

Sudan: Finding Faith in the Future



Persecuted and Forgotten?

Find out more about Sudan and 32 other countries in Aid to the Church in Need's 2011 report on Christians oppressed for their faith. See back page for details

“All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

2 Timothy 3:12

For decades, Christians in Sudan have endured civil war, displacement, violent attacks and persecution by extremists. Now a referendum on independence for South Sudan has created a new country. In this report, Aid to the Church in Need examines how the Church is striving to forge a new beginning for its people, free from oppression and suffering.

The people of Sudan are standing at the crossroads of history.

2011's independence referendum created the new country of South Sudan – bringing huge challenges for the Church, which has been providing pastoral care, medical help and education alongside its work of teaching and sustaining the Faith.

Thousands have gathered in the capital Khartoum to take passage to the south. Some will be returning to home lands they left 30 years ago during the country's fierce civil war.

Those going back will face difficulties – there are no houses, no jobs and few schools awaiting them.

But, despite limited resources, Bishop Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala of Tombura-



A warm welcome: Sudanese Christians greet visitors to their parish

Yambio is optimistic about the future for those who choose to return.

“In the north, they had to make do with camps and shanty towns,” he explains. “They had no land of their own.

“Here, they can have land, they can cultivate it, build a house. They can make their home here.

“People here are happy to share what they have with the newcomers. We are planning big celebrations in each of our parishes to receive them and make them feel at home.”

Aid to the Church in Need is helping the Church in South Sudan to care for those making the journey back south.

ACN's aid includes help for Sisters carrying out important religious and pastoral work, transport for catechists and Mass offerings to support priests.

Bishop Eduardo told ACN there was no need to worry about the future – which is in God's hands – but rather asked us to pray for him, and assured us of his prayers, saying: “Be sure I will offer Holy Mass for you and all friends of Aid to the Church in Need.”

Helping the suffering Church today



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Catechists – Keeping the Faith alive

“Without catechists the work of evangelisation cannot go ahead.”

Monsignor Roko Mousa faces many challenges as Apostolic Administrator of Malakal – South Sudan’s largest diocese and at almost 239,000 square kilometres (more than 3 times the size of Tasmania).

There are just 25 priests and 30 Religious tending to more than 800,000 faithful spread out across the vast region. But Mgr Mousa can also call on 36 full-time catechists, as well as 450 part-time ones.

With their help, the Church in the region is growing. About 7,000 people have been baptised in the past two years.

The catechists help keep the Faith alive where priests are seldom able to visit. Mgr Mousa explained: “It is impossible for priests to reach people where they are living.

“Some communities are visited only once a year by priests, to celebrate the sacraments. So we are practically dependent on the catechists for evangelisation.”

The catechists in Malakal travel from village to village teaching the faithful who are waiting to hear more about Jesus.



*Spreading the Faith:
A catechist prepares to
head out on his bike*

That is why ACN is helping their efforts to spread the Faith by providing 36 bicycles for full-time catechists.

Thanking the charity for its support, Mgr Mousa said: “May God bless you and your benefactors for your continuous support and concern.”



*Catechists play a key role teaching
the Faith to young Christians like these*

Mass offerings – Giving priests the means to survive

Conditions for priests in Sudan can be difficult. And with food prices having risen sharply just before the January 2011 referendum, in some areas priests are on the breadline.

The Mass offerings you kindly make through Aid to the Church in Need provide vital support for many priests ministering in difficult circumstances in Africa – and throughout the world.

Your kindness helps provide for their basic needs, so that they can feed themselves and tend to the needs of their parishioners.

Please be assured of their prayers for you and your intentions when they offer Holy Mass for you.

You can find out more by clicking on the Mass offerings tab on our website

www.aidtochurch.org



*Serving the faithful, thanks to you:
Outdoor Mass in Sudan*

Sudan: Suffering at the hands of extremists

Christians in Sudan continue to suffer at the hands of the rebel military group, the Lord's Resistance Army.

In January 2011, Sister Angelina from South Sudan was attacked and killed by the LRA while travelling in the neighbouring DR Congo, where she was providing medical help to refugees from Sudan.

In recent years, the LRA has continued to wage a campaign of terror, killing and kidnapping innocent victims in South Sudan.

Since 1988 the LRA has abducted more than 30,000 children. Boys are forced to become child soldiers, while the girls are abused as sex slaves.



*Bringing hope to the sick:
Sister Grace cares for HIV/AIDS sufferers*



*Former child soldiers
at a Mass in Sudan*

Bishop Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala of Tombura-Yambio told ACN: "Many of our children are still in the hands of the LRA. We do not know if they are alive or dead.

"Those who escape bear the physical and mental scars of what they have suffered and will never be the same again."

In Bishop Eduardo's diocese, ACN has helped the Church's programme of assistance for communities devastated by LRA attacks. And in neighbouring Uganda, the diocese of Isiro-Niagara

has received emergency help for former child soldiers.

But as the bishop said: "Each day that goes by without a solution to the LRA problem is another day of terror and pain."

In February 2011 Bishop Hiiboro appealed to rebels to start talks with the government so that South Sudan might start its new future in peace.

Please pray that the LRA will come to the negotiating table and that their acts of terror will end.

Religious Sisters – Helping bring hope

For Sister Grace, providing home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS is a mission of hope.

Many of her patients are too sick to travel to the clinic to receive treatment. So Sister Grace brings the love of Christ to them, tending to them, administering the medicines they need and praying with them.

In a country where more than half a million people suffer with the virus, and where the topic remains so taboo that many are too embarrassed to seek help, it would be easy to lose hope.

But, asked if her work challenges her faith, Sister Grace replies: "It looks hopeless for someone who has not got faith.

"But recognising that everyone has God-given dignity means there is always hope and that God never abandons his people."

Along with Sister Grace, 31 Sisters from four different congregations are playing a vital part in the Church's outreach in South Sudan's Tombura-Yambio diocese.

As well as medical work they teach in schools, work with young people and run catechetical activities such as Bible studies.

Your compassion means that ACN can help Sisters in their ministry – from support for ongoing formation to essential repairs to the Novice House of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Sudan's capital, Khartoum.

Carrying the Cross in Africa



Christians taking part in a procession in Jabarona displacement camp outside Khartoum, Sudan (Photo: ACN/Andrzej Polec)

Request your free copy of *Persecuted and Forgotten?* today!

Aid to the Church in Need's 2011 edition of *Persecuted and Forgotten?* is an eye-opening report on the reality of life for millions of Christians who carry the cross of oppression.

You can request your free copy by completing the enclosed reply slip or calling (02) 9679 1929.

***Persecuted and Forgotten?* – Aid to the Church in Need's new report on Christians oppressed for their faith – examines 33 countries where persecution against the faithful is worst. Here we take a look at the suffering Christians endure in countries in Africa.**

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

While religion plays little part in the ongoing civil violence that ravages DR Congo, nevertheless, innocent priests, Sisters and even Christian schoolchildren have suffered savage crimes.

In November 2010, Father Christian Mbusa Bakulene, parish priest of St John the Baptist's Church in Kanyabayonga, was murdered by two men in military uniform near a Congolese Armed Forces base. The men stopped the motorbike on which Fr Bakulene was travelling with a parish worker.

Asked which of them was the priest, Fr Bakulene replied: "I am." The gunman then took money from the companion before firing several shots, killing the priest. His companion was unharmed.

According to Fides news agency, the attack was a targeted killing aimed at frightening priests working in the area.

ERITREA

Severe abuses of religious freedom are commonplace in Eritrea – more than 3,000 Christians are being held, many in underground cells. Reports of harassment, arrests, indefinite detention without charge, prisoners being tortured and believers being forced to renounce their faith have led the US Secretary of State to call Eritrea a country "of particular concern".

In April 2010 28-year-old student Senait Oqbazgi Habta died of malaria and anaemia at the health facility of a prison in Sawa. She had been imprisoned since her arrest in 2008, together with 15 other students, for belonging to a Bible study group.

The students were imprisoned in containers exposed to the hot sun during the day and the cold at night, without toilet facilities or medical care. Previously Senait had refused to sign a document renouncing her faith.

NIGERIA

The situation for Christians in Nigeria is an uneasy one, with Islamic *Shari'a* law in one third of the country's states leading to great tension that has at times erupted into violence.

Christians suffer discrimination because of their faith. And there have been a number of bloody clashes between Islamists and Christians, with many losing their lives.

Nearly 40 people were killed and 74 were injured during attacks on Christmas Eve 2010. In Jos city several bombs exploded, targeting Christmas shoppers. A bomb set to explode during Midnight Mass was defused by police.

That same day, two churches in the northern city of Maiduguri were attacked, killing at least six people including a Baptist pastor and two choristers preparing for a carol service.



Bishop Eduardo Hiiaboro of Sudan greets young Catholics
Photo: Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, Sudan

Despite their suffering, Christians in Africa are holding true to their faith and their hope in the light of Christ's resurrection.

Trusting in God, they are striving to build a brighter future – thanks to your solidarity and prayers.

You can find out more about how you are helping suffering Christians around the world by clicking on the News & Features tab on our website www.aidtochurch.org

Any donation you kindly make will support suffering and needy Christians around the world.

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