

Dear Atle:

[Please use for your website whatever you think would be helpful.]

I thank God so much for the opportunity He gave us to meet in January for the evangelistic endeavors in Juba. I am very grateful to see the dedication to the building up of the work of foreign missions that you have shown. It is obvious that the Lord is using you to encourage our members there in Norway to make God their partner in these soul-winning efforts.

The work in South Sudan Field is much like the work in the rest of the world church, except that we engage in it under somewhat more difficult conditions. We incur the same expenses to hold evangelistic meetings, pay salaries, build church buildings, care for the needs of our workers, and so forth, just as the church has to do in other parts of the world. But as many of the people here are quite poor, we also have to manage with the little money they can contribute, coupled with what the world church is able to assist us. Without that assistance the difficulties we face would be multiplied. One of our primary goals in this Field is to encourage the mindset that the church here, though poor by most standards, can accomplish very much if the members will unite their meager resources with a spirit of sacrifice and faith in God. Still, we depend heavily on outside support, and while we work toward the day when this Field will be self-sustaining, we appreciate so much the generosity of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

Some of the more pressing needs we have are described in what follows. The cost of materials and their transportation are steadily rising, so the figures given now may not be precisely the cost next month or next year, but they will help give you and your donors some idea as to what to expect.

Even as late as three or four years ago, small churches (6m. x 12m.) were being built here for \$5,000. Larger ones (9m. x 18m.) cost around \$9,000-10,000. Today, a small church will usually cost around \$8,000-9,000, and the larger ones between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The costs will vary considerably depending on the location, as the transportation of building materials is very

expensive. Churches such as I am describing are built of fired (or "burned," as they say here) locally made brick, with a concrete floor and a sheet metal roof. We require our churches to provide us with copies of their land documents approved by the local authorities, and to gather sufficient quantities of sand and stone (gravel), as well as make the bricks. We give them a budget based on what the donors are able to sustain, and expect them to keep to it.

There are some locations which have proved especially difficult, however. Some churches cannot get sand, and some cannot get gravel, except it is transported from afar. Some locations have no clay, and therefore they must make cement blocks, using much more sand and cement than would be necessary if using brick. Some churches have no one within the church with the expertise to oversee the construction, and they have to hire that out. What we tell them is that they have X amount of money -- show us how you will utilize it to accomplish the task.

We are in desperate need for permanent housing for most of our pastors. What I mean by permanent is one made of burnt brick (or cement block), concrete floor, and sheet metal roofing. The locally made houses of mud brick and thatched roofs are eaten up by termites in a couple of years, and have to be continually repaired or replaced. We are working on a construction plan for a pastor's house, based on the size of the small church, 6m. x 12m. We will ask that the house be constructed on church land, that the house will remain under the control of the local church, so that whenever a pastoral transfer takes place, the new pastor has a place to live, and that the local church makes a contribution of the sand, gravel, and bricks. We will provide, as funding allows, for the purchase and transportation of the cement, iron sheets, reinforcing steel, timbers or steel for roof framing, and nails, etc. We hope to be able to make available to each church around \$10,000 for the pastor's house, and anticipate building perhaps one or two per year, as funding allows.

We want to express our gratefulness to the faithful members and friends who have donated money for the evangelistic meetings, and the two Bible workers (we call them gospel evangelists). When the money is received from the Middle East Union we will implement the

projects and report back to you. We will also greatly appreciate your earnest prayers on our behalf. Likewise, we will be praying that God's richest blessings will be given to you and the faithful people of Norway.

Kindest regards,

Pastor Mike