

A Call to Prayer for South Sudan



AP Images/Pete Muller

Thousands around the world lifted prayers of thanksgiving on Saturday as South Sudan celebrated its first day as an independent nation. And some of the people praying thanked God specifically for the role that Franklin Graham, president and CEO of BGEA and Samaritan's Purse, played in helping South Sudan achieve independence.

USA Today acknowledged that role in a Tuesday article. DeWayne Wickham wrote that along with the efforts of Presidents Bush and Obama, "South Sudan also has Franklin Graham to thank," saying that Graham "played an important role in supporting the secession of South Sudan—whose 8 million people are mostly Christians—from Muslim-dominated Sudan."

Prayer, in many ways, is even more important now. A day after the excitement of Independence Day abated, South Sudan President Salva Kiir expressed his desire for prayer as he begins to address challenges facing the new country.

Kiir faces the difficulty of building a nation from scratch, in an area with little infrastructure. Only 15 percent of its citizens can read and fears of

renewed conflict abound. The people of the South have endured a half century of civil war that left more than 2 million dead.

Another major issue is oil revenue. South Sudan has most of the oil but it must move it through Sudan's pipes.

"We must stand with South Sudan as this infant democratic nation struggles to secure its own," Graham wrote for , shortly before leaving to attend the independence ceremony.

During the weekend, Graham advised Kiir about the only true source of wisdom and help as the two men met on Sunday. After congratulating him on being the first president of the new nation, Graham encouraged Kiir to stay in prayer and to seek Godly counsel.

"There is still much that needs to be done to help the people of both countries," said Graham. "I pray that God will give these leaders wisdom and courage to lead their people, uniting their hearts toward the goal of reconciliation and peace."

Please join us in praying that God will sustain and grow the new nation, and guide its leaders in wisdom and godliness.

Used with permission of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.