your prayers."

Archbishop Ezekiel also thanked CASSS for the support to the ECS Bishops' Retreat in Entebbe. Led by Archbishop Daniel Deng (who was assisted by CASSS trustees Rev'd Graham Buttanshaw and John Poole) Archbishop Ezekiel said, "it was good for us to meet with each other, as we hadn't seen each other for a long time. Seeing each other online is one thing but it is not the same as being with each other and seeing each other in person. It was good to know that our brothers are with us."

Turning to the future, Archbishop Ezekiel said that, along with ongoing support to pastors and bishops, trauma healing for those affected by war would be a priority. "All Sudanese are traumatised," he said, "but in the churches we are well placed to use materials that have been developed to address this, as well as carry out train the trainer activities." He also added that training and education were important for those who had been affected by the war, so that they can support themselves and their families once peace comes.

The CASSS trustees have agreed to follow up on Archbishop Ezekiel's request for support to trauma healing. The ECS is well placed to do this and, in addition to making resources available, a working group will be set up to develop how this can be taken forward.

Archbishop Ezekiel and Mama Suria had additional meetings in the South of England before travelling to Leeds & Skipton for the final few days of their visit, spending time with the Sudanese congregations and Sudan Link members there. Please join us in praying for their safety as they return to the region, as well as for God's peace in Sudan.

Peter Everington (1934-2025)

We were saddened to hear of the death of Peter Everington, a long-time member of the Sudan Church Association (later CASSS). Here, we reprint extracts from his obituary from the Guardian:

Peter Everington obituary by Philip Boobbyer

(Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd)

My friend Peter Everington, who has died aged 90, was in his second year studying classics at Cambridge when the Suez crisis came to a head in October 1956. The perceived arrogance and deceit driving Britain's involvement in the invasion of Egypt shocked him deeply, and prompted him to rethink the direction of his life.

Turning to his strong Christian faith, he felt a call to build bridges between Britain and the Arab world. This led him to switch his degree course to Arabic, and after graduation, in 1958, he became an English teacher in newly independent Sudan. Over an eight-year period, he worked in secondary schools in Port Sudan and Khartoum and at the Higher Teacher Training Institute in Omdurman, and he revisited the country many times subsequently.

While teaching in Northern Ireland prior to Cambridge, Peter had become involved in a movement called Moral Re-Armament (MRA), later renamed Initiatives of Change, which encouraged conflict resolution. Peter attempted this kind of work in Sudan – divided between the Muslim north and the Christian south – by supporting figures on either side who wanted to bring peace to the war-torn country.

One of these was Joseph Lagu, a guerrilla leader who later became vice-president of Sudan before going into exile in London. There, Peter and Lagu worked closely together from the mid-1980s onwards, supporting peacebuilding efforts. In 1996 Peter was awarded the Order of the Two Niles for services to Sudan.

Returning from Sudan to the UK in 1966, he decided to work full-time with MRA. In 1972, he married Jean Robertson, and they spent the first two and a half years of their marriage in Iran. Back in the UK from the mid-1970s, with the couple eventually settling in Acton, west London, Peter was involved over the next two decades in running a student exchange programme for the British-Arab Universities Association.

In 2017, a Khartoum-based cultural organisation published, in English and Arabic, a memoir by Peter entitled Watch Your Step, Khawaja: A British Teacher in Sudan 1958-66.

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For contact details for the Provinces and Dioceses for the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) & the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) see 'About the churches' on the website.

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