



Greetings from RECONCILE! A quarter of the year has almost passed and RECONCILE staff has been busy. The New Year kicked off with a staff retreat in beautiful Jinja, Uganda to strategically plan for the 1st quarter of the year. During the retreat, we were blessed by a devotion on the "Purification of Memories" from Luke 15:11-31. From the parable of the Lost Son, we discussed the different ways that hurt, pain, and unresolved anger can be a barrier to God's work and calling on our lives as well as the organizations with which we work. We were struck by the gracious forgiveness and unconditional love displayed by the father, and were reminded of God's unconditional love for us.

More specifically, we discussed the concrete tools and actions one can take to live out the forgiveness we are called to give and receive as God's people. We received the opportunity to purify our hearts and minds. We received a great start to the New Year!

Gumuruk workshop



The week of January 14th, RECONCILE staff headed to Gumuruk - a rural area of southern Sudan within Pibor county in Jonglei state. A staff member from the Civic Education department and the one from the Psychosocial Rehabilitation department facilitated a workshop on Trauma Healing and Civic Education. Ethnic conflict persists in the area between the Dinka and the Murle people concerning scarcity of water, cattle raiding, and child abductions. RECONCILE went to talk about peace with one of the ethnic groups. In a small church made of mud with a grass roof, 45 participants from surrounding villages came together eager to learn about peace and to find ways to be an instrument in the reconciliation process with rival ethnic groups. After a compact five days, the staff left this small village with

more understanding about causes for ethnic conflict, pastoral and nomadic lifestyles, polygamy, and the constant struggle between Christianity and culture.

Reconciliation Conference - Kampala

In late January, staff from each program department represented RECONCILE at the Duke Center for Reconciliation's Kampala II Gathering. There was superb theological teaching and biblical exegesis on the topic of reconciliation. RECONCILE staff had many opportunities to learn from and link with other African organizations doing similar work which was of great value. RECONCILE staff was very encouraged by the positive response of other conference participants to information about the Sudanese context and RECONCILE's approach to reconciliation, which was shared in several forums.

Consultative Meeting on Justice and Reconciliation as Peacebuilders



In mid February, RECONCILE partnered with Center for Justice and Reconciliation (a faith based NGO from the Netherlands) to conduct a workshop on transitional justice and the conceptual meaning of reconciliation. 26 participants from various NGOs, churches, and community based organizations in Yei came together to explore traditional and transitional justice, reconciliation, and peace. They were challenged to think about the contribution of reconciliation and how it will manifest itself in the Sudanese context. Debates encouraged intellectual exchange of the effectiveness of traditional justice vs. the modern court system. Community responses to occurrences of death and pain, helped participants explore different methods of bringing about reconciliation. Through stimulations, role play,

lecture and facilitated discussion, participants attempted to understand each other's interpretations of these concepts, share experiences from the field, and inform each other of what their particular organizations were doing to bring about justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Eastern Equatoria State Legislative Assembly Capacity Development Workshop – Torit



At the end of February, beginning of March, RECONCILE conducted a workshop for the Legislative Assembly of Torit. 26 members of parliament from Southern Sudan's eight parties revisited their roles, rights, and obligations as members of assembly. They engaged in stimulating discussion about the roots, concept, and implementation of democracy within the Ugandan and Sudanese contexts. They spoke frankly and openly about the challenges faced during the interim period of the CPA and the solutions possible within the obligations and regulations of the document. In three days, participants received a plethora of knowledge surrounding the procedures and structures of government, law, human rights, budgeting, voting, conflict resolution, electioneering, and campaigns. Parliamentarians left inspired and encouraged. The groups requested a follow-up session to focus more specifically on the constitution and inter-governmental relations.

Bor Peace Conference

During Holy Week, RECONCILE facilitated several sessions on trauma healing and conflict resolution at the Bor Peace Conference led by the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. Dinka, Anyiak Nuer, Murle, and Mundari church and community leaders from Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Central Equatoria states came together to discuss the root causes of ethnic conflict and possible solutions to ending the violence. The movement and acquisition of small arms, cattle rustling, land grazing, and the abduction of children surfaced as large obstacles to lasting peace. The issue of disarmament

invoked in depth discussion about the various ways it could be done effectively at all levels of society. Restored faith and respect in chiefs and elders as well as education of the youth emerged as necessities for long term peace. At the conclusion of the conference several powerful recommendations and resolutions addressing concrete ways to pursue peace were presented to the government of Southern Sudan, communities represented, and the Church.

Staff housing



Construction began early February on the long awaited staff housing. To date the two duplexes are undergoing plastering of the interior. A single house will be built with the option of becoming a duplex in the future. It is hoped that by the end of April or mid-May, the 2 duplexes will be ready for staff to move in and by the end of June, both duplexes and the single house will be complete.

Update on the goat project!



The goat house is complete and the purebred Toggenburg does and buck from Mbale, Uganda have arrived. Five in all, the goats are doing well.