

Biography of Rev. Thomas Anei

Thomas Anei, one of nine children, was born in 1980 in Aweil, Sudan. In 1983 civil war broke out between the north (mainly Muslim) and the south (mainly Christian), and in 1986, when Thomas was six, the conflict reached his village.

Thomas and a younger brother fled, walking across Sudan to Ethiopia as a part of a group that became known as “The Lost Boys of Sudan.” At the height of the 21-year war, more than 27,000 boys were separated from their families, escaping a campaign of ethnic cleansing by successive regimes in Khartoum aimed at preventing boys from joining the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) based in the south. Boys as young as five trekked across Sudan’s vast tropical and desert lands to Ethiopia to find safety in refugee camps. Thomas was one of these boys.

Tragically, Thomas’ younger brother died in Ethiopia and when Thomas eventually made it back to Aweil he found that his parents as well as an older brother had been killed. The war, which lasted until 2005 ultimately claimed 1.9 million civilian lives and displaced another 4 million.

Hoping for revenge for the killing of his family, Thomas joined the SPLA as a child soldier. During this period however he became a Christian, and left the army in 1994, traveling with an orphaned child from Aweil to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwestern Kenya (Kakuma means “nowhere” in Swahili.) He attended school while in Kakuma and during this time he came to look after four more orphaned children, taking them in and looking after them as his own.

He eventually moved to Nakuru, Kenya, where he started a Bible training course and began working with Bishop Henry Riak who was stationed in Nakuru (due to the insecurity of his home area, the Diocese of Wau). In 2001, Thomas was ordained as a deacon in the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan by Bishop Riak and in 2006, he was ordained as a priest. Thomas has since planted more churches in Aweil West County.

In May 2007, Thomas was selected by Bishop Riak to represent the Diocese of Wau at a 10 day training course organized by Five Talents at the Christian Economic Development Institute in Nakuru, Kenya, and in December 2007, the Bishop asked him to travel with Five Talents to Lietnhom in southern Sudan. His visit to the programme was a turning point for Five Talents and Thomas. He developed his skills in project management and training and in early 2008 he was invited to work in Lietnhom as a Five Talents fellow and project officer, where he provides business and discipleship training for the village savings and loans project. “I want to make sure that in every place, the people of Sudan hear about this program,” he said.

And the five small children that Thomas cared for in Kakuma? They are still under his care and he is their adopted father. They are now teenagers and live in Nakuru, Kenya where they attend a secondary school. During his absences they are cared for by his cousin’s wife and Thomas uses his income to pay for their school fees and he visits them whenever he is not working in Sudan.

Five Talents is seeking to raise funds to support the work of Thomas in the village savings and loans projects in Lietnhom, Wau and Luanyaker which are currently supporting 647 people.


Sept’ 09

See overleaf

“Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.” (Matt. 25:20)

Charity No. III3969. Company No. 5641704. International Patron: The Archbishop of Canterbury

Rev. Thomas Anei

	Age 0	I was born in Aweil, Sudan into a family with 9 brothers and sisters
	Age 6	Civil War causes me to flee to Ethiopia as one of the 27,000 “Lost Boys of Sudan”.
	Age 12	I returned to Aweil to find my parents had been killed in the war along with 2 million other people during the entire conflict. I joined the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) as a child soldier.
	Age 14	I left the army and escaped to the “Kakuma” (“nowhere”) refugee camp in Northern Kenya. I attended school for the first time and found my Christian faith.
	Age 20	I moved to Nakuru, Kenya for bible college and work with the church.
	Age 25	Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed. End of 20 year Civil War in Sudan.
	Age 26	I was ordained an Anglican priest and began return visits to Aweil.
	Age 27	Attended Five Talents’ micro-enterprise development training course in Nakuru, Kenya and returned to live in Lietnhom, near Aweil.
	Age 28	Started working as Five Talents “Fellow” in Lietnhom as a community trainer for the microfinance programme.
	Age 29	I am visiting the UK to tell my story and raise funds to help my community.