

# Annual Report 2015

## SUDANESE REFORMED CHURCHES (SRC)

### General Synod

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Sudanese Reformed Churches (SRC) started as a small house fellowship in Khartoum, Sudan in February 1992. It was time of great Christian persecution in Sudan. In God's grace SRC has now grown into sixteen (16) churches twelve (12) in South Sudan and four (4) in Sudan with total membership of 4000 members.

### The Impact of Man-made Crisis in South Sudan

With independence in 2011, there was great optimism that the days of war, famine and poverty were over. However, 2013 have proven it wrong. The current civil war that began in Mid-December 2013 continues to affect millions of people in South Sudan. The insecurity and active hostilities have resulted in major humanitarian consequences such as high rates of death, forced displacement, malnutrition, poverty, widespread abduction, and vulnerability to disease outbreaks, burning of villages, massive use of rape, cattle raiding, and destruction of food and humanitarian supplies, disrupted livelihoods and more than two million children without schools.

Although the exact number of death is still unknown, it is however estimated that this brutal civil war has left more than **80,000** people dead. Moreover, based on UN data, there are **1.6 million** internal displaced persons (IDPs), **191,253** persons being protected by UNMISS in their camps, **801,221** individuals who have become refugees in the neighboring countries and other **4 million** are facing famine.

With pressure from the international community and the region, last August, 2015 the government and the armed opposition signed a Compromise Agreement to end the hostilities. However military confrontations continue to escalate contrary to the spirit of the agreement signed. This indicates that the situation in South Sudan remains desperate. Economically, there is hyperinflation and massive food shortages. The economy which is at the edge of collapse is worsening every day and prices of goods and commodities are skyrocketing and people have less money to buy basic food items. Even when fighting does stop, the humanitarian impact of what has already happened will continue to be felt throughout 2016 and beyond.

### Hope in the midst of Dilemma

This situation in South Sudan also continues to affect SRC and her members and particularly in Malakal, Bor, Bentiu where major battles were fought. In those areas most of SRC members are living inside United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) camps for safety.

In Juba the capital city of South Sudan, some of SRC members are living in two UN civilian protection camps. It is to be noted that living condition in those sites is miserable as health, water, sanitation and hygiene are concerned. They are entirely depended on humanitarian

assistance since they lost all their property and jobs during the fighting. Other SRC members fled across the borders to the neighboring countries as refugees.

In spite of all these situations, SRC 10 pastors and 18 evangelists are laboring sacrificially trusting the GOOD LORD of his mercy, grace and protection. They are engaged in evangelism, pastoral care, trauma counseling and leading small groups in camps. Through their labor in the last twenty months **832** souls came to the Lord and have joined the churches in camps. This is the promise and hope that the Lord is in control and at work even at difficult and hopeless situations. This is true hope in the midst of dilemma.

In term of infrastructure SRC had lost all that she used to possess in Bor, Malakal, Bentiu and Juba. In Juba although the situation is unpredictable SRC is exerting all efforts to rebuild the destroyed worship center that was used by Juba Sudanese Reformed Church before the conflict.

In Sudan, SRC four congregations are facing two challenges. First in Khartoum where there are three congregations, there is persecution against Christians. Christians are not allowed to acquire lands for the church and they are always denied access to government and public employment. Only house churches work well and the number of believers that gather together has to be small in number to avoid any suspicion. Secondly, the congregation in Nuba Mountain is laboring in war zone. The situation is similar to the one in South Sudan. It was hope before the crisis to consolidate the church in South Sudan so that she is able to extent helping hand to SRC ministry in Sudan. But this hope was shattered by conflict in South Sudan. The church is praying for the restoration of the plan that was shattered.

## **SRC Engagement**

Although war is still raging on in some parts of the country, SRC is recovering from war trauma and her leaders have been praying and asking what is God calling us to do? Below is what SRC leaders have projected to do at this time of conflict and instability:

1. Gospel witness in IDPs camps and refugee camps in (Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda).
2. Work of mercy and compassion among those affected by war and particularly to SRC members (providing life-saving support, supporting people in re-establishing their lives including children).
3. Providing counseling to those affected so that they get recovered from their trauma, deep wounds and pains of the current war.
4. Rebuilding of Juba Sudanese Reformed Church to become SRC hub.



JSRC worship center destroyed during 2013 crisis in Juba

5. Starting of orphanage center in Juba (the war has dramatically increased the number of orphans in the country).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> GKSA General Synod**

The third general Synod of Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA) was held in Potchefstroom, South Africa as from 5<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. SRC is in ecclesiastical unity with GKSA. Hence SRC was invited and represented by one delegate during the synod proceedings. Rev. Patrick Jok SRC delegate conveyed SRC greetings and briefed the synod about the general situation in South Sudan and Sudan. During the Synod SRC was able to connect with Rev. Arend Reitsema and Merrel Keyes who were representing Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. They promised to visit South Sudan in the future if God opens the door.



Rev. Arend Reitsema & Merrel Keyes with Rev. Patrick Jok during GKSA synod

### **4<sup>th</sup> WRF General Assembly**

4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the World Reformed Fellowship was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, as from 23<sup>rd</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> 2015. WRF mission is to promote understanding, cooperation and sharing of resources among its member churches in the advancement of the gospel. In the assembly Rev. Dr. Flip Buys from South Africa was elected as International Director. SRC was represented by Rev. Patrick Jok. The assembly and fellowship of the WRF delegates was a blessing to all.

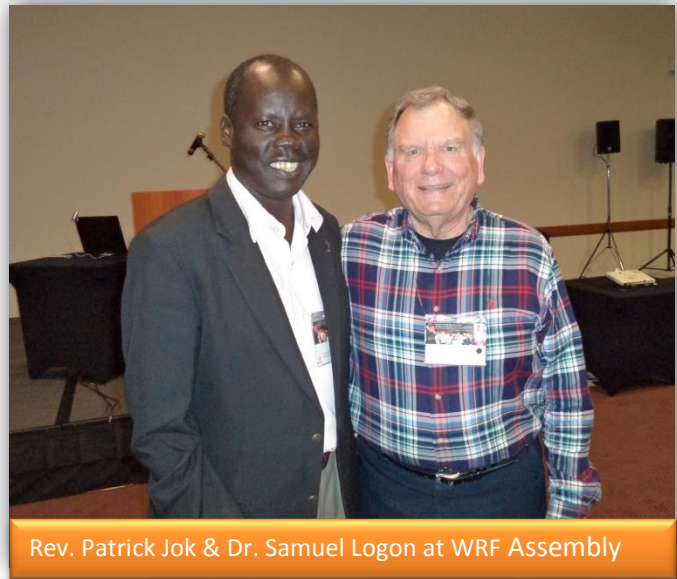


WRF leadership with Dr. Flip Buys the elected International Director second to the last from the left



## **SRC Joins SSCC**

In 2009 SRC applied for Sudan Council of Churches (SCC). In November, 2015 SRC was granted an affiliate status by SCC. This implies that SRC has officially joined the council. SCC is national council of Sudan Christian denominations. It was formed for a purpose of having one united voice as body of Christ in addressing all the issues that are facing Christians across the country. By this membership SRC has privilege of recognition by all government institutions across South Sudan.



Rev. Patrick Jok & Dr. Samuel Logon at WRF Assembly

## **ICRC Mission Committee**

SRC participated in ICRC Missions Committee consultation which was held in September 16-17, 2015 at Orthodox Presbyterian Church Headquarters, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. It was a



Some of OPC leaders with representatives from Sudan and North East India during ICRC WMC meeting

consultation that brought together representatives of world mission agencies of ICRC member churches plus some member churches of North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). It focused on exchanging information on current and planned work, discussed issues of mutual concern in mission among member churches. SRC was represented by Rev. Patrick Jok who is also a member of ICRC Mission Committee.

## **Rehabilitation of JSRC**

Juba Sudanese Reformed Church (JSRC) had been greatly affected by the conflict in the country that erupted in Mid-December, 2013. The congregation had lost all that she used to possess. Some of the congregational members in Juba are still living in United Nation Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) protection camps for their safety. They lost all their property. But in spite of



The newly rebuilt Juba SRC building

all these situations, JSRC is prompted by Christ's love to build trust and confidence among the people of South Sudan through the ministry of the gospel.

With relative normality of situation in Juba, JSRC are exerting efforts to rebuild what had been destroyed. The main goal of this rebuilding is to create a venue where to counsel, encourage, and give hope to

those who are deeply traumatized by the current violence in the country

Due to instability in the country, JSRC is becoming a key congregation of SRC replacing Immanuel Sudanese Reformed Church in Malakal which used to be the leading congregation before late 2013. All SRC resources are now being focused on Juba which is hoped to be SRC hub.



The congregation for 1<sup>st</sup> time celebrated Christmas in the site after the crisis

## **Diaconal Response**

As humanitarian situation continues to worsen because of the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, some overseas churches and church based organization and individual have responded generously toward SRC humanitarian need. Their generous supports have saved lives of people who could have died of hunger, malnutrition and other hunger related diseases.

In 2015 at least **1140** SRC displaced members were reached with basic food. The food items provided were (beans, rice, edible oil, wheat flour, sugar and milk-powder for children). It is worth mentioning that this year the number of people SRC is serving has increased to 1970 plus 283 widows and orphans that received trauma healing counseling and support. By end of 2015 the total number of IDPs served by SRC reached 2253. The increase came as result of gospel witness carried out among the IPDs.

## **Ecumenical Relationships**

Internationally SRC is a member of World Reformed Fellowship (WRF) and International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). Nationally, is a member of South Sudan Council of Churches.

## **SRC Needs**

1. Diaconal aid (relief) for the needy in South Sudan particularly SRC members who are in UNMISS compounds across the country (it is important to emphasize that even if peace prevails today in South Sudan, the level of need for emergency relief aid is so high).
2. Diaconal support to eighteen (18) displaced pastors & evangelists: Juba (7); Malakal (4); Bentiu (3) Bor (2) and (1) Ethiopia and (1) Kenya.
3. Evangelism in the war affected areas (IDPs camps) and in refugee camps in (Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda).
4. Bibles and Reformed Christian literatures.
5. Engagement in the ministry of trauma healing, reconciliation and peace.
6. Provision of used clothes to children, women and elderly.

## **Prayer Requests**

1. Violence, and tribal warfare may end in South Sudan and peace prevails again (Peace is needed to end the suffering. The conflict continues to affect the lives of millions of people)
2. Safety of SRC leaders as they labor in IDPs and refugee camps (they are serving in areas of high risks and uncertainty).
3. Provision of relief assistance to IDPs and particularly to SRC members.
4. 1 Car (Land-cruiser station) and motorbike for SRC home mission in Juba and the resounding areas.
5. Scholarships for SRC members who have completed high schools (major universities in South Sudan are not operational even those that are functioning do not operate well due instability and the political upheaval in the country).
6. Rehabilitation and reconstruction of three SRC church buildings that were destroyed and burnt down.

### **SRC Vision**

“To see merging of individuals, families and communities in Sudan and South Sudan that are saved, disciplined and integrated into a local church to serve, to worship and to become agents of transformation to exalt the triune God”

### **SRC Mission**

“SRC mission is to labor with God’s given grace by preaching a holistic gospel to all the abandoned and neglected people in Sudan and South Sudan so that individual, family and community are saved and transformed by Christ through the practical acts of God’s love”.