

Chalke - Cueibet Partnership

Chalke Deanery defies C of E

If you think that the Church of England moves slowly, Chalke Deanery might surprise you. In November 2012, the Deanery Synod voted to start a deanery link with the Episcopal Church of Sudan Diocese of Cueibet (pronounced Shebet) and its Bishop, Elijah Matueny.

Since then we have had two visits from Bishop Elijah and on his first, a much needed hip replacement was arranged. In October 2013, Canon David Henley, Revd Alice Goodall and Lesley Simm made a return visit to Cueibet and gave a full report to the Deanery Synod on the ways in which the link could be developed.

In eight months, just under £9000 has been raised from parishes through donations and pledges. A three year project to fund an agricultural advisor is underway and the Deanery Synod has given the go ahead for an IT worker project.

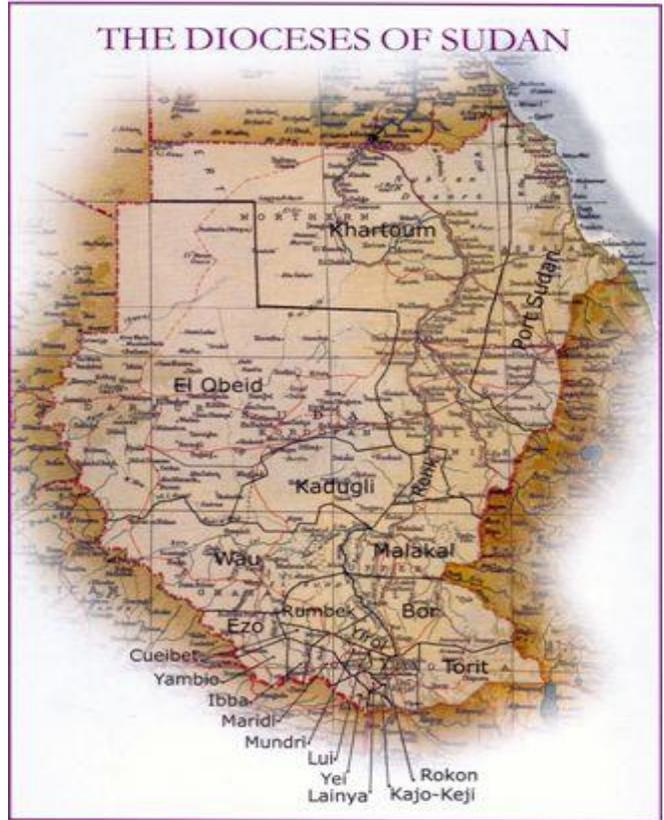
Bishop Elijah and Cueibet Diocese



The Diocese of Cueibet was created out of the Diocese of Rumbek in 1995. Bishop Elijah became its second bishop in July 2010. The diocese is in the centre of the new Republic of South Sudan and curves in a semi-circle to the west, north and south of the Lakes State capital of

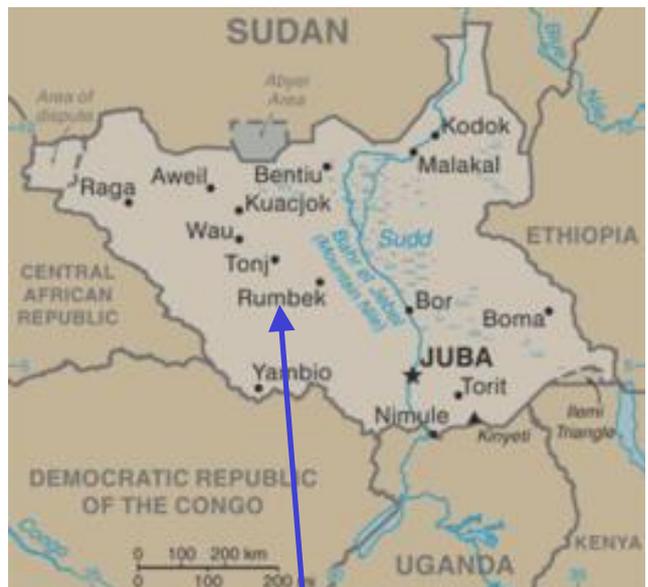
Rumbek. Because of the lack of roads, travelling to all parts of the diocese involves going through Rumbek which can add days to journey time.

The population is approximately 202,000 from 3 ethnic groups: Dinka, Pakam and Jur-belli. People live in extreme poverty in very small villages. The average life expectancy is 42 years with 1 in 10 children dying in childhood and over 2 in 100 women dying in childbirth. Yet there is much hope for the future. The land is fertile and there is no shortage of water, although access can be a challenge. The list of needs for healthcare, education and developing a basic rural economy seems overpowering but there are ways in which we can help: supporting them with our prayers and funding projects which help the people of the diocese to sustain themselves.



Working in partnership

In response to the Deanery Synod's vote we have set up a Planning Group which will guide our link based on a practical and realistic assessment of proposed projects, ensuring that projects are seen through to completion and supporting projects only where delivery is achievable.



Diocese of Cueibet

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Our first project, to fund an agricultural advisor, has already begun. We are now working on providing training to support diocesan IT needs.

Agricultural Advisor

During the war to create the independent country of South Sudan, many families lost their homes and were forced to live in the bush in extreme poverty. They have now returned to their villages and are getting on with the task of rebuilding their lives. Many of the women who were traditionally responsible for feeding their families, lost their skills and need to begin afresh to cultivate the ground in their villages.

Bishop Elijah has appointed Daniel Cueibet Bolong as the agricultural advisor for the diocese.



Daniel has been trained in basic agricultural methods and in January started to work alongside families, advising them and providing them with fruit tree seedlings and tools. This will be a rolling programme over three years as he moves from village to village. The aim is to increase their own food sufficiency while providing a surplus to trade in the market. The cost of paying Daniel's salary for the three years and providing a motorbike, tools and seedlings is about £9,100.

IT Project

One of the biggest challenges for Bishop Elijah and his people is communication. Mobile phones work well in some areas. There is a computer in the rudimentary diocesan office with limited internet access. Although equipment is an issue, a

lack of IT skills is the main obstacle to improving communication. An American church has provided the hardware. Bishop Elijah has recruited John Thon Dongrin as the IT worker and will find the funding for two years' salary. The next step is to train him.



Such training is not easily accessible, but a suitable course in Nairobi starting in April has been identified lasting six months. The cost, including travel, is £660. We have agreed to fund this which means that the IT worker will be in place when the next deanery visit takes place in November 2014.

How can we help?

The total financial commitment to our deanery partnership with Cueibet over three years is £9,760 which gives us a target of some £800 still to raise. The Planning Group will monitor the progress of the projects and report back to the Deanery Synod. As the partnership develops, there may be other projects to support, but we will not begin these until funding is assured.

You can help with your prayers, by publicising the Chalke-Cueibet Partnership in your churches and communities and by donating.

**For more details, to arrange a presentation or find out about planning for November's visit, contact Revd Alice Goodall: 01747 828827
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**For details about how to donate, contact Gerry Purdue, Deanery Treasurer: 01747 830419
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