



HOW YOUR CONGREGATION CAN HELP

We need your congregation to join our work in raising awareness and educating others about the Darfur genocide. Find out more about our Faith Action programs in this booklet and use the information and forms attached to request a speaker and to register for the SC Tents of Hope project.

There are many ways that your congregation can make a difference:

Through Awareness-raising and Education...

Educating ourselves and others is a powerful act, and one that can empower our communities. There is too little coverage of the appalling humanitarian situation in Darfur and not enough attention paid to the genocide that has taken place over the past 5 years. Through bible study and worship, we can free ourselves from ignorance and mobilize our communities by putting our faith into action.

Through taking up a collection...

By supporting Darfur action through a church collection, your congregation's bond to the Darfurian people is further strengthened, as is their impact on the region. The UN calls the situation in Darfur, "The world's worst humanitarian crisis" and the Red Cross has declared emergency levels of child malnutrition. The World Food Program has struggled to combat the food crisis that has raged throughout the Spring, leaving a third of the population without food.

Through prayer...

Uniting as a congregation to work for the people of Darfur cannot be restricted to education and fundraising. We must take the most powerful action of all and remember the people of Darfur in prayer and worship. Keep the people of Darfur in your congregation's prayers each Sunday, or assign a Sunday each month to update your congregation on the situation in Darfur. Sample readings, scripture, lessons and prayers are included in this pack and further information, materials and updates can be requested by phone or email.

The Darfur Action Group of South Carolina is an inter-religious community organization working throughout the state to raise awareness of how we can support and protect the people of Darfur. The group and its board are entirely made up of volunteers and grateful to receive interest from ministers and laypersons who wish to become further involved with the DAGSC and its work.



DARFUR FACTSHEET

What is going on in Darfur, Sudan?

Since 2003 the government of Sudan and armed Arab militias known as the Janjaweed have conducted a scorched-earth campaign against the African civilian population of Darfur, terrorizing men, women and children and forcibly displacing the Darfurians from their land. More than 400,000 Africans have been killed with nearly 4 million displaced from their homes and forced to live in squalid and unsafe refugee camps, with thousands more dying each month of deprivation and disease.

What are we doing to stop the Genocide?

In its response to the genocide, the US government has condemned the violence, which includes torture and mass rape against children as young as 7. The UN has described the situation as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis”. But there is still insufficient protection on the ground to stop the killing of the Darfurian refugees: the international community has spoken of its commitment to stopping the genocide, but thousands more continue to die in Darfur.

What is the current situation in Darfur?

In February 2008 the government of Sudan renewed bombing campaigns against the civilian population, leaving tens of thousands of Africans displaced for a second time and killing many. A number of aid agencies and the UN have removed humanitarian workers from the region during the Spring due to the violence that continues unabated without the full peacekeeping force on the ground, which has left Darfurian refugees in a crisis situation.

The current food crisis in Darfur has left nearly a third of the population without access to food. Without aid reinforcements with food and water, millions of Africans will be at risk during the rainy season which begins shortly. The UN has renewed calls for peacekeepers in Darfur, where 26,000 peacekeeping troops were supposed to be deployed on January 1st 2008 - only 10,000 troops, with insufficient equipment or strategic support, are in Darfur currently.

What can you do to help?

The Darfur Action Group of South Carolina is asking South Carolinians to respond to the Darfur crisis by educating our communities and fundraising for the World Food Program in Darfur. Support our efforts by involving your school, church, campus or community organization in Darfur Action.



DIVESTMENT FACTSHEET

What is divestment?

Divestment ensures that we are not funding the genocide in Darfur. At present, many state funds, personal holdings and other investors (such as Universities) are supporting the Government of Sudan by investing in Chinese Oil Companies that provide more than 50% of its revenue. This money is used by the government to fund the campaign of genocide it has waged against the African population in Darfur since 2003 (the Sudan Divestment Task Force estimates that up to 70% of this revenue goes to military expenses, such as funding the *Janjaweed* and Sudanese military).

Why divestment?

Without the oil money it receives, the Government of Sudan would not be able to continue the genocide against the African population in Darfur. Since the divestment campaign began in 2006, twenty-four US states, fifty universities, and fifteen cities have made the moral decision to take action on their Sudan-linked investments. In response to these efforts, at least ten major corporations have ceased operations in Sudan or significantly changed their behavior in the country.

What's happening with divestment now?

In May 2007 the US government imposed bilateral sanctions against the Sudanese government, preventing 31 companies from doing business in the United States or with US companies, and on January 3rd 2008 Congress passed the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act, which further strengthened these restrictions on a federal level. The Government of Sudan has repeatedly spoken out about the crippling effect these sanctions have had on its ability to do business.

What can you do to help?

Proposed legislation has been passed by both the House and Senate to protect the South Carolina retirement system from investments in companies funding the genocide in Darfur.

Please join us in asking the Governor to support S241 and hold a public bill signing to show South Carolina's commitment to this issue. Ask your representatives to join us and support city and college divestment in South Carolina.



WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY MATERIALS

Scriptures and Teachings

Proverbs 3:27

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

Proverbs 24:11-12

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?

Isaiah 2:3-4

Come let us go up the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the paths of the Most High. And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation—neither shall they learn war any more. And none shall be afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

Isaiah 58:9-12

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets and Dwellings.

Micah 6:6-8

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?



Responsive Reading

Leader: The plight of our brothers and sisters in the African country of Sudan, in the region of Darfur resounds with horror. Over the past five years, more than 400,000 people have died, more than 4 million people have been displaced from their homes, and many more are at risk of starvation. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end this genocide.

People: We have the power to stop it. But we must act now, before it's too late. We offer our support and prayers to the people of Darfur.

Leader: The faith community must be vigilant and act to end the genocide. Every day the people of Darfur experience horrendous crimes; fathers, mothers, children and elders all continue to suffer rape, murder, torture and displacement. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end the genocide.

People: We have the power to stop it. But we must act now, before it's too late. We will join citizens from around the world calling for the international community to protect the people of Darfur.

Leader: In the 20th century, we have known mass slaughter of human life, displacement, starvation, and rape as a mean of ethnic cleansing in Armenia, The Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda. Now in Darfur, hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost in the 21st century, but countless more can be saved. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end this humanitarian crisis.

All: We are witnessing the destruction of human life. Let us join hearts with the faith community throughout America-in prayer, in action, and in spirit, to let the Darfurian people know that they are not abandoned. Not on our watch will we stand by and have genocide occur. We pray that peace, protection, and mercy prevail in Sudan. Amen.



Sample Prayers

Loving God, we know there are tremendous problems facing the world - natural disasters, civil wars, violence, disparities in resources, and sickness - We confess that there are days when we look the other way or pretend the problems don't exist. We say that the problem is someone else's concern or displace the blame. We are not confident that we can make an impact and we fear failure for ourselves and on the behalf of others. We might even think that moving to make a difference will change us in ways that we will not like or make us uncomfortable. Before we even begin, we desire to give up - on our opponents and on the victims. Forgive us for our faint-heartedness and selfishness, for failing to love others as we should, and for failing to believe that you have empowered us to protect our brothers and sisters. Remind us Lord that some faithful persons refused to give up on us, and that You have not given up on any of us. AMEN.

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred ... let me sow love
Where there is injury ... pardon
Where there is doubt ... faith
Where there is despair ... hope
Where there is darkness ... light
Where there is sadness ... joy
Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled ... as to console
To be understood ... as to understand,
To be loved ... as to love
For it is in giving ... that we receive,
It is in pardoning ... that we are pardoned,
It is in dying ... that we are born to eternal life

Composed by a Holocaust victim before his death:

I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.
I believe in love even when feeling it not.
I believe in God even when God is silent.



TENTS OF HOPE

The South Carolina Tents of Hope program is a creative community-based project to help raise awareness about the Darfur crisis and to involve all members of a family, school, faith community, or neighborhood in our efforts to help the people of Darfur. The tents symbolize our compassion for the survivors of the Darfur genocide, and give kids an opportunity to get involved in a fun project that will provide much needed shelter for Darfurians living in refugee camps.

The tents can be built and designed by small or large communities, either as a team or as a group project. There will be a state-wide competition in September to choose the tents that will represent our state at the national exhibition in Washington, DC in November 2008. Following the exhibition, tents from around the country will be shipped to Darfur where they will provide shelter for some of the millions of refugees who have been forced to live in displacement camps since the genocide began in 2003.

There are no requirements for groups that wish to join the program, but we hope that you will consider entering your group's tent in the SC competition for the national exhibition in November. We also hope that you will join with and support a group from another state during the tent-building process, to share your experiences and promote fellowship with other communities.

Tents can be ordered from Reliable Tents Co., which offers discounted prices to participants in the Tents of Hope project (tents can be viewed at www.reliabletent.com); the cost of a new 8 x 10 ft. canvas wall tent with an aluminum frame is \$500. Alternatively you may wish to purchase a used canvas wall tent from a military surplus store.

Reliable Tents Co. contact details: Connie Kellogg (800) 544-1039 ext. 103

Quick-drying acrylic paint is recommended for decorating your tent, and many groups choose to divide the tent into panels for small groups to work on together. You might also like to paint a mural on your tent, or use the canvas to tell the story of your group's involvement in the project and the tent's journey between your group and Darfur.

Documenting the progress of your tent can make a great display for your church or school, and also helps other groups by showing what the project entails.



GROUP REGISTRATION

Group name:

Contact:

Email:

Phone:

Address:

Do you wish to enter the statewide competition?

How did you find out about SC Tents of Hope?

Please email this form to Jo Read at darfuraotionsc@aol.com or by mail:

Darfur Action Group of South Carolina, c/o Main Street Methodist, 1830 Main Street,
Columbia, SC 29201

For any questions, issues or news about your tent please contact us by email to let us know how we can help!



SPEAKER/MATERIALS REQUEST

Group name:

Contact:

Email:

Phone:

Address:

Would you like a speaker to visit with and present a program to your group? (please give details)

Would you like to order additional materials? (please indicate below)

'Darfur Needs You' T-shirts

'Save Darfur' bracelets

'Faith Action' dvd

'Darfur Voices' dvd

Collection bottle (small)

Collection bottle (large)

Please email this form to Jo Read at darfuractions@aol.com or by mail:

Darfur Action Group of South Carolina, c/o Main Street Methodist, 1830 Main Street,
Columbia, SC 29201