

From Lost Boy to Bishop

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The Episcopal Church of Sudan's Diocese of Aweil has consecrated the Rt. Rev. Abraham Yel Nhial as its first bishop. He was elected on July 16 and consecrated two days later.

The election had been postponed from the spring because of Sudan's historic national elections. The new diocese covers the entire Southern Sudan state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and is divided into seven archdeaconries. The other candidates in the election were the Rev. Angelo Yuet Aguer and the Rev. Mathew Garang Chimiir.

Born in Wun Lang village, Aweil District, in 1978, he was forced to flee in 1987 when troops sent by the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum attacked his village, killing everyone except those taken as slaves.

Like most of the other "Lost Boys of Sudan," Nhial survived only because he was not home during the attack. Nine-year-old Nhial was one of 35,000 boys who fled toward Ethiopia. After a four-year sojourn when Ethiopia's civil war forced them to flee again, he was one of fewer than 16,000 to survive and grow up in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp.

The new bishop was one of the Lost Boys chosen to come to the United States in January 2001, an event documented by *60 Minutes*. Living in Atlanta, Ga., Nhial first earned a G.E.D. and then a bachelor's degree from Atlanta Christian College before joining other Sudanese priests at Trinity School for Ministry. Nhial completed a master's degree in May.

He married Daruka Aloung Bior, his sweetheart from Kakuma, in June 2003, and they have three children.

Broadman & Holman published his autobiography, *Lost Boy No More: A True Story of Survival and Salvation*, written with DiAnn Mills, in 2004.

Even in Kakuma Refugee Camp Nhial was an evangelist. His ministry is marked by his forgiveness and mercy toward his former persecutors. The Rev. John Chol Daau, another former Lost Boy, says Nhial has a vision "to share the gospel beyond Aweil" and a desire to see all of Sudan's marginalized and oppressed peoples, Christian and Muslim alike, receive justice.

Faith J.H. McDonnell