

History of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia's Links to Bradford and Sudan

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia has had an ongoing link with the Diocese of Bradford in England since 1977 and with the Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan since 1982. The Bradford link involves:

- frequent personal communication and occasional “across the pond” visits between the bishops and diocesan staff members
- an annual Summer Youth Exchange program, with a group from Bradford coming to us and our young people going to England in alternating years
- visitors from Bradford attending our annual diocesan Council
- visitors from our diocese attending Bradford's Diocesan Day events
- clergy from our diocese attending clergy conferences in Bradford
- inclusion of prayer requests from Bradford in our Prayer Calendar and of our requests in theirs
- a number of our parishes matched with parishes in Bradford, with pen pals, visits, and shared prayer lists featured with varying degrees of frequency and enthusiasm

Our diocese and Bradford are both linked to Sudan, and both of our Prayer Calendars include prayer requests from Sudan. However, while Bradford's link is limited to the four northernmost dioceses in Sudan, we are connected to the whole Province. We

- belong to the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS), with several Companions for Mission Committee members serving on the AFRECS Board of Directors
- raised funds to provide telephone and computer equipment for the provincial office
- have raised the funds to provide a solar windmill to provide electricity and a reliable water supply for the Marc Nikkel School in the Diocese of Bor
- contribute to scholarships for students and for teacher training at the Marc Nikkel School
- assist Dr. Oliver Duku, the Principal of Bishop Allison Theological College and member of the Commission on Theological Education for the Episcopal Church of Sudan, in his efforts to improve the education of Sudanese priests
- have helped fund the retirement of elderly Sudanese bishops
- sent three committee members to the Diocese of Bor to learn first-hand of conditions there and to reinforce our connection to the people there
- have raised funds for the renovation of the provincial guesthouse in Juba, with the goal of making that facility an income producer for the province
- have helped fund the operations of Hope Primary School in the Diocese of Kadugli

- sent a representative to the enthronement of The Most Reverend Daniel Deng Bul as Sudan's Archbishop
- provided funds to buy a car for the Archbishop's use
- contributed to a fund to retired the provincial debt that the Archbishop inherited upon taking office

Finally, a significant number of the “Lost Boys of Sudan” now live in our diocese. A number of our people are involved in helping them make new lives in the United States.

The education of the people of our geographically large, largely rural diocese in matters pertaining to our links to Bradford and Sudan is handled largely through the Companions for Mission area of the diocesan website and through visitors to and workshops during our annual Council of the Diocese.