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LIVES International Mission

Healing Workshops  
Southern Sudanese in Kenya  
Spring 2014

## *A Letter from Fran Boyle*

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your prayers and support of our recent trip to minister to Southern Sudanese refugees in Kenya. The trip went really well and we returned feeling that we had made a difference in the lives of those we ministered to. We believe that this will also impact the Sudanese community as a whole.

As you may know, we were diverted from our original plan to minister in S. Sudan because of the recent fighting there. Though it would have been safe in the area we were to minister, our travel to get there would have taken us through areas that had not been safe. At any rate, the outcome was that Scott Thompson and I led Trauma Healing Workshops in two towns in Kenya with a large Sudanese refugee population. This was clearly what God intended for us to do.

Even though the Sudanese are not accustomed to publicly sharing their personal pain endured during years of war, they began to open up and acknowledge the reality of their pain in a corporate setting. For some, their pain was validated as they felt heard for the first time. At the same time, they learned to see, by using Scripture, where God was in all of this and they learned how they can walk through the stages of grief and forgiveness to a place of personal wholeness.

We had roughly 40 attendees at the workshop in Nakuru (including two pastors) and over 50 in Eldoret (including 4 pastors and one bishop). In both locations the demographics skewed to the younger side - roughly two-thirds of the participants were under 30, with the rest being over 50. Most had been in Kenya for several years, fleeing the violence of the decades-long war between north and south Sudan prior to South Sudan's independence in 2011. A number of attendees had fled the violence that broke out in late 2013 and had only been in Kenya a few weeks. Even for the people who had been long removed from life-threatening situations, the recent violence had stirred up old memories, reopening raw emotional wounds. With the younger attendees, all this was piling on top of the young adult angst of "what am I going to do with my life?" Many were struggling with lost hope - they felt they had no future as a Sudanese in Kenya, and the renewed violence in South Sudan had wrecked their dreams of returning to a newly born country with bright prospects. The pastors of the churches serving these congregations had been overwhelmed for years - virtually every household had experienced deep suffering and was in serious financial need.

We had four days in both Nakuru and Eldoret, with each day comprising roughly four hours of teaching and workshop exercises. The material for each session has a strong Biblical foundation and incorporates an understanding of the emotional and physiological effects of traumatic events. After each session Scott and I would offer up an opportunity to receive personal prayer for inner healing, and we used this time to also work with the local clergy to develop their ability to minister to their congregation through Spirit-led prayer.



During each session, people had the opportunity to share what they had endured with each other in small groups and also with the larger group. The Lord often begins to heal through the simple act of sharing the circumstances of their pain. The next focal point of the workshop was to understand the grief process and Jesus' desire to "bind up the brokenhearted" (Is. 61:1). At this point, workshop participants began to ask more challenging questions, and the Holy Spirit started to gently surface and heal areas of deep suffering. In Nakuru, we prayed with a pastor's wife who was stuck in the "anger and denial" stage of the grieving process for her father, who had died in South Sudan nearly a year ago. She was in Kenya when he died, and simply could not accept his death. Whenever she spoke to relatives back home, she would still ask to speak to her father. Her husband participated in the tearful prayer session, and by the end of our time together she felt led to hold a private memorial service for her father so she could say goodbye to him. In both Nakuru and Eldoret, young men and women came forward who had been orphaned at an early age and continued to struggle with anger over being abandoned and feeling like they were consigned to a hard life with limited opportunities. Their pain was evident - it affected their voices, posture, and countenance. They received some comfort from the seminar discussions and teachings, but not enough. As we prayed with them, the Lord would lead us to specific areas that He knew needed to be healed first, with survivor's guilt, hopelessness, and unforgiveness being most common.



Fran teaching

Finally, we wrapped up each week with a discussion about how we can live as Christians in the midst of conflict. The tribal differences which have been exploited by Khartoum and political rivalry, exploded into a full blown war in the South in December. This fighting took the lives of over 10,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands. Many who attended had fled this recent fighting. Both tribes were present in our workshops. They worked in small groups to have honest discussions about the problems which led up to the fighting and vowed to continue to meet after our workshops ended to find a way to be a part of the solution. In Nakuru, a young Dinka woman planned to start a cross-ethnic Bible study and was busily making an invitation list when we left. In Eldoret, the Dinka and Nuer churches promised to meet and worship together regularly, and a recent email from one of the pastors let us know that they are following through with that commitment. That same pastor indicated that



Group gathered for healing workshop in Nakuru



Sharing in small groups

since our visit, their church attendance has nearly doubled and several people have come to Christ. It is amazing what can happen when the Holy Spirit starts to set people free from those things that are keeping them from His joy and peace!

In Nakuru, we had people from the Nuba Mountains who have experienced horrific fighting and slaughter. There were people from Bor where the entire town has been wiped out. In Eldoret, we had many people from the Jonglei state where fighting continues. There were young people who were in Kenya as students who have not heard from their family members since the fighting broke out and do not know if they are alive or dead. The support that they had from their family is no longer there for school or a place to live so they are feeling desperate.

We were blessed to have our sessions in Eldoret opened and closed by a much revered retired Bishop, Nathaniel Garang. Bishop Nathaniel had recently returned from Bor, just ahead of the outbreak of fighting. His home was destroyed along with everything else in the town. He spoke of letting go and not harboring bitterness and unforgiveness, which perpetuates these kinds of outbreaks.



Fran with Mary and some of her children

We did not encounter only spiritual and emotional needs. In Eldoret, we were introduced to two families in particularly dire circumstances. One was headed up by a widowed female deacon of the church, named Naomi, who has taken in 9 orphans. She has transformed the quarter-acre of land near her house into a garden (complete with a goat), but was still struggling to feed so many. Another was a 33-year-old mother of 7 named Mary (pictured above with Fran and some of her children) who had not heard from her husband since the fighting broke out in December. She did not know if her

husband was dead or alive, but the money that he had been sending from South Sudan had stopped. They were behind on their rent and had no money for food. A donor back in the US heard about Mary's plight and agreed to help out with the rent for a few months. We also purchased a few weeks' worth of food staples for the local church to distribute to these two families.

I received an email from Pastor Abraham in Eldoret a few days ago. Abraham says that Mary and Naomi are being threatened with jail because they cannot pay their overdue rent and they do not have any documentation of either Sudanese citizenship or Kenyan residency papers. I do not know how the Sudanese passport helps, but Pastor Abraham is planning to travel to Juba to obtain his S. Sudanese passport and then travel back to Kenya. Mary and Naomi feel that their only option is to travel to Kakuma refugee camp with their children. This is a real concern, because Kakuma is overflowing with over 100,000 refugees now. There is a shortage of everything and the conditions are deplorable. Please join us in praying for Mary, Naomi and the children.



Fran with Longar in Nakuru

In Nakuru, we spent time between the workshops visiting with the families of pastors that we support while the pastors are working in S. Sudan. It was a joy to spend time with Longar (pictured above) who lives with Pastor Santino's family. I was able to visit Longar's school where his teachers report that he is doing quite well. Longar proudly introduced me to all of his friends at school. I look in amazement at this tall, happy young man as I recall the hungry little orphan in rags that I fell in love with in S. Sudan.

Back in S. Sudan in Akuak Rak, the building of two more classrooms for our orphans who were meeting for class under the trees, is going well (see below). We have a team from Pensacola, Florida going into Akuak Rak in June, and look forward to their report on how things are going there. We were disappointed not to be able to see the children this time so are anxious to have a team go in.

We need doors and windows for the classrooms. We were quoted \$4,000 for these items. We will join the children in praying these things in. We must also pray in the tuitions that will be needed to put the 18 orphan children that will be graduating from elementary school and going to secondary school next year. We will need \$550 a year per student to support these children—our first students to go to Secondary School!



The Darfurians (pictured below) have been in Akuak Rak and have been asking for help. We have been able to send them medicines for their cattle again and have sent some emergency supplies for surviving in the bush. It is not the amounts that they asked for, but it is the best that we could do at this time.



**Funds are needed to provide:**

- Additional Healing Workshops
- Doors and windows for the classrooms (\$4,000)
- Tuition for 18 orphans who will be going to secondary school next year (\$550/year for each student)
- Tuition for our Sudanese students studying in Kenya
- Medicine and emergency supplies for the Darfurians
- All of the ongoing costs of medicines for the clinic and the school

***We thank you for your continued prayers and caring!***  
*Because of God working through you, we are making a difference!*

Tax deductible checks for any of the projects and for Fran's ministry support may be made out to "YES" (Yielded Evangelical Servants). **DO NOT** put Fran's name on the check! Please send checks to Fran, rather than YES, so that she can make sure that donations are properly credited to her account. You can also make a donation via credit card by going to our website: [www.connectinglivesintl.org](http://www.connectinglivesintl.org).

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Questions? Call Fran at 703-642-5135 or email her ([fran@connectinglivesintl.org](mailto:fran@connectinglivesintl.org))

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