

## MONDAY, MARCH 17

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And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”



—Matthew 25:40

Shortly before his death in 2005, John Garang, who led the fight for our freedom in South Sudan, said, “Women in the Sudan are the marginalized of the marginalized.” So much has changed since he said this, but shamefully this statement is still true, especially in the Bahr El Ghazel region where I come from in South Sudan.

Official government statistics say 98 percent of women in the region cannot read or write. Although a few girls go to school, most will not complete their education. They will likely be married off for a dowry. The dowry may be paid in stolen cows, a practice fueling the current tribal conflict in South Sudan.

Yet we rely on these same women to provide food, manage our homes and raise our children. They are such a central part of our society, and, I think, these women are the key to unlocking a better future for South Sudan. We should care more for those who seem to be the least important in our society. We should empower them to take their proper place in our shared future.

What if we lifted up those who are the very least in our society, showed them we cared and empowered them to make the future their own as equals in their own country? What if we included you?

—Moses Deng Bol