

Updates from Chris P 8 Dec 2019

Dear Friends,

This year is nearly over so an update is rather overdue!

After nearly 4 years back in UK, I am feeling pretty well settled in Derby - and can recommend 'retirement' - the Government now pays me to do what I choose! My multifaceted life combines various part-time roles: continuing my work with Pioneers, welcoming and befriending Asylum seekers with a local charity and friendships with International Students through a church ministry. I also try to keep up some exercise, support a friend with MS, spend many hours in my garden and enjoy some lovely visits with friends - both in my home, exploring Derbyshire and elsewhere.

I'm so grateful for the good health to enjoy this rich and varied season of life. But this year has also been marked by 3 weddings and 9 funerals. In Africa I was always conscious that so much of life seemed to be caught up with death - and I really didn't expect that to be true here. Then this weekend, the vicar of my church in Derby died after a few months' illness.

The funerals keep reminding me that our lives are short and fragile, each new day is a gift to use and to be thankful for. Advent encourages me to ponder again what His coming to the world means for us all - and the new friends I'm welcoming from around the world.

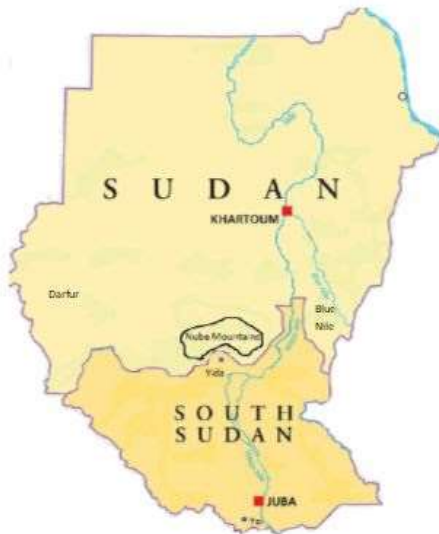


A highlight of this year was to travel south of Aswan in Egypt, close to where the River Nile crosses the border from Sudan (where I'm pointing!) and then far north to Alexandria, to see where the Nile joins the Mediterranean Sea. A long held dream after so many years of living close the Blue & White Niles - it was also great to travel with friends from Kendal and also to meet up with a Sudanese pastor in Cairo and meet other friends.



In May I was invited to attend a Pioneers conference in Ethiopia so was able to spend time with a nephew and his wife as well as other friends working there.

More local travels included a few days walking again on the SW coastal path, a holiday with friends who have a home in the Dordogne and summer outings with the International students.



The Sudans

Sudan: Since the president, Omar Bashir was overthrown in April 2019, there are some cautiously encouraging signs of good change. The former oppressive, fundamentalist, National Congress has been dissolved, women have begun to have a voice - no longer beaten for wearing trousers in public! And significantly more freedom for Christians - with the possible return of confiscated properties. An indicator of how these changes are viewed is that there will be an exchange of Ambassadors with USA after a gap of 23 years! Peace will be a long journey, doubtless with much opposition - but the transitional leadership is looking to establish peace agreements with Nuba Mountains & Darfur. Understandably, many Nuba Christians are still very wary From the outside, there seems much to thank God for in the events of this last year.

South Sudan: A peace agreement in August 2018 has calmed some of the violence - but finalising the agreement between the Government and 2 main opposition groups has been delayed several times - now set for February 2020. So although some refugees have returned home, many are waiting to see. Across, the agency I worked with in S Sudan - continues to serve communities in some of the remote and hard to reach areas. The college in Yei where I was working is hoping to re-open in 2020, but funding is still uncertain.

PRAY please for both Sudans: - the People the Pastors and the Politicians

Looking ahead:

In January I plan to attend a PI conference in Indonesia and then proceed to Australia to visit some friends - mostly from my years in Africa. I will return to UK via Calcutta - to visit some folk serving there. Quite an adventure!

In 2020, it will be 100 years since the first missionaries went to Nuba Mountains in Sudan - so there are plans for some celebrations - if this happens, I hope to be able to attend.

For those of you who do pray for me, I'd be grateful for prayer in knowing God's priorities in my life. I'm especially enjoying the work with Asylum seekers and trust that as relationships grow, I will have freedom to share more with them.

And finally, a happy Christmas and New Year to everyone! Love Christine