

South Sudan 2011 Update



One of many convoys of "returnees" arriving at Torit from northern Sudan

Archangelo, the church planter from Tsertanya, S. Sudan, couldn't get transportation to our three-day seminar at the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS)—Torit, but came later. A year's passed since seeing him, so I



Archangelo's new bike, donated by a LMPC SS Class.

RECONCILIATION REPORT

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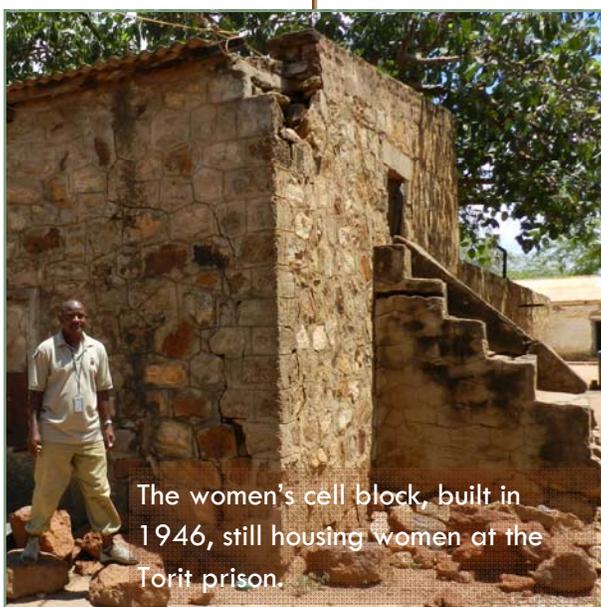
asked if any of the ten men with whom Joe Huebscher and I had shared a two-hour gospel presentation had become Christians. Reflecting, he said six. Most now attend his church with some regularity--about thirty adults and the same number of children in total, including Chief Peter, who had earnestly desired regular church services in his village. If we can put up the walls of a church building, they will build the roof. Many are subsistence farmers, who climb a high mountain behind the village to cultivate crops, sometimes enduring the cold for weeks until the crops are viable. The church plants at Lalanga and Hidonge are not going as well, but I wasn't able to meet with their leaders.



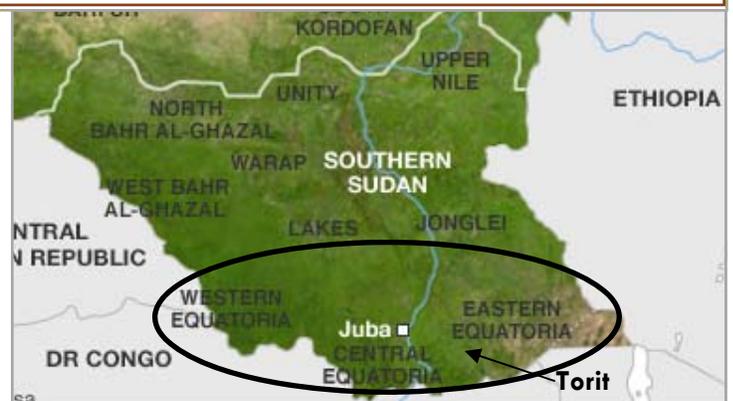
The interlocking block machine

How will those walls be built? Hopefully by August or September an interlocking block machine will arrive in Torit—a gift of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church (LMPC). No mortar is needed between the blocks, which are made of highly compressed soil, cement and water, cutting the need for cement¹. The first project is a church in Torit, the capital of Eastern Equatoria Province. Arnold Polk, the inventor, will teach the block crew how to use the machine and construct buildings. Unemployment is about 70% in Torit, and this is a micro-enterprise. We plan for the block machine crew to be hired out, and the net profits used to fund Kingdom projects, such as the Tsertanya church. A UN (Nigerian) prison official working at the Torit prison asked for a chapel within the prison compound.

Patrick Oting, our Sudanese partner, introduced us to the lead-



The women's cell block, built in 1946, still housing women at the Torit prison.



ership of the 120-year-old Presbyterian Church of the Sudan (PCOS) in Central, Western and Eastern Equatoria provinces. Their vision is to evangelize the 50 tribes (their count) of S. Sudan by planting churches throughout those states, which comprise the lowest third of S. Sudan. We await a proposal to partner in equipping their pastors for ministry, all of whom are bi-vocational, and none of whom have formal pastoral training. We're also working on a way to provide scholarships to Westminster Theological College, in Kampala.



PCOS Equatoria leaders

About ten pastors attended parts of a three-day seminar, including teaching on Biblical Financial Management, Church Finances, Personal Evangelism and Spiritual Growth, as well as topics ably taught by Sudanese on Prayer and Church Planting. RMNI provided funds for the conference. An average of 25-30 people attended. Patrick wrote that they hadn't heard previously what I taught, and felt that it was well received.



The Torit seminar

Ellen Fox, acting headmistress at the Lohutok Girls'school, met me in Kampala and again at Torit. We had a great time catching up, opening gifts from the USA, filming video reports, shopping in Kampala and enjoying Chinese at Fang Fang's. She's lost about 60 pounds, but appears in good health. Look for her videos soon at www.RMNI.org ². Her love for Africa is undiminished and teaching is her passion—a new career. Some of her girls won't take recess, but stay to study. They are genuinely sad when she is away. Ellen asks for wisdom and for ability to learn the Lopid language, to enable her to evangelize and otherwise serve village women.



Ellen treasures new teaching materials!

Prospective team members have expressed concerns about safety in S. Sudan. Some church leaders in Juba, the national capital, are sure that the north is supplying rebel groups in the north/south border region with arms. Five groups have united against the government of S. Sudan, the apparent objective being to gain control of oil fields in the Abyei border area, which is 300 miles of bad road away³. Security was not an issue in the areas of Eastern and Central Equatoria in which we traveled. In Juba my valise was stolen from a locked vehicle, but that could happen in the USA. The ultimate issue is not safety, but whether or not the Lord is leading a person to go. His will is not necessarily "safe" (2 Cor. 11:23-27).



S. Sudan becomes a new nation on July 9, 2011. In March 2010 I reported on a speech and brief conversation with Eastern Equatoria gubernatorial candidate Louis Labong Lojore. He said that it was miraculous that S. Sudan was at peace, looking

to nationhood, and that only a spiritual foundation would suffice. There's blatant immorality in Juba. When trying to locate a motel room, it was normal to be asked if a room was needed for a couple of hours, or for overnight. One place told us around 6:30 PM that a room would be available about 9 PM. Louis Labong is now Governor



This Member of Parliament (Alma) asked for a prayer of blessing over the new Toyota, dedicated for service to Sudanese women.

Labong. With such men, and with strong churches, S. Sudan can emerge as a platform not only to evangelize the tribes of S. Sudan, but one to reach northern Sudan, where there are still ties, and the region. If S. Sudanese are anything, they are determined. Please contact us if you'd like to join a ministry trip to S. Sudan, tentatively scheduled for March, 2012.

- 1 http://pbmin.org/index.php/block_machine
- 2 <http://www.rmni.org/global-and-short-term-missions/21/369-foxs-village-ministry.html>
- 3 <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/South-Sudan--Rebel--Groups-Unite-118782949.html>
<http://blogs.voanews.com/breaking-news/2011/05/05/us-sees-dangerous-standoff-in-sudans-border-region/> On May 5, 2011, the Voice of American reported that unless S. Sudan gave up claims to Abyei oil, the north Sudan government would not recognize S. Sudanese independence.
- 4 http://sudancatholicradio.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=352:torit-civil-hospital-still-lacking-qualified-personnel-and-drugs&catid=2:south-sudan&Itemid=84



The Torit hospital campus is about 65 years old. Within the last year flush toilets were installed for the first time. The hospital lacks drugs, qualified personnel, and an X-ray machine⁴. Interested?

There is still time to join our July 16-29, 2011 ministry trip to central and southern India. We continue a partnership established in 2005 with an excellent Indian ministry partner. Our focus is upon equipping Indian Christians for ministry, through a multi-ethnic ministry team. We plan seminars for men, women and those younger. Medical personnel are also most welcome, and would work under in-country medical personnel. We begin in the Chandrapur area



INDIA 2011

and then travel in southern regions. Christians comprise about 2-10% of the population where we intend to serve. We can learn very much from Indian Christians about faith, perseverance and church planting. Details are at www.RMNI.org Contact us at 423-822-1091 without delay for more information.

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Fierce storms and tornadoes plowed our region in late April, coming within a few miles of us. We escaped all but minor damage (to our driveway). A tree fell within a spider's leg of our two vehicles, and we were without power for four days, but lost no food. Churches have become emergency relief centers, and the spirit among volunteers of all kinds more than proves that it's more blessed to help, than to be helped. This Report is later than usual due to these events and returning April 23rd from S. Sudan. It was my first ministry trip "alone." The economy and fears of violence probably prevented some from coming. I believe that there are funds enough and that God's protection is sufficient. In-country security situations are monitored at least weekly through the Overseas Security Advisory Council. God will provide the funds and the faith, if He wants you to join us in India or in S. Sudan. Why there? Few short-term ministry teams go to S. Sudan at present, and few enough go to India. Both are strategic Kingdom investments. The churches in S. Sudan can grow unhindered by war, and are within reach of many Muslim and animist tribes. India will soon become the most populous nation on earth, and is home to the great majority of the over 950 million Hindus on the planet.

Upon returning to the Westside housing project, mobility and immobility have increased. Due to gang shootings, police are arresting those who normally hang out there ("thuggin"). Many new guys have moved in, due to closure of another major housing project. So we're almost beginning again. Two local employers have agreed to give favorable consideration to Westside applicants, and two applications are in the pipeline. We're still searching for those who will work, whom God is powerfully drawing to Christ, and who want to be disciplined. It appears that helping find jobs may be the key to finding them. We're feeling our way along, dealing with police records and lack of diplomas and my mistakes, but it's a worthwhile investment in self-sufficiency and home-building, in the name of Jesus. Thanks for prayers, gifts and your valued friendship.

Prayer Power



Jerusalem's Wailing Wall

- ↑ I'm grateful for health, safety and being able to accomplish more than expected on the S. Sudan trip, beginning and deepening relationships. This was by intercession.
- ↑ Pray for a spiritual awakening in S. Sudan and for churches to gain and pursue a vision for the unreached. Pray for peace in S. Sudan and fair resolution of issues with the north.
- ↑ Pray that the block machine will arrive without difficulties and be used

- for many years in Kingdom projects.
- ↑ Ellen Fox requested prayer for much wisdom and for language acquisition. Pray for good health and possible in-country mission agency affiliation.
- ↑ Pray for the church plants at Tsertanya, Hidonge and Lalanga, S. Sudan.
- ↑ Pray for staff to join RMNI.
- ↑ Pray for workers for the India team in July,

- 2011. Pray for enduring fruit from that trip.
- ↑ Pray for many to turn to Christ in the wake of deadly tornadoes in southern US states and for wisdom for churches on how best to represent the Lord.
- ↑ Pray for jobs and new employers and for wisdom in assisting and followup at the Westside.
- ↑ Pray for Kippy, now in jail, that he'll emerge moving solidly forward in discipleship.