



## Under Tree Schools – Newsletter Christmas 2006 to April 2007

April 2007

Joseph has arrived in Malek, with supplies of construction materials for the new school. He was held up in Juba on Government business, but is now free to begin the task of registering pupils for the new school and to begin the first stage of the building works. Two of our students whom we supported throughout their secondary education in East Africa are joining the team in Malek.

Communications by telephone and by email between the UK and Southern Sudan are currently difficult, and we await more details of how he is getting on. But we and he are delighted that he has been able to get to Malek and start work.

March 2007

Come and meet Joseph: Joseph is very pleased that he expects to be able to be home in London during June. We are planning a big day on 30 June for all our supporters to come and meet him. We can find out from him how the new school is going and the situation of the area it covers, as well as of the progress the country as a whole is making under its new Government.

Please put 30 June in your diary, if you can. The meeting will be at St Mary's Barnes in London from 11am til 3 pm. All the trustees will be there and we can talk about the next steps in turning Joseph's vision into reality. Have a day in London!

February 2007

There are a number of reports from Sudan, including Southern Sudan, on the web. See the links page on our site for links to websites that give information on developments on human rights, political and economic updates and development issues.

mid-January 2007

To follow developments on the ground reported recently, here is some information about Southern Sudan and the Sudanese community in Egypt. A quarter of the refugees who left during the civil war have returned from Egypt. About ten thousand are still there. The government of Southern Sudan has made plans to repatriate them at state expense. But it is likely that some will remain in Egypt because of fear of the unknown. Meantime Robert (Joseph's successor as Administrator of the Sudanese Ministry in Alexandria) has been forced to move the Sudanese community there out of the churches of St. Mark's and All Saints. They are now based at a Presbyterian church, but the Sunshine School's future is rather uncertain.

In Southern Sudan, where the population has increased with the return of many already from Egypt, there is the risk of a food shortage. The staple corn and millet has been badly

affected by too little rain early in the season, and heavy showers later on have destroyed some of the crop. The UN is now preparing to intervene with food supplies. The Aweil district will soon be experiencing its hottest weather (38C between February and June). At present it is still cool at night but soon the people will sleep under the stars. Water supplies should not be a problem with many wells, bore holes and rivers in the Nile basin, though a small number will have to journey some distance to fetch water.

Celebrations of the second anniversary of the Peace Agreement of 9th January 2005 were overshadowed by an open dispute between Sudan President Omar Beshir and his Vice President, Salva Kiir (who is President of the Government of Southern Sudan). The Vice President was holding the President accountable for not delivering what was agreed at the Peace Agreement, mainly for not giving the South its share in the oil revenues.

Mr Salva Kiir and his Government of the South are involved in brokering a Peace Agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army. It is in everyone's interest to bring stability to Northern Uganda so that the LRA doesn't retreat into Southern Sudan thereby creating insecurity. The Khartoum government has exploited this conflict.

News from Joseph at Christmas 2006

Joseph is back in Barnes with his family for Christmas and looks forward to seeing everyone. He has had a busy but productive first two months as Head of Religious Affairs in the Government of Southern Sudan. Appointment of twelve staff to work under him has now been completed, including four inspectors of departments he has set up, one on Islamic affairs, another on Christian affairs, one on other faiths, and a Reconciliation department. Two workshops have been held in these months, one of them being on Peace and Reconciliation to which Joseph invited the heads of other ministries in the government.

The start of building work to create the new school is on schedule. Three builders have been contracted and three assistants for Barnaba, the coordinator. Orders have been placed both for the brick making and the stone gathering. Materials such as timber and iron sheeting will be bought and transported to Malek at the beginning of February, hopefully to arrive a week later. Joseph will travel with them to oversee the beginning of construction and laying of foundations. All very exciting! Joseph wishes to thank everyone for their generous support of this project and asks that we keep praying for stability both in the North and the South, where there have been further clashes around Malakal in the north west of Southern Sudan.