

# THE BISHOP MUBARAK SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR NUBA WOMEN & TOGETHER FOR SUDAN

December 2003

Dear Friends,

**The Sudanese peace process has entered a new, more optimistic phase. So have The Bishop Mubarak Fund and Together for Sudan.** Trustees of both charities join me in thanking you for consistent support over the past five years. But just as with the peace process itself, this next stage of building on what has been accomplished will be an even more difficult time.

How shall we meet the opportunities which ceasefire presents to expand our work? How should we respond to the changing environment in which Sudanese peoples, many displaced for more than 20 years, begin to return to their places of origin? How can we best offer assistance and support to them, help them during the enormous task of peace building which will preoccupy the next many years? I want to describe some of the challenges which now face **The Bishop Mubarak Fund** as it delivers "**Power to the Powerless through Education**" and **Together for Sudan** as it engages in "**Building Peace through Service**".

But **first**, because it is Christmas and just after the Eid, **let us remind ourselves that we are all members of the human family. Let me introduce you to our sister Agatha.**

Agatha, a former journalist, has been forced by circumstances into a life of poverty and great suffering. Here she is with her son Emmanuel and daughter Pia at their home in the southern Sudanese city of Juba. Agatha has forgiven her husband for abandoning her. She has also forgiven the men who some years ago beat and kicked her with the result that she has a permanent hearing loss. And last year after her brother was murdered, Agatha and two nieces persuaded the judge not to order the execution of the murderer.



So while I greatly admire Agatha for her courage and tenacity on behalf of her children, I admire even more her spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. A ability not only to survive but to forgive and to move forward will be crucial in helping the Sudanese people heal after years of civil war.

***If anyone would like to write an encouragement to Agatha, you may send the letter to me for delivery in January when I next visit Sudan.***

**Now what is the Bishop Mubarak Fund's future?** Our work is expanding and we hope soon to move our eight Sudanese team members into a larger office. A Khartoum office database has been set up and British volunteers are working on a BMF/TFS website. Check us out soon on [www.bishopmubarakfund.org.uk](http://www.bishopmubarakfund.org.uk)

**Education of women and children remains our work priority** because women are the keystone for building both families and nations. This year we have 123 woman scholars – including 11 non-Nuba -- at Sudanese universities and are paying the salaries of 56 teachers in 16 basic schools for children—to the benefit of over 2,000 children. We are also upgrading our women's literacy project and hope in 2004 to sponsor up to 35 literacy classes in Khartoum area, the Nuba Mountains and Abyei. BMF/TFS Country Director Silas Jojo visited Juba recently and reports a great demand for education there.



This spring we sent a first group of BMF university graduates back to the Nuba Mountains as teachers and began to give high priority to nursing and teaching scholarships. We are exploring ways to begin partnering schools in Sudan with schools in Europe and America and invite your inquiries. Sudanese doctors are advising us on possibilities for upgrading nursing education in the Nuba Mountains. **Scholarship, a chance for an education, is a unique gift which you might like to give in the name of a loved one.** I believe in this so strongly that my Christmas gift this year to my mother, a former nurse, is a scholarship in her name to allow a Sudanese woman to study nursing.

**Sadly, one of our greatest priorities, the AIDS Orphans Education Project, remains small and under funded.** In Africa today some eleven million children are AIDS orphans and every minute four more Africans die of AIDS. Before 2020 possibly 55 million Africans will have died of AIDS, a catastrophe in the human family. Civil war has prevented compilation of statistics on HIV in Sudan but it is clear that infection rates are rising. Peace, moreover, will bring major population movement as troops demobilize and the displaced return to their homelands. **TFS** – which is facilitating a CAFOD funded HIV/AIDS Awareness Project through the Women's Action Group in Khartoum – **believes we ought to give priority to both preventative education and home based care.** And **BMF is determined to expand its scholarships to many more AIDS orphans.**



**But how can people learn to read, study for exams, even cope with life, if they are ill and hungry? Together for Sudan is a life support system in the vital task of making education widely available to women and children.** This support work now includes solar panels, eye glasses, medicines and breakfast for kindergarten children as well as women's income generation activities.

**Health support is a TFS priority.** Together for Sudan operates a **Medicine Box Project** – both stationary and mobile – at seven sites in Khartoum and the Nuba Mountains. The medicines supplied to inmates in Khartoum prisons and to people in villages outlying Kadugli in the Nuba Mountains are often the only medicines available to them. Meanwhile diseases such as malaria, whooping cough, measles and gastro-enteritis continue to reap a huge annual harvest of Sudanese children. **But our critically important medical work cannot expand without further funding.**

Over the past two years the **Eye Glasses Project** has performed splendid work in the displaced settlements around Khartoum providing medical and surgical intervention as well as spectacles. We are also sending reading glasses to Juba and the Nuba Mountains. **But far more needs to be done.** According to a recent statement by the World Health Organisation, extremely poor levels of hygiene combined with lack of medicines, health care facilities and trained personnel contribute to "widespread preventable blindness" particularly in southern and eastern Sudan. WHO estimates that 3.5 million Sudanese have trachoma, a chronic and very painful condition which leads to blindness.

**The Breakfast Project is now operational at 10 sites in the Khartoum area. But this is far from sufficient.** UNICEF recently reported that in some areas of southern Sudan nearly 50 percent of the children are malnourished. I believe that most children in the displaced areas around Khartoum are also malnourished. And that, in a world of growing inequality between the fed and the starving, should make those of us better off members of the human family more determined than ever to help.



After an October visit to the only girls secondary school in the Nuba Mountains, BMF Project Coordinator Elvira Zozimo reported that all 50 girls at the boarding school were malnourished, anemic and chronically hungry. But these young women are not only a gene pool of the future mothers, teachers, nurses and women leaders of the Nuba Mountains, they are also our daughters. ***In December, with the help of two women, one British and one American, we began to feed these students at the Kadugli Girls Secondary School.***

**TFS seeks to respond to people with special needs and in 2004 we will launch a Wheelchair Project.** This project results from the extraordinary vision of Californian Don Schoendorfer who several years ago saw a man with withered legs dragging himself across a road in Morocco. Don determined to help such marginalized individuals regain their dignity and mobility. After retirement as an engineer he designed a special lightweight, all terrain wheelchair. Since 2001 when free distribution began, over 25,000 chairs have been given to disabled people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

**In 2004 we hope to receive a container of 550 chairs in Khartoum.** Sudan has many disabled people as the result of war, accidents, land mines and diseases such as polio and **TFS** will partner with other INGOs and Sudanese organizations to distribute the chairs. We hope that the coming container will be the first of several!

**Give the gifts of health, of sight and of education! Here's how you can help with some of our immediate needs:**

#### **The Bishop Mubarak Scholarship Fund**

\* Send a child to basic school for a year for £50 or to secondary school for £70

\* Pay the part-time salary of a literacy teacher for £250

\* Pay the annual salary of a basic school teacher for £400

\* Contribute £400 to send a young woman to university for one year

### **Together for Sudan**

\* Buy a woman a pair of prescription eyeglasses for £15

\* Donate £40 to maintain a solar panel or to pay for cataract surgery

\* Give £40 to provide a child with school breakfast for a year

\* Send any amount to help TFS transport and distribute wheelchairs

We have positioned ourselves to respond to the needs expressed to us by displaced and marginalized Sudanese people. They now enter a peaceful era after many years of civil war. Thank you for continuing to support us as we support them in peace building.

Depending on project, make cheques payable to either **The Bishop Mubarak Fund**, Norman Jackson, Treasurer, 47 Taunton Ave., London SW20 0BH, or to **Together for Sudan**, Dina Gillespie, Treasurer, 45 Paramount Court, 41 University Street, London WC1E 6JP.

With appreciation,



Lillian Craig Harris  
Director

**BMF Trustees:** Herman Bell, Andrew Deuchar, Alan Goulty, Lillian Craig Harris, Norman Jackson, Mary Smith, Adrian Thomas. **Patrons:** Prof. Zakiuddin Ahmad, Dr. Gasim Badri, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, Lady Greenbury, Oona King MP, Mr. Ian Mackie, Ambassador William Patey, Ms. Lynne Rienner. **English charity no. 1075850**

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***Here is Don with his specially designed wheelchair. My sister Aurora Harris and her son Andy are helping to raise the \$25,000 needed to send the chairs to Port Sudan from China where they are manufactured.***

