

## Archiepiscopal Visit to Bor Town, Jonglei State

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012



Archbishop Daniel Deng and Governor Kuol Manyang

Archbishop Daniel Deng along with a provincial support team travelled to Bor in order to meet with the newly-formed Inter-Church Committee for Peace, Mediation and Reconciliation. They have been formed in response to the desire of the churches to respond to the persistent insecurity and deadly clashes that have taken place in Jonglei State since August 2011, largely between the tribes of Murle and Lou Nuer. In the recent bout of violence, the town of Pibor where many Murle reside was attacked resulting in many deaths and injuries. A counter attack followed shortly in Akobo, a Lou Nuer area; it is reported that 50 people were killed there by members of the Murle tribe. On the morning of January 9<sup>th</sup> in Jalle, Bor County another 41 people were killed. The clashes and counter clashes correlate to the incidents of cattle raiding between the different tribes, a practice that has gone on for centuries. What makes this conflict different, however, is the scale of the killings, the large number of cattle being stolen, and the abduction of scores of women and children. The Sudan Council of Churches Peace Initiative chaired by the Most Rev Dr Daniel Deng Bul along with the Government of South Sudan, United Nations, and other NGOs have been working hard to encourage dialogue and to prevent further clashes. The formation of this committee was a continuation of the peace process.

Upon arrival in Bor, Archbishop Daniel was greeted with songs of celebration and praise by some of the local Mothers Union members. A word of welcoming was given by the Bishop of Bor, Rt Rev Reuben Akurdid, a small bible study was held, and he settled in for the evening.

The next day, representatives from the Catholic and the Presbyterian churches convened to hear from His Grace what the current security situation across different parts of Jonglei State, to be briefed on what their mandate was as a committee, and to be given greater direction on how they should aim to succeed their peace mission. They listened attentively as Archbishop Daniel shared some of his recent experience as Chair of the SCC General Peace, Mediation and Reconciliation



The Inter-Church Peace Committee in the Office of the Governor

Committee with them. The committee consists of Bishop Reuben Akurdid as Chair, Rev James Aguer Awer from the Presbyterian Church as Vice Chair, Fr Edward Joseph Deng from the Catholic Church as Secretary and representatives from the other SCC member churches as committee members. The meeting lasted about 2 hours after which they moved on to the Office of HE Kuol Manyang, Governor of Jonglei State.

Governor Kuol was very enthused to be introduced to the new peace committee and to have the opportunity to address them. He agreed to ‘cooperate with them’ and said that it was a good initiative from the church. He added that he ‘would visit the committee from time to time.’ Archbishop Daniel explained that the committee in Bor would be supporting the important peace work that has already taken place and that as well as encouraging and counselling the people, they would continue in their role as ministers by ‘going to the heart of the people’ and teaching them about peace.

The meeting in the office of the governor was approximately 20 minutes long, and proved to be a very special opportunity for the new Committee not just to meet their Governor, but also to be recognised by him as the official SCC Peace, Mediation and Reconciliation Committee for Jonglei State. (RAC)



The SCC Inter-Church Peace Committee visiting the Office of the Governor