
Solidarity with Southern Sudan

Solidarity with Southern Sudan is an act of solidarity between religious institutes, who are members of the Union of Superiors General (USG) and the Union of International Superiors General (UISG) and the Church in Southern Sudan, under the direction of the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC)

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), was signed in January 2005, the bishops of Southern Sudan invited the USG/UISG to consider the needs of the people and the Church following decades of civil war. Aware of the variety of charisms and capacities of congregations, the USG/UISG responded and sent a six member delegation to visit the dioceses of Southern Sudan. That visit and others, the formation of a Steering Committee, and dialogue with the bishops have all led to a commitment to enter into a partnership with the local church to initiate and progressively develop a Teacher Training Institute and a Health Training Institute.

Southern Sudan has the lowest education rates in the world today. Illiteracy rate in Southern Sudan is almost 85% and only 25% of children are enrolled in primary school. Besides the shortage of basic infrastructure and materials, the number one need cited repeatedly is for more trained teachers. Only 6% of teachers have been formally trained.

In addition, Southern Sudan lacks infrastructure and has some of the worst indices in the world for nutrition, access to water, mother/child health, and outbreaks of common preventable diseases. While the CPA officially ended the civil war between North and South, thousands continue to die unnecessarily and suffer immeasurably. "Less than 25% of the population has access to safe water. The mortality rate for children under the age of 5 years is almost 25%. Only 30-40% live within one day's walk of a basic health facility.

For Southern Sudan this is a moment of transition as well as transformation. The local church now needs the solidarity of the universal church in order to heal past wounds, reconcile division and build a new future.

for Humanity November 2004) 55 congregations, as of November 30, 2007, have joined together with a promise of personnel or financial contributions to help create the Teacher Training Institute and the Health Training Institute.

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