

Sudan Prayer Letter 1

Dear All

As I think most of you know, I am off to Southern Sudan in three weeks' time and the preparations are beginning to take shape. I have taken the liberty of adding your name to a list of people who I feel able to ask to pray for me as I go and hope that you will appreciate receiving prayer and news updates prior to the trip and (hopefully, Sudanese WiFi permitting!) during the trip.

I am leaving on Tuesday 9th October and flying (via Nairobi) to Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan, where I will be staying for a couple of days before taking a MAF flight the hundred or so miles northwest to Mundri. I am going with a colleague from Salisbury, Jim Findlay, who has considerably more experience than I of Africa, which is something I am very grateful for! When we get to Mundri, Jim and I will be staying at a Guest House in the town (sounds posh - we have en suite rooms, except the en suite facilities aren't actually connected!) and working as visiting lecturers at the Bishop Ngalamo theological college. There will be around 13 or 14 people who we will be involved in training, some are already Pastors of Churches and others are in training, but the important factor is that the literacy rate in Southern Sudan is one of the lowest in the world - approximately 2% make it to the end of Primary Education. I have to say that my concern is that it is very hard to get my head around teaching in that environment - it maybe something which is within my capabilities but involves a considerable change of culture, environment, thinking and style. So there is one thing to pray for, please!

Sudan and Southern Sudan are often in the news and it is important to note that Jim and I are going to be in the south of Southern Sudan, which is some 2-300 miles from the border area, where some scuffles still happen and even further from Khartoum, where there was violence last week in reaction to the American film about Mohammed. We feel very safe from that aspect although the reason we are now taking the MAF flight is that the roads between Juba and Mundri are impassable at present due to the floods from the wet season. But please pray for safety in travel, too. I have had all my jabs - and tomorrow see the Doctor for the malaria tablets, so I feel that I am as protected as possible, although the inevitable tummy bugs will no doubt be a threat if not a certainty at some stage. I have no idea what food we will be eating and with my well-known love of bananas (!), I am sure that this will be a challenge and there will be a weight loss achieved in the trip ...

Claire and Jessica will be at home for while I am away apart from a few days when they will be going to see Hannah in Paris and I have no doubt that I will miss them very much and particularly miss Claire's wisdom in my day to day decisions - Jim is lovely, but has limitations as a substitute for Claire. Please pray for Claire, Hannah and Jessica while I am away, and pray for communication to be possible (I believe mobile coverage will be available) so that we can keep in touch. And please pray for my relationship with Jim. We have got to know each other over recent months but a month is a long time to spend in each other's company with our habits and foibles.

So the next few weeks promise to be busy - at the moment, I have a number of parish and pastoral issues which have inevitably surfaced and the combination of those, plus preparing for the practical aspects of the trip, plus the preparations for the parish in my absence, plus

the preparations for what I need to teach (Worship & Evangelism, Liturgy and Pastoral Care) mean a rather frantic three weeks. I have no evenings free in my diary at present!

So please would you pray...

- For perspective and time in preparations
- For me to get my head round teaching in the environment I will face.
- For safety in travel
- For Claire, Hannah and Jessica while I am away
- For my relationship with Jim

And finally... I am asking the Parish if they would like to contribute financially towards a couple of things. I am hoping to visit a school at Rokon, where we have a partnership as a Church, and I would like to be able buy equipment (eg pencils and other precious items). I will do this when I am out there, as it is easier to do and means I don't have to take valuable luggage space. I would also like to buy a guitar (!!) to take with me to use while I am out there and then leave behind me. I am seeking to buy a classical type of guitar, along with several sets of spares strings, as this will last longer - the cost is about £80 in total. If you would like to add to this "fund", please could you send a cheque to me (in the next couple of weeks, please) - but I am aware that everyone has a lot of pressures on their finances, so please feel no pressure in this!

I face the coming weeks with anticipation, excitement and not a few nerves - so knowing that there are people praying for me will be a great encouragement. As you can see, I have set up a special email account that I can use while I am away - so please use this one to get in touch about the trip!

Thank you for reading this... and for your prayers

With love in Jesus

Tim Storey