

## Psalm 173 - Darfur Lament

By **Jeff Kiernan**

Happy are they who follow not the counsel of the wicked  
 But in the theology of love heed the cries of the Fur, the Zaghawa, and the Masaalit.  
 And with resolute courage heed the pictures, words, and witness of Brian Steidle:  
 “The smell of charred flesh was hard to wash away.”

Hearken to my words, O Lord and attend to my sighing.  
 Energize our wills to persist to write, cajole, pester, and demand  
 Action from leaders elected or not, truthful or not  
 On behalf of 400,000 deceased images of You and us.

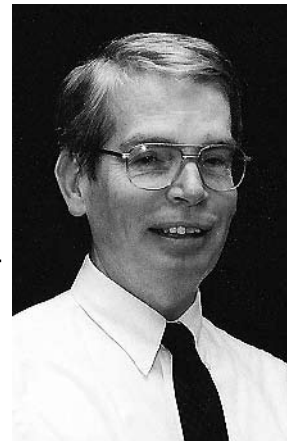
O Lord, how many adversaries rise up against your people!  
 Relentless are the janjaweed marauders as they slay all in their path;  
 Protect villagers as they flee, run, stumble, fall, and flee yet again;  
 Protect us from the lying tongues of politicians and greed-driven men.

Lord of all good gifts, give us hope, a hope firmly rooted in faith,  
 A hope as deep as that witnessed by Pitya’s Sudanese sisters and brothers:  
 “As for us, God will take care of us, God will save some of us.”  
 Help us to deal realistically with injustice and not merely compromise with it.

Lover of All, help us to actively embrace our dreams of justice,  
 Help us to have courage to bring compassion and healing to Darfur,  
 Help us to answer with action questions that plague us each night.  
 It is we, now, “who will feed their hungers and comfort all their pain.”

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**Jeff Kiernan** teaches religion at Notre Dame High School in Fairfield, CT, and sociology at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, CT. A Vietnam era USAF veteran, discharged as a conscientious objector, he is a husband, father, and grandfather. “Psalm 173 – Darfur Lament” was part of a Guided Prayer session at the ITMS Tenth General Meeting in June and is dedicated to Jeff’s longtime friend, Father Philip Pitya, a Sudanese priest now living in asylum in the United States. In reference to the title, Jeff notes that he’s “waiting for others to write Psalms 151 to 172 – or maybe they’ve already been written and we just don’t realize it yet!”



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