

THE BISHOP MUBARAK SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR NUBA WOMEN Registered English charity no. 1075850

“Power to the Powerless through Education”

August 2003

Dear Friends,

Helping others is very much about seizing the opportunity. People who don't understand this sometimes say, “The need is too great. I can't help because there is nothing I can do which would really make a difference.” I know the feeling! In 1996 when the late Bishop Mubarak asked me to speak to the ragged, sick, malnourished women of Delami in the Nuba Mountains, I refused immediately. There was nothing in my hands to give them, I was unable to change their situation and I could not imagine what I might say which would make any difference or even any sense. Eventually, of course, **it was what their suffering did for me**, which led to establishment of The Bishop Mubarak Fund.

Today I understand that there is **always something we can do to help others in need** even if it is simply to speak to them, to see them as fellow human beings. But we are afraid to get involved because of our own already busy lives, high stress levels, other interests. And sometimes we even manage to convince ourselves that suffering people who have an unfamiliar culture or a different religion are “always like that and there is nothing I can do.” The truth is quite the reverse. When we recognize the needs of others as **the gift of opportunity**, a new world opens. I want to tell you about some recent opportunities which we – and you – have acted upon.

But look first at this photo of three lovely young Sudanese women in the BMF's Khartoum office. All are university graduates and all plan to marry soon. Raja, a Nuba, and Elvira, an Equatorian, are Christians. Izdihar is a Muslim whose family roots are in Darfur, Sudan's far west. It is the opportunity of service to others, to women and children in particular, which brings them together. Their great desire is to help people who are poor, uneducated and suffering find a way to achieve their potential in life. The way is education, a road paved with determination, compassion and opportunity.



L to R: Raja Yacoub Abbo, BMF Assistant Project Coordinator and former BMF Scholar; Elvira Zozimo, BMF's new Project Coordinator; Izdihar Jubara, Assistant Project Coordinator for Together for Sudan, the BMF's sister charity.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!



***A case of holistic opportunism!** This is Dr. Nabila Radi, ophthalmologist, at a kindergarten in Jaborona where The Bishop Mubarak Fund pays teachers' salaries. She is supposed to be checking children's eyes and, sure enough, she begins to do so. But now what is she doing? Most of these children have never seen a doctor before and Dr. Nabila cannot resist responding to their other obvious medical needs. Together for Sudan has asked Dr. Nabila to examine the eyes of children in all 16 schools where BMF sponsors teachers. Her methods will cost a lot more than simple eye examinations because over 100 children will attend each outreach and vitamins, worming preparations, antibiotics and fungal creams are expensive. But this is **an unmissable opportunity.**

***A challenge to "do something!"** During a visit last autumn to **Abyei**, an area contested between north and south Sudan, a priest challenged me to "do something for the women". Remembering Bishop Mubarak, I dared not refuse! Despite the remoteness of the area and the impossibility of close monitoring from Khartoum, BMF decided to transfer funds through El Obeid for two women's literacy teachers on the Catholic compound and four basic school teachers at the Episcopal self-help school. And now that priest tells me that the Catholics are sharing their salary among three literacy teachers and the Episcopalians among eight teachers! **Where is this opportunity leading us?**

***In memory of Matthew...**Last month BMF received a cheque "in memory of our friends' baby who was still born at full term. We know that our friends will be glad to see something positive and hopeful come out of this sad event." **Because caring friends recognised a heartbreaking opportunity, another child's life will be improved.**

***An exceptional opportunity.** Early this year the BMF Women's Literacy Project underwent a professional review which recommended that for maximum effectiveness we need to retrain our teachers and adopt a different methodology. Consequently, literacy classes in the Khartoum area have been closed for this year while we reboot. But we had to make an exception **in the Nuba Mountains** (and in Abyei!) **where ceasefire has brought expanded opportunities** as well as enhanced the partnership between the BMF and the Episcopal Diocese of Kadugli. BMF is now sponsoring nine literacy teachers in Southern Kordofan as well as paying teachers' salaries at five Nuba Mountains basic schools. (And Together for Sudan has just funded a mobile Medicine Box to operate out of Kadugli). Meanwhile, BMF is also working on plans to upgrade nursing education in the

Nuba Mountains and facilitating the return of our university graduates to the Nuba Mountains as teachers.



Here are the 2003 BMF University graduates, our second batch! Most of these graduates hope to return to the Nuba Mountains as teachers.

***Irresistible opportunity!** Before I went to Sudan in July I asked the office there to begin contacting disabled people about the Wheelchair Project which Together for Sudan hopes to begin in 2004. Izdihar found, and later took me to meet, Mahieldin who is 12 years old, has never walked and had never been to school. By the time I arrived, Izdihar had Mahieldin enrolled in school even though he has to be carried there and back every day. **What would you have done with two little girls age 7 and 10 who carry their big brother to school?** Sign them up for scholarships, I told Elvira. We can't have unschooled children carrying people to class! Here you see our three scholars, all now learning to read and waiting for the promised wheelchair.



When we respond to our opportunities, we give opportunity to others. What the Bishop Mubarak Fund is doing for the women and children of the Nuba Mountains is simply helping them find new opportunity, new life, after a prolonged period of death and destruction. Education is the key to the future and, after peace, what the Nuba people identify as their greatest need. **Thank you for sharing in this opportunity to provide hope, to change lives.**

The Bishop Mubarak Fund has many ambitions, many opportunities. This year we decided to expand our university scholarships to include marginalised non-Nuba women (From the beginning we have included non-Nuba in literacy classes and children's classes). In the current academic year 10 of the 123 BMF university scholars are displaced southern women who would not otherwise be at university. Next year we hope to begin an HIV/AIDS Orphans Project. **But we need increased financial support in order to rise to these opportunities.**

Is there something you can do? Friends of **Kathryn Law Brennan**, who died in late 2001, have set up a BMF university scholarship in her name. Perhaps this is a way in which you, too, could remember a friend or relative? Or you might wish to **remember the BMF in your will**. A personal legacy would be a living memorial to your desire to assist the Sudanese people through education. **Or you could just write a cheque today. Say yes to your opportunities!**

Please make cheques payable to **Bishop Mubarak Fund** and post to Norman Jackson, Treasurer, 47 Taunton Ave., London SW20 0BH

With appreciation for your support,



Lillian Craig Harris (Director)

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Literacy teacher in the Nuba Mountains