



MINUTE FOR MISSION

An Unrelenting Pursuit of Peace in South Sudan

When violence forced John Khamis to flee South Sudan for a refugee camp in Uganda, he did not leave behind his commitment to Christian peacebuilding in a country embroiled in civil war.

“John lives in the Bidi Bidi Refugee Camp along with 220,000 other South Sudanese. Amid the crowded conditions and heat, he strives to calm anger and heal bitterness among rival ethnic groups as he bears witness to the Christian call to reconciliation. He is an Episcopal clergyman and a trauma specialist with RECONCILE International, a South Sudanese ecumenical organization that works for a healthy, peaceful, and democratic society in South Sudan.

In the refugee camp, John is at the center of efforts to continue the RECONCILE Peace Institute, which brings together members of rival ethnic groups to learn how to engage in peacebuilding. He and some alumni of the Peace Institute also living at Bidi Bidi will compose the faculty. The institute was located at the RECONCILE offices in Yei, South Sudan, but the RECONCILE staff had to leave Yei when the city was attacked in July 2016.

John and his colleagues are determined that the dream of peace for South Sudan will not die. Your gifts to the Peace & Global Witness Offering will help RECONCILE continue its dogged pursuit of peace.

John has been working for peace in his homeland for decades. Presbyterian mission co-worker Shelvis Smith-Mather says John’s skills in trauma healing bring “a presence of God’s love and care for people in great need.”

Shelvis, his wife Nancy, and their children, lived in a duplex apartment in Yei, next to the one where Khamis and his family lived. The Smith-Mathers now serve in Uganda and are facilitating the peacebuilding and trauma healing work in the refugee camps.

During one visit to Bidi Bidi, John told Shelvis that life in the camps is “sometimes so overwhelming I find myself asking if this is really me. I once had a comfortable home and plenty of clean drinking water.”

Yet John is by no means despondent. He will not give up on peace in South Sudan. The stakes are too high, and he will not languish in despair because the gospel’s hope is too deep.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering is helping to proclaim the gospel of peace in South Sudan, in other places around the world, and across the United States. These ministries range from reconciliation efforts at the local level to advocacy work in the international community through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations.

Twenty-five percent of the offering our congregation receives will go to local ministries of peace and reconciliation, 25% will go to similar work at the mid council level, and 50% will go to the national church to support national and international ministries like RECONCILE.

Your gifts will help bring peace in troubled places around the world and build bridges of reconciliation in our community.

Let Us Pray

God of Peace, we pray for peace in South Sudan and for the work of John Khamis and RECONCILE International. We give thanks for committed servants who strive to end hostility and division at home and abroad. May they sense your wisdom and courage as they face the challenges before them. **Amen.**