

SOUTH SUDAN TRIP 2 CAN-GO REPORT

Trip Dates: September 8-17, 2023

Report written by Brendan Steinacher, Brad Carpenter, Todd Brown, and Matt Macy

C for Champion

Before:

- The Administrative Council of EFC-Rwanda with the blessing of the Yearly Meeting and church members of EFC-Rwanda.
- Many pastors in EFC-Rwanda have voiced a willingness to go to serve.

During:

- The mission team of EFC-Rwanda, Bernard, Jean Paul, Gerard, Nicodeme, and Brad
- During the trip many of the EFC-Rwanda leaders and church members were faithful to pray and regularly asked for updates.
- Some EFM prayer supporters were also faithfully praying with us.

After:

- Gerard, Jean Paul, Nicodeme, Theodore, Bernard, Brad, and Matt
- In EFC-Rwanda we have people who have told EFC-Rwanda that are ready and willing to go.
- We must have time to sit with them and have deep discussions with them about the difference between being willing and having a sense of call. We trust that they are there, we just need to find them.

Second Trip:

- Second wave mission team: EFC-R & EFM Jean-Paul Nsekanabo, Nicodeme Basebya, Aaron Mupenda, Brad Carpenter, Matt Macy, Todd Brown, Brendan Steinacher
 - It has not been definitively clear if a western missionary is sensing a call directly towards South Sudan.
 - Churches and individuals who have indicated support for the fields in Africa.
 - Individuals: Matt Macy, Brendan Steinacher, Brad Carpenter, Todd Brown, Kevin & Melisa Hoppock, Chris Stanfield.
 - Churches: Paonia Friends, Northridge Friends Church, Chandler, Other Mid-America Churches are all possible champions

A for Affirmation

Before:

- At the local level and national level in EFC-Rwanda the Church affirms the call that God is leading EFC-Rwanda to begin a mission in South Sudan.
- As EFM we have not yet seen a formal call to begin in South Sudan, but Brad and Chelsea and Matt all see that this is the time to partner with EFC-Rwanda as they go.

During:

- We saw that people were very happy to talk with us and to share about themselves with us.
- There were pastors who stopped their other work to accompany us and even to speak on our behalf to authorities along the way. This felt like an important affirmation from God.
- Everyone we talked to in South Sudan including leaders of other denominations gave us encouragement and told us to come. No one told us that it would be bad or tried to discourage us.

After:

- EFC-Rwanda leaders and the Yearly Meeting affirm their willingness to partner. This will continue to be a process for leaders and church members to hear, own and commit to partner and send.
- There are people who have given toward Luke 10 with Tanzania and South Sudan in mind.

Second Trip:

- Encouragement and inspiration with the Rwandan friends confidently stating they are going. They plan to have missionaries on the ground by June 2025. This has been planned prior to the second trip.
- The sense of the “Final stamp” has been felt on this second trip. Making the resolve that much more concrete.
- The vision to launch missions into South Sudan has begun throughout EFC-R. Which spoke to the organizational maturity and driven from the local church level.
- Power of relationships. – is it possible that the reason is “on mission with Rwandan missions sending.”
- Networks built- William, Apostle Luke, Government immigration officials. When needed God provided a person or a clear path as we navigated throughout South Sudan. Providing partnership opportunities. (Church relationships, Pastors, Government officials)
- On the day we come back in a year The Deputy General stated they will proclaim this day a “Day of Prayer.” In the National Immigration Offices of South Sudan

N for Compelling Need

Before:

- EFC-Rwanda saw that South Sudan has some unreached peoples in their country.

During:

- There is great need for the gospel in South Sudan in both unreached (Murle) and the under-reached (Dinka-Bor, Nuer, Mundari, Olubogo).
- We were not able to visit everywhere in the country, but everyone we talked to told us that even the Christians are biblically ignorant.
- There is much fighting between tribes, stealing property and animals and abducting children that shows us that there is a great need for Jesus to bring his reconciliation to peoples there.
- We saw much land that appeared fertile but was not farmed.
- Life is expensive but people do not have money.
- There are some old customs and cultural practices that we saw that seem to be preventing them from having what they need for life.
- In the cities where there are many tribes, it seems that some of the churches only have one tribe (segregated).

After:

- There were others we heard about that are unreached and without any church presence including subgroups of the Mundari, Toposa, Murle (who live on the other side of flooded marsh), and others.

Second Trip:

- A country in transition with confirmation that people desired restoration and transformation. Each community visited indicated a willingness for prayer, learning about Christ, and receptive to the prayer “may peace be upon this house”. Juba 2, Torit City, Mangala Payem, Juba.

- Clear that there are generational needs due to instability and 20 years of war. Even the people within the churches demonstrated that deep discipleship would be needed.
- An urgency for discipleship- for the “sake of our children’s children” and transformed future! Multiple wives, kidnapping of women and children, prostitution, cattle raiding, lack of agriculture.
- Watch what happens geopolitically, pray for the upcoming national elections in 2024, a desire for stability...
- Safety and security awareness.

G for Gifting

Before:

- There is a group of pastors in EFC-Rwanda who publicly announced that they are willing to go as missionaries.

During:

- We saw that the laws and requirements for security of the country are many and are not easy to know. They will need wisdom and people from South Sudan to help them.

After:

- Within EFC-Rwanda we have all of the gifts of the Church.
- We see that missionaries would need:
 - Evangelism gifts
 - Teaching the Bible
 - Learning language and culture
 - Ability to adapt and adjust to different cultures.
 - Patient/Perseverance through difficulties, differences, etc.
 - Experience in whole-life discipleship so that they can help people grow in all 4 relationships (with God, with self, with others, and with Creation)
 - Teachable people
 - Slow to criticize, suspending judgment, asking questions for more understanding.
 - Skills in farming and animal husbandry
 - Skills in Business

Second Trip:

- Rwandans have expressed their experience as a gift in the beginning of transformation for South Sudan. Problem solving the needs after genocide directly correlate to the needs, they see in the communities we visited.
- Gifting requirements critical to working alongside the Rwandan missionaries and communities in South Sudan - humble, support roles, teachable, abilities to compliment rather than directly lead.
- USA missionaries involved in practical support- business development, farming, cattle, health... coming alongside Rwandan Pastors.
- Confident that Western Missionaries could/would serve under the Rwandan leadership. Maturity and wisdom in a partnership with Rwandans exists.

O for Opportunity

Before:

- We were not aware of many opportunities before we went.

During:

- We met with Luke Mugabe, Jane Mbabazi, William Deng, Faisal Monday, Peter (driver) who were all very helpful to us.
 - William Deng – is Dinka and helped us very much.
 - General of Police in Terekeka County seemed very warm and welcoming to us.
 - William – young man is Mundari tribe. He is a Christian and translated for us as we talked with people there.
 - Episcopal Canon in Terekeka Diocese welcomed us and gave his blessing.
 - A Rwandan Muslim who lives in Aru Junction was very helpful in understanding the area.
 - A Cholo person in Bor Town was very helpful in giving information including many things about Khartoum.
 - The Community Leader of the Murle Internal Displaced Camp was open and very willing to share with us.

After:

- The pastors who welcomed us, shared with us, and gave us a chance to share with their congregations.
- The community leaders in each village welcomed us to come and visit their communities.
- The provision and availability of food, etc. The areas we traveled had good roads and buses. There are other places that are flooded during the rainy season.
- Some of the legal requirements are not very difficult if you know the right procedures.
- It seems like one possible way to enter would be through a whole-life discipleship (D for D) approach that helps them look at relationships with God, self, others, and creation from the very beginning.

Second Trip: Critical for the readers understanding: Possibly more unique to South Sudan than other potential locations.

- Key connections: “Man-of-Peace” experienced in our interactions- critical connections at multiple levels already exist from the onset in entering South Sudan as a new field. Churches, Government officials, immigration police, and community Chiefs.
- Desire for stability, openness to the gospel, favorable towards Christian discipleship/church, “A want-to-want-to” experienced with problem-solving and community transformation, sense of urgency, open arms of invitation, felt invited in every community we visited,
- Confirmation of our assumptions came from a Norwegian national staying in remote villages. She lives with families as she travels around the country documenting national antiquities for the government. As she stated- she felt safe, was well protected, well fed and provided for and believes any village would welcome our teams in the same way. Her contacts have been provided by the South Sudan government.

Is this a CAN GO for EFM at this time?

At this point, the main way that this potential new field aligns with EFM’s vision and mission is that this is the vision and mission of EFC-Rwanda. As we partner with EFC-Rwanda, this then fits into our vision and mission as EFM.

Greater resolve from this second trip.

Which of the five criteria do we see the strongest? Which of the five criteria is yet to become convincing?

The Need and Opportunity both seem strong. The least convincing is a lack of people in Rwanda who are clearly called by God and backed by EFC-Rwanda. We also have not heard yet of anyone in EFC-NA Yearly Meetings who has a sense of call to go to South Sudan.

Second Trip:

Opportunity and affirmation. We have a greater commitment from Rwandan churches to send missionaries. Rwanda is moving forward with the mobilization of the mission's board and full engagement from the local churches.

The "Key Connections" cannot be overlooked .

We still do not have a sense of calling directly for a Western missionary(s) to South Sudan. EFC-Rwanda leaders have asked that EFM send U.S. missionaries to join their team.

Describe key points or stories in the process and affirmation/confirmation of God's call to Evangelical Friends to go to this particular people or place.

EFC-Rwanda has sensed a pull toward starting a mission in South Sudan since 2013. This was the first time EFC-Africa and EFM began discussing EFC-Africa sending their own missionaries. This trip was helpful for understanding more in general about South Sudan and we made important contacts with other Christian leaders. We had good experiences in each location we visited that affirmed EFC-Rwanda's sense of call to South Sudan, but nothing that seemed a clear affirmation to go to a specific space. The Rwandan members of the team sense that one part of our work in South Sudan will be in helping to connect and bring unity between the tribes. So, at this point, we would prefer to look for the place that God calls us rather than to a specific people group. Rwandans have a unique perspective and experience to offer that can be helpful to invite various tribes into the unity that Christ brings.

Second Trip:

While a direct location is still TBD the field has been narrowed to three possible locations- Terit City, Juba Two, Juba.

The desire to serve communities inclusive of multiple tribes or specific people groups is still the focus. With the refugee camps and new townships comprised of multiple people groups it lends credence to this approach.

What steps have you taken since returning from the trip or do you need to take in further discernment or exploration of this field?

- We need to come up with a good strategy for sharing stories from this trip throughout EFC-Rwanda, among leaders, local churches, and individuals so that the Lord can keep increasing excitement and passion for this mission of God through EFC-Rwanda.
- To talk with the ones who have said they are willing to go as missionaries and help them to discern if this is a calling from God or not.
- We also need a good way to communicate with key leaders in the EFC-NA churches so that we can discern who God might call to join this exploration, discernment, and sending/going.
- Second Trip:
 - EFM: messages have been provided to multiple churches, outreach teams, and individuals.

- EFC-R: Their missions board has begun the full campaign to mobilize their local churches in support of missions sending to South Sudan.

Luke 10 Team Recommendation to EFM

2022 FIRST TRIP:

WE BELIEVE THAT THE NEXT STEP WILL BE FOR ANOTHER TRIP TO SOUTH SUDAN. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS SHOULD BE A LONGER TRIP THAT HAPPENS DURING THE DRY SEASON OF SOUTH SUDAN (FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2023). WE WANT TO VISIT THE PEOPLE GROUPS WE WERE NOT ABLE TO VISIT THIS TIME SO THAT WE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM: MURLE, TAPOSA, AND POSSIBLY MORE. THE REASON FOR SPENDING A LONG TIME IS SO THAT THEY CAN EVENTUALLY NARROW DOWN THEIR FOCUS AND GO DEEP IN UNDERSTANDING AND DISCERNING A CALL TO A SPECIFIC PLACE.

2023 SECOND TRIP:

WE RECOMMEND THAT EFM ADOPT SOUTH SUDAN AS A NEW FIELD TO ENTER BY 2025. ALONGSIDE OUR RWANDAN PARTNERS AS A MULTINATIONAL TEAM.