

After delays caused by an untimely charter cancellation and several delays to transport Bibles up to our forward base, we were finally all set to begin our trip. The Nuba Mountains is a no-fly zone several hours flying time into Central Sudan. Both the Government of Sudan and the UN forbid flights to the Nuba. It was a tense flight in.

Our Sudan mission started with a research and preaching hike through the Nuba Mountains. In 2 weeks we walked roughly 250 km. We ministered to and encouraged 26 active congregations. We also returned to the place and people who, with us, had endured the ruthless government of Sudan helicopter gunship attack earlier this year.

“We thought you'd never come back, you have encouraged us with your return” said one church member who had aided our team in escaping to safety.

What a difference to the dry season when only shelling, wailing and suffering was seen and heard. This time a good rainfall and harvest inspired much singing and dancing. Our visit coincided with “The Assembly of Saints” week of Bible teaching and worship held by the local churches annually. We spoke at each major gathering and presented Gospel records in their languages, accompanied by flip chart display pictures. Many sat riveted as the tape recorder Messengers proclaimed the Gospel message and Bible stories in Arabic. The soldiers couldn't get enough of them – especially of the stories of valour and victory by mighty men of God in the Bible.

These cassette players and flipcharts are an incredible, effective means of reaching out to people and discipling them. I cannot describe the awe and wonder on the people's faces as they sat and listened to Gospel presentations, or Bible stories, in their own language and saw it visually depicted in pictures. We praise God for the work and machines of Gospel Recordings. We were able to give 10 of these machines, Sunday school books and charts to able evangelists.

One of our messages was the challenge to obey God and He will bring rain in its season, good crops and grant victory over your enemies (Deuteronomy 28). The Nubans are facing a vicious scorched earth campaign each dry season, and also aerial bombings throughout the year. They lack qualified teachers and school materials and feel very isolated.

Testimony after testimony was heard of heroic efforts to spread the Gospel and church growth despite threats of death, torture and harassment by secret police and the incessant military attacks by the NIF (National Islamic Front) government.

The destruction of their homes, livestock and crops and the loss of all possessions leave many Nubans destitute – surrounded by relentless Jihad, hunger and lack of necessities such as medical facilities, schools and markets. Some are suffering from TB and Leprosy with no treatment available. Very few obtain any treatment at all.

We were very encouraged to find that the Bibles, Gospel books, Christian literature and educational books which we had brought in on a previous trip had been effectively distributed throughout the 26 congregations we visited and further afield.

All in all, a successful and productive trip. We distributed 1 200 Arabic Bibles, 1 000 Hymn books and 2 500 other Christian books in 6 languages. We conducted 30 church services amongst 26 congregations.

Running the Gauntlet

Bible distribution to Eastern Equatoria is comparatively easy and yet much neglected. Four wheel drive is essential and so is God's continual protection from bandits who ambush vehicles, murder drivers, steal relief aid and burn out vehicles regularly.

Our time here was productive and we made several new contacts as well as encouraged “old” friends with a revisit and stock of S.I.M. materials, Peter’s “Faith Under Fire in Sudan” book (highly in demand!) and much needed Bibles. The effectiveness of the church in this area remains impressive and stories of the Dinka revival (since 1972) are inspiring. With much rejoicing over the gifts we had brought, they requested that we bring Bibles and tracts in other languages, that they might be able to reach out to neighbouring tribes!

The Greatest Challenge was the overland journey to the newly liberated Western Equatoria. It was not without its delays, dangers and disaster as I rolled the trailer off the road, damaging the bicycles (we managed to repair one of the bikes), whilst travelling through terrorist infested Northern Uganda. To reach our destinations, we had to cross deep, wide, fast-flowing rivers that went over our bonnet during our submarine crossings. One of these even washed Scott downstream, but by God's grace, he managed to swim back to the vehicle!

The wet, windy roads presented many difficulties. We returned to Uganda at a later stage to fetch more loads. The gruelling 450 km trip through a rainy and wet equatorial jungle took over 20 hours. That was not the end of our travels, as we distributed Bibles and Christian literature as far as the border of the Congo in the West to visiting soldiers at the battlefront near Juba and the Nile in the East.

We undertook ministry in several newly liberated towns sometimes using 4-wheel drive quad motor bikes. In one area where we had been walking, a woman collecting firewood was fatally injured after stepping on an anti-personnel mine. It was a tragic situation as she was four months pregnant.

All together we travelled over 20 000 kilometres, had wheel bearing problems with both back wheels, snapped a sidschaft on the way up, rolled our trailer and destroyed the load-bin (totally). Scott and I both suffered malaria twice (Scott was twice hospitalised), we were attacked by savage wild bees and had our first tyre blow-out in THIRTY – FIVE THOUSAND KILOMETRES, (PRAISE GOD FOR HIS GRACE!) We were robbed in Nairobi and harassed by police and border officials. But through it all, we experienced our Lord's presence and grace, and indeed we can say with Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:23, "GREAT is Thy faithfulness . . .!"

Steve (Northern Team Leader)

Related Resources:-

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