

Hannah and Tim Latin Link

Serving Marginalised Communities in Brazil and South Sudan

Dear friends,

Tim returned from South Sudan last Sunday. We are happy and relieved to be reunited. 25 days felt like a very long time! Many men work in South Sudan but their families stay in Uganda, including several who serve with ACROSS where Tim stayed while in Juba. (They called themselves the "married bachelors"!) We don't know how they and their families manage it!

Many families across the world are separated involuntarily by immigration restrictions, and we pray for their reunion. We remember how Jesus entrusted his mum and best friend to each other's care on the cross, providing them with a new family, and pray that the Church can be family to those separated this Easter.

Abyei - an oasis of peace in South Sudan

God is working in Abyei! Who would have guessed, five years ago when Paramount Chief Kuol Adol was killed, that Abyei would become an example to the rest of South Sudan in how to make peace on the ground when national leaders couldn't agree?!

Despite Concordis' exit from South Sudan, communities have found ways to continue the arrangements they put in place. The settled Dinka Ngok community and Misseriya nomads meet weekly & resolve issues including cattle-raiding & blood compensation. A bigger pre-migration conference was held in March. Annual migrations are already underway.

The peace market at Amiet has grown massively - up to 2000 traders are operating there - and is now not just a market between Dinka Ngok and Misseriya, but between South Sudan and Sudan. Goods come from Khartoum and reach deep into South Sudan.

Benefits of the market include freedom of movement, prosperity, availability of goods, availability of work, and increased possibilities for people to return to and survive in their villages. (Most people have made a permanent move back to Abyei town or to their villages.) Taxes provide a guaranteed source of income for local government and we pray that local people will see the results of this in improved public services. But the biggest dividend is peace, strengthened by daily interactions and relationship-building between ordinary members of Dinka Ngok and Misseriya communities. The increased trust can only help the long-term prospects for resolving the final status of Abyei Area. Pray for this, and pray too that the local church makes the most of

April/Abril/Akoldit '18



Above: Tim with students at Abyei Anglican Bible College

Below: Anyone fancy an onion?
Amiet peace market



Please be praying:

- For continued peace, for Concordis' return, and for the UN team reviewing UNISFA
- For the new Abyei Anglican Bible College in Abyei, the 9 students and principal Santino Jok
- For the success of our teacher sponsorship pilot programme, and for others to join us so it can be extended from next year
- For Fr Biong & Fr Paul, especially that God will grant Fr Biong the opportunity for rest and further study
- For the final status of Abyei Area to be resolved
- That the church would make the most of the new opportunities that exist due to peace
- For a Darfuri fellowship in Juba reaching out to traders in Juba and elsewhere (contact us for more details)

the possibilities for interaction.

Although we didn't know it when Tim booked his flights, a UN team was visiting Abyei to review UNISFA's performance and mandate. Tim was able to take part in meetings and speak privately with some members of the team. Pray the team would understand and take action on what Tim and Dinka Ngok representatives told them. Tim also wrote a report for Concordis; pray that Concordis will secure funding to return to Abyei.

Supporting theological education in Abyei

An exciting development - the Episcopal Church of South Sudan have opened 'Abyei Anglican Bible College' in Agok, Abyei! 9 students will complete the first year of a theology degree in 2 years of daily study on weekday afternoons, and can transfer to Wau or Juba if they wish to continue their studies. Tim relied heavily on his notes from All Nations (thanks Carol!) in delivering six lectures on Old Testament theology, looking at themes including covenant, Law, land, and kingship. We will look to see how we can support the college in the future, but do pray for the Principal Santino Jok, who has a lot on his plate teaching, finding and supervising other teachers, managing the curriculum, finding resources, setting exams etc. Pray that in God's time the college may expand and further theological education to the benefit not only of Abyei but also the surrounding area.

Sponsoring teachers in Abyei

Primary school teachers receive a very low monthly salary and often go months without being paid. Unsurprisingly, there is a very high turnover of staff, and many schools in Abyei have less than 50% of the quota of teachers they are supposed to have. Tim reached agreement with the Ministry of Education in Abyei and Abyei Catholic Church, to recruit and sponsor additional teachers for some of the government schools in the villages. The church, will recruit and pay the teachers with funds that we pass on. Mijak Primary School is the pilot for the project; we are providing 3 teachers. We will pay them about \$40 USD/month, and also top-up the salaries of their government-paid colleagues slightly. For every teacher provided, we will provide chalk, and exercise books.

If the scheme works well, we want to extend it next year to other schools in the area. But we will need your help. If you would like to sponsor a teacher for one year, the costs are **£500 per year per teacher**. If that sounds a lot, why not see if your small group at church, community group or union branch would like to take part? Although our focus is on the free, government-run schools, it is also possible to fund scholarships for individual students at the Catholic schools. **Get in touch to find out more.**

Love & solidarity, Hannah, Tim and Rita



Above: Fr Biong with Fr Paul (who has joined him in Abyei)
Below: International Women's Day in Abyei



Above: The Head of Mijak Primary School
Below: Mijak Primary School



Below: new church roof in Abyei



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