

NEWS FROM KAJO KEJI BY RANDALL FEGLEY rafegley@yahoo.com

We visited five primary schools

Here are some reflections on our diocesan team's visit to Kajo Keji's schools in January 2007. This journey was both to express our continuing friendship and to confirm the effectiveness of our efforts. From our 2006 donations, each school had been given a bicycle, incentives (pay) for their teachers, textbooks and stationary. Training seminars were provided for PTAs and school management committees (school boards). This is the first time that teachers have received any salaries in eight years.

January 9, 2007: Romogi Primary School has nine teachers and 200 pupils in seven grades. Even though it is proudly moving into a new permanent building, it has neither enough classroom space nor an adequate water source. As spiritual center of the Diocese of Kajo Keji, Romogi is seeing the rebuilding of Canon Benaiah Poggo Memorial College (Kajo Keji's Theological College), and will be the future location of Kajo Keji's Cathedral.

January 10, 2007: Loopo Primary School greeted us with songs, dancing and their own locally made stars of Bethlehem. Their needs are very great. In January 2006 their staff room consisted of bundles of sorghum straw perched on four sticks. They have now completed a tukul as a combination staff room, storeroom and library. However, they are in urgent need of a safe place to store books and supplies and need support for a number of orphans attending there. Beside their rapidly deteriorating building are the ruins of their brick and stone building that was destroyed during the war. As they are in immediate need of four classrooms, reconstruction of the old building has become a priority.

Lu'bale Primary School was devastated by an arsonist in 2004. Our reception there was ecstatic. People traveled for miles to join us. Since its tragedy, this village has seen much development. Donations from the Diocese of Bethlehem, coupled with the work of the American Refugee Committee, completed two blocks of latrines. Our assistance also came in the form of blackboards and hoes, as well as the items received by the other schools. The people there had done a significant amount of work themselves. Over a period of months they had burned 45,000 bricks for the construction of permanent buildings for their school and church, whose foundation the community dug in one day. Their deputy headmaster and school board chairman praised the Diocese of Kajo Keji not only for its assistance but also for the transparency with which it was distributed.

Located near the border with Uganda, Sodogo Primary School is expecting to be inundated by returning refugees. Founded in 1983, it is a series of rectangular, mud-walled, thatched classrooms with 152 pupils in seven grades. It desperately needs a water source; even more importantly, it needs brick buildings with concrete foundations, as the school compound is surrounded on all sides by termite mounds and ant hills. Without

permanent solid structures, the insects will continue to take a toll, biting the children and eating anything paper or wood. It was late in the day as we arrived in Sodogo; in fact, we discussed cancelling our visit. However, we heard from messengers on motorcycles that the village had prepared a special reception with a band and music and dancing. We labored on the dusty roads, unsure of how long the journey would take and our energies would last. The joyful reception and honest gratitude of Sodogo's people made us glad we had labored on.

January 11, 2007: Limi Primary School is located in a displacement camp. Its people are internally displaced persons (IDPs), some 250 families who have fled other areas of Sudan. Despite being from different tribes, children from both local and IDP families study and play together under the particularly watchful eye of deputy head teacher Cizarina, a dynamic woman who takes no nonsense. Like so many other schools, Limi has insect and water problems, but one noticeable feature of its buildings is their beautification with explosions of red flowers.

Unfortunately, due to an outbreak of meningitis our team could not visit two of Kajo Keji's schools: Gaderu and Ajo Primaries. However, visitors from both stopped to see us at the rest house where we were staying. The first of these visitors, the Venerable George Kenyi Lokuyu, Archdeacon of Gaderu, effusively thanked me for the donations and supplies they had received. He expressed his hope that a representative from the Diocese of Bethlehem would visit Gaderu, the northernmost archdeanery of the Diocese.

On the final day of our visit, the headmaster of Ajo Primary School, Kenyi Enis Isaac, visited me at the Diocesan Center. The western-most school in the county, Ajo was among the first adopted by a Bethlehem donor. Still, it has had a catalogue of troubles. It is separated from the rest of the county by the Kaya River and for years was surrounded by landmines. When I visited in January 2006, I met with two delegations from Ajo: two headmasters, two PTA chairs, and two school board chairs for the same school – the community was deeply riven by a dispute.

By January 2007, divisions were healed; the landmines were gone; but meningitis now ravaged this unfortunate community. Some day I hope one of our teams will be able to visit Ajo. Like so many other villages in the county, it has done much to help itself and its people beam with gratitude for what others have done for them.

Professor of history and political science at Penn State's Berks Campus and a member of our World Mission committee, Dr. Randall Fegley is one of four diocesan representatives who visited Kajo Keji in January. He has been a leader in our diocesan initiative with the people of our partnership diocese in the Episcopal Church of the Sudan.



Charles Barebo meets the pupils of the primary school at Limi Displacement Camp.



Archdeacon Howard Stringfellow turns over our gift of exercise books to the staff at Limi Primary School.



Dr. Randall Fegley poses with members of the local community at the ruins of Loopo Primary School.



Jo Trepagnier presents gifts to the staff of Romogi Primary School.

LIVING A BAPTIZED LIFE: THREE QUESTIONS/FIVE PROMISES BY ANNE KITCH (PART 3 OF 6)

Recognize, resist, repent, return



The Baptismal Covenant consists of two sections. The first is a recitation of the Apostles' Creed, put into question and answer form. The second part consists of five promises intended to help us live a Christian life.

The second promise: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? I will, with God's help.

There are many powerful words in this promise. "Evil" and "sin" rank right up there in the top ten list of major theological concerns. When we enter the season of Lent each year, we hear the word "repent" often. Yet I think the most important word in this promise is not one of these big church words. I think the most important word is "whenever." The promise does not say "if" you fall into sin, but "whenever" you fall into sin.

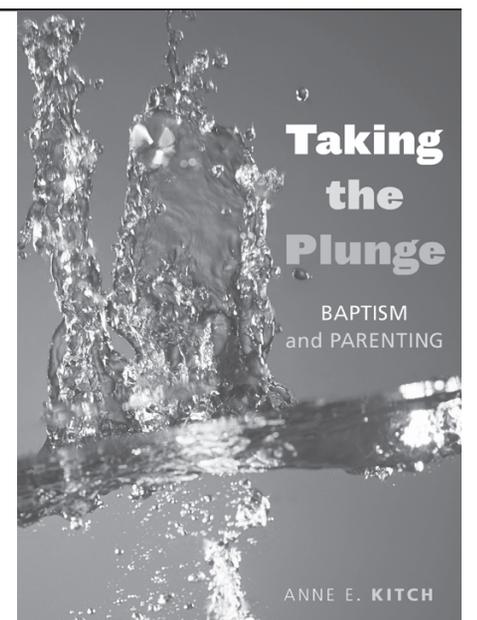
It is not a question of "if." Sin is not

avoidable. This does not mean that we are horrible people who should always feel guilty about something or are in need of doing good in order to prove our worth. It simply means that we are human. Part of being human means we have limitations; we are not perfect. This promise acknowledges our limitations and gives us something to do about them.

We promise first to persevere in resisting evil, to keep at it, to try gain and again.

We do not promise to overcome evil or to conquer evil. That battle is in God's court. Our call is to resist evil; to recognize it and say no to it. We will not always be successful at turning away from evil. God knows this. Even with a strong faith and a will to do good, we will stumble.

When we do fail to resist evil, when we sin, God gives us the remedy. We can repent and return. To "repent" means to turn around. We can acknowledge our fault, and turn back to God. We can do this with the wonderful knowledge that God's forgiveness is always offered to us. We do not have to abase ourselves before God to make amends. Rather, with the humility that comes from understanding God's great love for us, we can face a loving God and say, "I'm sorry." We can return to the Lord, we can come home to God. With God's forgiveness in our hearts, we can begin to make right what we have done amiss. Anne E. Kitch of our Cathedral is a member of the Standing Committee and the Liturgy and Music Commission of the Diocese of Bethlehem.



Visit morehouse.org and search for Kitch to find information about *Taking the Plunge: Baptism and Parenting*, a new book, and other books by Canon Anne Kitch.