

WEA
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE



The Ploughshare

The referendum: Sudan's moment



Sudan's Moment of Truth

Sudan's north-south civil war was Africa's longest running civil conflict, flaring first in 1955 and continuing until 2005 peace settlement. Over 5 decades of fighting between the predominantly Muslim north and Christian south has tragically seen an estimated 2 million lives destroyed and untold suffering with devastating consequences on the environment, rural communities and the fragile economies of both the north and the south.

In 2005 a peace deal ended the latest phase of violence and fighting, and in exchange promised southerners self-determination through a referendum on independence from the north. The referendum is scheduled for January 9th 2011.

Few believe the majority of southerners will vote for unity.

HOW WILL THE VOTE WORK?

The vote will be by secret ballot and will have its own 17-day registration process. More than 50 percent need to vote for either result for it to be binding.

The referendum commission has approved a budget of \$372 million. Some 10,800 staff will work in almost 3,000 referendum centers. More than 14,000 police will secure the process in the south. Voting is due to begin on January 9th and last one week.

The 10,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force in Sudan, separate from a much bigger U.N.-African Union force in Darfur, will also help maintain security.

The referendum law should have been passed three years ago and the commission formed immediately after. In reality the commission took their oath in July 2010 giving them just six months to arrange a vote which will forever change the path of Africa's largest country.

Many observers believe the vote may be delayed by a few weeks with such a tight schedule. The result should be announced by Feb. 15, 2011.

VIOLENCE

While the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region gets the most attention, the north-south conflict has the potential to eclipse Darfur. The news is troubling. While the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) forbids either sides from rearming and importation, there is strong evidence that the two may be ramping up their armaments in advance of the 2011 referendum. In the north, the Khartoum government purchased of around a dozen MiG-29 fighter aircraft while satellite imagery to tracked shipments of heavy weaponry to the government of South Sudan.

The disputed oil-producing Abyei region is supposed to hold a simultaneous plebiscite on whether to join the south or the north but deep north-south divisions over who will vote and who will plan it mean this vote will either be much delayed or may not happen at all.

Most analysts believe Abyei, the site of north-south clashes since 2005, could remain Sudan's "Kashmir" and local tensions there could spark a more general war if left to fester.

Other areas could include oil fields close to the still disputed border

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Many African nations favor Sudan's unity because they fear the split could fuel secessionist tensions in their own countries.

Sudan is also the axis of the continent's Arab north-African and black sub-Saharan divide. Many will see a split as a wider failure to overcome those differences.

Some worry secession could lead to demands for autonomy in Sudan's other regions including Darfur or the east who have also rebelled against Khartoum and the country could disintegrate.

Others fear that if southerners are not given the chance to vote on whether to rule themselves, the north-south civil war, which destabilized much of east Africa, could reignite.

WEA Pledges support.

Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe WEA's SecretaryGeneral visited Sudan in October assessing the situation and had high level meetings with Church officials and the government including the President's office and cabinet.

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) has pledged action to ensure that the referendum taking place on Southern Sudan's future next January is a success.

In response to calls for assistance from the Southern Sudanese President and the Sudan Council of Churches, the WEA has committed to:

- Mobilize its entire global community in praying for a free, fair and safe referendum
- Ask its National Alliances to lobby their respective governments in supporting the timeline of the referendum
- Work with our global community to send international observers to the Sudan for the referendum
- Launch a Peace for Sudan Fund, which encourages its global community to give generously to
- Call on all governments to respect and accept the will of Southern Sudanese expressed through the referendum
- Call upon all governments to play their part in ensuring that the Khartoum government protects the human rights and religious freedom of all people.
- Support holistic development, peace-building, reconciliation and good governance through our global community of churches and NGOs.
- Advocate on behalf of the people of Southern Sudan at the highest governmental and institutional levels.

In his closing remarks to the forum, Dr Tunnicliffe said: "The people of Sudan have suffered for many years. Now is the time for a new future that will bring peace, wholeness, dignity, freedom of belief and freedom from extreme poverty. The people of Sudan deserve nothing less."

The forum ended with a joint communiqué and several resolutions signed between the government and churches.

Aiah Forday-Khabenje, General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa (AEA), was present at the forum. He called upon the international community to support the Southern Sudanese in holding a successful and peaceful referendum.

He said: "Sudan was embroiled in civil war for the best part of half a century. That war ended when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was agreed five years ago and it is imperative that the country does not slide back into another destructive cycle of conflict and poverty. We are looking to governments to honour the commitment they made to ensure that the referendum goes ahead on time and that it does not result in further suffering for the people of Sudan."

In a joint interview Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, said it was time to call on religious and political leaders in Africa and around the world to assure a free and fair referendum and for all to abide by the results.

They also stressed the importance of supporting the Sudanese people in southern Sudan as they make their decision on the future of south Sudan.

Tveit spoke of a recent meeting with Muslim and Christian leaders and scholars who said the election cannot be viewed as a point of tension between Muslim and Christian. Tunnicliffe said the WEA is calling for a day of prayer for Sudan on 5 December.

Both leaders pointed out that there are hundreds of thousands of Christians living in northern Sudan who could be impacted by the outcome of the referendum. But there are also million others, both Christian and Muslim, who remain internally displaced from the war and others living in volatile and disputed areas of the country that could be impacted if the referendum is delayed or the results not accepted.

Prayer for Sudan



December 5th is a day of Prayer for Sudan.

In response to this request from the Church of Sudan, the WEA is asking all churches and Christians to join hands with brothers and sisters in Sudan through corporate and individual prayers.

We are asking people to pray:

- For a peaceful and fair referendum on January 9th.
- That the results of the vote will be accepted by the Sudanese government and the international community.
- That the religious liberty of all people will be respected and safeguarded.
- The rebuilding of infrastructure and social services post referendum.

Check WEA's Prayer for Sudan webpage for more information.

<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/sudan/news/view-WEA-Calls-Global-Day-Prayer-Sudan.htm>

Lausanne - Cape Town 2010



In partnership with the Lausanne Committee on Peace and Reconciliation and the Duke Center for Reconciliation, the World Evangelical Alliance Peace and reconciliation Initiative facilitated a Lausanne Dialogue Group over four days of process and one day of pilgrimage to sites and centers important to the anti-Apartheid struggle.

The Dialogue sessions were run under the heading *Reconciliation as the Mission of God and broken into four sections following through the week : Sharing Our Stories of Pain and Hope; Shaping a Biblical Vision; Where Do We See Hope; Where Do We Go From Here?*

While only 90 minutes long the dialogue sessions were potent.

Tuesday October 19th – Day One: Lament and Hope

Our first dialogue session focused on stories of lament and hope. Led by Celestine Musekura from ALARM there was a deep and very open time of people speaking out from a variety of contexts about facing injustice and oppression. The room was filled to well over capacity, with each person having rich stories and in many instances very painful experiences to speak out. These were shared together in small groups; offence at not being able to feel respected in speaking in their own indigenous language in predominantly white churches, assaults, sexism at work, abduction and kidnapping, imprisonment for human rights and Christian advocacy, rape, murder and genocide. Yet, as traumatic the retelling, these were also accounts of hope and reconciliation and the turning of bitterness into renewal of spirit. In one case there was an account of a victim whose family was murdered, now working together with one of the perpetrators in a ministry of conflict resolution and peace-making.

As Celestine said at the beginning of our first dialogue session; without lament there is no healing, forgiveness or true reconciliation.

Wednesday October 20th – Day Two: Shaping a Biblical Vision.

The focus of day two asked – “What does a faithful Biblical and theological framework for reconciliation look like?” The session was opened by Rev Moss Nthla of the South African Association of Evangelicals by taking us through a snapshot of the history and development of Apartheid. At its roots lay an heretical interpretation of scripture that used the Bible to assert racial and cultural distinction to the point of separation or apartness – what the word apartheid means. Moss spoke of the need and struggle to reclaim a just biblical narrative and the importance of never losing it.

Co-presenter Rosalee Velloso from Brazil spoke from the passage of the Prodigal’s Son and carefully considered each character and circumstance in the story so as to frame the small group discussion question of how we can contextualize the story and have it speak to us in our own histories and place.

Once again remarkable biblical insights into the text from the group process emerged. These were taken in notes and will be posted when they have been edited.

Thursday October 21st : Pilgrimage Day

A day of Pilgrimage to see the site historical sites of Apartheid and meet with people involved in the struggle was led by Rev Peter Storey, a South African Pastor who stood in prophetic resistance to the Apartheid regime and the apathy of the white church at much personal cost, including the bull-dozing of his church. Places visited included the infamous ‘Section Six’. Section six had once been a thriving multi-cultural neighbourhood but with the regime its inhabitants were forcibly evicted and all the structures levelled. Today, in honour of the memory of that atrocity the land, some of Cape Town’s most expensive, lays waste and undeveloped. A museum on the site retells the story. From there the group travelled to St Georges Cathedral where Bishop Desmond Tutu defied Apartheid by opening his church to all. In the afternoon the group of 35 met with Christian leaders and community activists in the one of the townships and heard not only of pressing economic injustices, but also of hope as community and church mobilise for just development and neighbourhood empowerment.

Below is included the personal thoughts of one of our pilgrimage participants, Ken Sande of Peacemakers Ministries.

Dear Friends,

Yesterday was a day of painful pilgrimage. The Reconciliation study group that I’m part of spent the day visiting places in and around Cape Town that are tied to the nation’s struggle with Apartheid. Our guide in the morning was Rev. Peter Storey. Dr. Storey was a Bishop in the United Methodist Church in Johannesburg, pastor to a congregation in “District 6” of Cape Town (an area where all Blacks were forcibly relocated), chaplain on Robben Island (where the most influential political activists, including Nelson Mandela, were imprisoned). He was one of the people who was asked by President Mandela to

select the members of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. His insights into the struggle to end Apartheid were amazing.

We visited the former slave market in Cape Town, a monument commemorating the slaves' suffering, went to two churches that fought against Apartheid, and visited Dr. Storey's former church in District 6. It is now a museum commemorating the community's suffering, as well as their noble response to the oppression they experienced for decades at the hands of the South African government. During Apartheid, every person in the country was officially "classified" into 7 different racial categories. Those on the low end of the scale, the Bantu people, were severely restricted in their contact with whites, forcibly relocated to rural townships, deliberately under-educated, forbidden to hold most professional jobs, deprived of any political voice or vote, and harshly punished if they crossed any of the Apartheid boundaries.

The battle to overturn this system was long, painful, and bloody. And for far too long, most of the churches in South Africa either directly supported Apartheid with twisted theology, or silently ignored the massive human suffering it caused for millions of people all around them.

Apartheid and its overthrow triggered thousands of violent beatings and deaths. When the system finally ended, the country was faced with the challenge of pursuing both justice and peace. Dr Storey explained that their leaders realized that if they tried simply to ignore the injustice and suffering of the past, it would be like leaving toxic waste buried a few inches beneath their feet, constantly emitting the noxious fumes of hatred, resentment, and bitterness. On the other hand, if they only sought to bring criminals to justice in court, where would they draw the line? With the soldiers and police who arrested and tortured dissidents? With the politicians and generals who gave them their orders? With the rebels who fought back with guns and machetes? With the newspaper editors who fueled racism and resisted change? With the Christians who silently ignored the great evil that was taking place before their very eyes?

Seeking to avoid both of these extremes, the Mandela government established Truth and Reconciliation Commissions to promote peace and healing. Those who suffered could come before the commissions to tell their stories of pain, which were broadcast publicly in summary form so the whole nation could join in the grieving process. As one man said, "*The nation cried my tears with me.*" And those who committed the crimes were promised amnesty if they would come before the commissions, confess what they had done, and respond to the questions and grief of the families they had impacted. Over 7,000 chose to do so. One of them was the former Minister of Police, who asked to kneel and wash the feet of a man he had ordered to be tortured.

Although the commissions were officially administered as civil processes, Dr. Storey said that most of them were conducted in deeply theological ways, with a strong emphasis on the biblical processes of confession, redemption, and forgiveness. In many cases, when a person broke down while describing the pain they had suffered, the audiences would break out singing hymns and praying words of comfort and encouragement.

The process was not perfect. Many who had suffered never came forward, and many others stubbornly refused to acknowledge that what they had done was wrong. What was most disappointing to Dr. Storey was that the churches in small towns and villages that had no official commissions did not emulate the process on their own, so that the wounded and guilty people in their communities would find healing and reconciliation. But, in spite of these deficiencies, these commissions were a key to promoting peace and preventing perpetual cycles of revenge.

As he wrapped up his comments, Dr. Storey gave this advice for those who want to do something about injustice and suffering:

- pray for the victims of suffering by name (make it intensely personally)
- go to those for whom you pray
- then suffer with them—which is exactly what Jesus did for us

He then smiled at our group, commended us for our commitment to peacemaking, and said, “Those who give themselves to the ministry of reconciliation have found themselves in the center of the ministry of Jesus Christ.”

After lunch, we drove outside the city to the township of Kukaletto, which is home to over 250,000 Bantu people who were forced out of the city during Apartheid. Although the government is working to improve conditions, many of the residents still live in tiny shacks built from plywood and corrugated sheet metal. Unemployment is over 65%, and at least one fourth of the people are HIV positive. Most homes include one or more children who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

In the midst of this gloomy place, God is working to bring hope and progress through a variety of churches, one of which is the JL Zwane Church. Their pastor, Dr. Spiwo Xapile, described their ministry in Kukaletto, which includes evangelism, discipleship, food programs, education, job training, and advocating for ongoing social reform. It is a marvelous channel of God’s love and grace into a community that could so easily succumb to hopelessness and despair. We were somber as we walked back to our bus. Then our spirits were lifted by the broad smiles and shining faces of the children playing near the church. Hope can still shine forth wherever a church chooses to be a channel of grace.

When we returned to the Conference Center, our group spent quite a while debriefing on what we had seen and experienced today. All of us were sobered and grieved by the suffering and pain we had learned of. While we were thankful for the many Christians whom God raised up to oppose Apartheid or heal its wounds, we were all troubled by the fact that so many churches in South Africa and around the world had either directly supported Apartheid or stood silently by and refused to speak and work against it. Several members of our group described how this same pattern of churches aiding or silently ignoring social injustice continues around the world (as my earlier description of the plight of India’s Dalits illustrated).

My heart was heavy as I walked back to my hotel, thinking of the pain and suffering that is going on every minute in this fallen world. But as I prayed and thought of all the ways I've seen God bringing justice and reconciliation over the past 30 years, I regained a sense of hope. I recommitted myself to doing all I can to maximize Peacemaker Ministries' effectiveness in fulfilling all three elements of the vision God has placed in our hearts:

Families together for life

Churches together through Christ

Communities together in peace

Please pray that the presentations and discussions of the remaining days (we close on Sunday afternoon) will strengthen this commitment and produce new strategies and alliances for pursuing the conference theme, "***God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.***"

Day 3- Friday 22nd : Where do we see signs of Hope?

Led by both Lisa Loden of Israel and Celestine Musekura from Rwanda, evidence of hope in reconciliation was examined. Lisa spoke of important engagements for friendships and greater understanding emerging between Israeli Jews and Arabs, both within Israel and Palestine. These were connected through Christian love and faith and were particularly evident in the work of Musuhala. Musuhala is a ministry of understanding and reconciliation based on creating spaces for free discussion of issues and offence. Most successful are the Musuhala retreats into the desert, where as Salim Munayer, who leads this programme remarked 'the desert is an environment that requires each person to depend on each other for survival.' Particular signs of hope Lisa pointed to were those of women crossing the divide, Christian, Jewish and Islamic to meet and share their lives more closely. She also looked to opportunities for children to engage more naturally rather than take on the prejudices of the adult world.

Celestine gave some background then showed a video on the 'Great Lakes Project' a peace and reconciliation training programme in central Africa coordinated by Duke University and helping to bring Christian leaders together from around the region with the expressed goal of overcoming tribalism and ethnic tensions through the ministry of the local church.

The whole programme of facilitated by Bill Lowrey, Director of Peace-building, for World Vision, who had the group divide into smaller units and discuss where in our own contexts we saw 'signs of hope.' Rather than report back on those, we considered what were common threads or ingredients that promote peace-making. These included; time and patience, safe-place to share and resolve issues openly, faith that love and justice were stronger than hate and violence, the presence of Christ, the support and resources of the church, truth speaking, lament and forgiveness.

The third day ended with a draft statement on Apartheid being circulated and participants invited to endorse and sign.

Statement of Lament for Evangelicals and the Legacy of Apartheid

This Lausanne Congress 2010 in Cape Town gathered in a land which 16 years ago stood in the grip of one of the greatest evils of our time—apartheid. We regret that this was not named or confessed at the opening of the Congress.

As participants at the Congress we gathered for dialogue sessions and biblical reflection on peacemaking and reconciliation with careful listening to the stories of Christian involvement and resistance to apartheid. We were also encouraged by stories of hope for the future taking place through local reconciliation ministry.

This leads us, with others, to lament our failure in much of the evangelical church both in South Africa and throughout the world who remained silent about or complicit in apartheid. Yet we also rejoice that there were Christian witnesses who spoke out prophetically and lived faithfully, at great sacrifice.

This invites us into repentance before our Lord Jesus Christ. We reject the theological heresies which undergirded apartheid. We lament the socioeconomic suffering which is apartheid's on-going legacy. This calls the evangelical church to not only lament apartheid's legacy but opens our eyes to see the pain and wounds of the current realities and injustices which the church fails to protest and engage in our own contexts today. We are called to deeds of repentance and to resist injustices.

Wherever there is suffering in our world today, we rejoice where the church lives the alternative, and lament where the church remains silent.

We call upon this Congress to join in this spirit of lament and confession.

Lausanne Special Interest Group on Reconciliation Members

Sam Barkat, U.S.

Paula Fuller, U.S.

Lisa Loden, Israel

Bill Lowrey, U.S.

Grace Morillo, Columbia

Celestin Musekura, Rwanda

Moss Nthla, South Africa

Chris Rice, U.S.

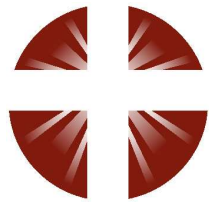
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The document is available for signing on <http://www.myfaithwalks.com>

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