



FAR REACHING MINISTRIES



LORD, WILL I LIVE TO SEE TOMORROW?



SR. CHAPLAIN MICHAEL DISCUSSING FIELD OPERATIONS WITH WES

War is a destroyer of lives. The scale of what lies ahead for the chaplains and this ministry would be overwhelming if it were not for the Lord. The recent civilian death toll in South Sudan has left behind destroyed families, and many new orphans and widows. It will require everything we have to comfort these latest victims of war. The scripture is clear when it says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction..." We have the confidence that Christ alone can work through the darkest of circumstances and bring healing to the broken hearted.

After seeing the death and destruction in the Jonglei region, especially in the city of Bor, we returned to the capital city of Juba. We arrived at the General's compound with two of our senior chaplains as the sun was setting behind the rocky hills of Jebel Kujur. Earlier that day, as we were driving through Juba, several Land Cruisers, mounted with large-caliber machine guns and grenade launchers, pulled alongside our vehicle. I immediately noticed that each vehicle held at least ten heavily armed soldiers. Michael, one of our senior chaplains said, "Wes, it's the General!" I stopped our vehicle and got out to greet my brother. All the traffic on the road stopped and not a single driver honked their horn. The General is a great leader and warrior, and is held in high esteem by both friend and foe. The General said to me, "When I saw your vehicle, I ordered my convoy to turn around. I told my men that this is my brother!" After jovially chiding Vicky for coming into town without first reporting to his headquarters, he insisted that we come to his home for dinner.

Over the course of dinner, military and government officials from several countries passed through the General's residence. The General had me share the hope of Christ with each visiting group of dignitaries. One of the officers asked the General if he was a believer. The General responded that he was a strong believer and then went on to give a powerful presentation of the Gospel. The General did not shrink back nor apologize for his faith. He shared his faith as a man who truly has a deeply committed heart for Jesus Christ. The military commanders listened to a man who not only knew what he believed but was able to share with such conviction that it caused all to listen.

During a conversation that evening, the General's wife told everyone that God had called them there for a purpose. You could feel the moving of the Holy Spirit as she spoke. A hush fell over the room as she went on to say, "God is going to use all of you and we cannot forget that we are not here by chance or coincidence." We spoke late into the evening and prayed about the war until the last of the visitors left.



After everyone had gone, the General and I sat in his courtyard and continued to talk and pray. I realized that I was experiencing an evening that most men will never experience in their lifetime. As heavily armed soldiers with machine guns were patrolling the compound, the General turned to me and said, "Wes, God has ordained that you and I were to be brothers." I could not help but think about the relationship between Jonathan and David, and how the Lord had bound them together. Both Jonathan and David were men that had experienced hard battles, yet walked by faith, living as warriors for God's Kingdom. I have been blessed in ministry to have a deep relationship with many of those that I have led to Christ. There is a bond that cannot be broken by man because it has been ordained by the Lord. The recent coup d'état has resulted in the murder of thousands of innocent civilians—mostly women,

children and the elderly. The city of Bor that was attacked by rebel forces was decimated and has become a ghost town. It will be remembered as a place of genocide. No one can estimate the magnitude of the suffering that this will hold for the people of South Sudan in the coming years, but I do know that there will be an extremely high cost for our chaplains; for many of them, it will cost them their lives. The scripture tells us to count the cost of following Christ so that in times of hardship, our resolve will not be shaken. The Lord has called the chaplains to live out their faith and to minister God's love through their lives and actions.

A few days prior to my returning back to Juba, I had traveled to the city of Bor to minister to the people caught in the deadly rebel attacks; but there was no one left to minister to. Everyone had either been killed or had fled the area to escape the ongoing massacre. It was a haunting feeling walking amongst all the dead. As we drove from destroyed village to destroyed village, I knew that the enemy was near and at any moment we could come face-to-face with death and the only outcome would be that many of us could lose our lives in an ambush. It is a time when men seriously contemplate, "Lord, will I live to see tomorrow?"

I heard gun fire in the distance and knew people could be dying at that very moment. We heard a gunshot close to where we were and the soldiers grabbed their weapons. When I later asked about the gunfire that we had heard, we were told that a man had shot himself because his family had been murdered.

No matter what you have seen in life, it is hard to handle a man taking his own life because of the unbearable sorrow of losing his wife and children. This kind of suffering reminds us that life is but a vapor and our only hope is in our God.

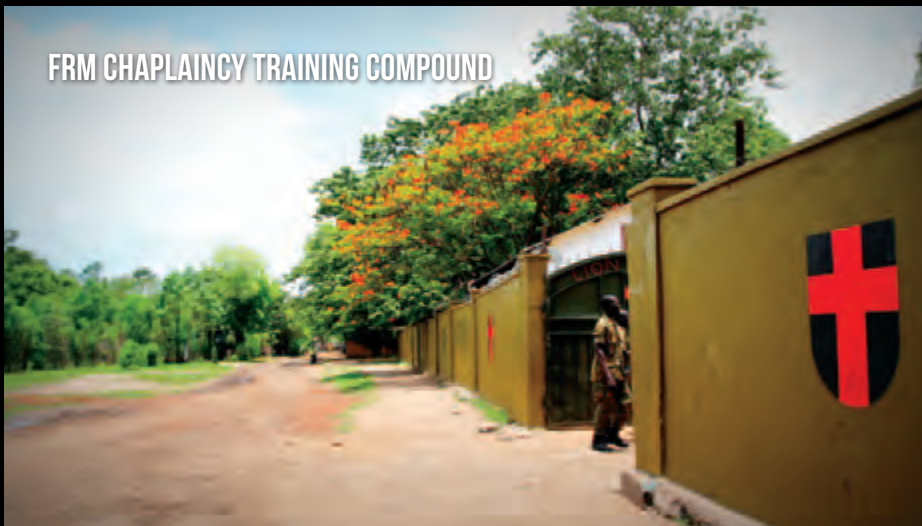
When I returned to our chaplains' base, I sat down one evening with Lino, one of our senior staff chaplains, to talk about the rebel ambush that he and twenty of our chaplains had recently fallen into. Lino is a



FRM CHAPLAIN CORPS' GODLY MEN OF VALOR



FRM CHAPLAINCY TRAINING COMPOUND



HEAVILY ARMED SOUTH SUDAN SOLDIERS



READYING
THE CHAPLAINS

NEW BUSH VEHICLES ARE NEEDED!



In South Sudan, transportation for our ministry is not a luxury, it's critical. Our current vehicles are between 12 and 14 years old, and it's unheard of for any vehicle to last as

long as ours have in such harsh terrain. As faithful stewards, we have intentionally maintained excellent care of our vehicles and they have lasted four times longer than those of every other ministry, humanitarian group and governmental agency across Sudan.

Due to the recent rebel attacks, and escalating humanitarian crisis, we realize that we must purchase new ministry vehicles, as quickly as possible, to be able to continue to respond to the growing demands across South Sudan. This continues to be a dangerous and crucial time, and we must ensure that we have safe, durable and highly reliable transportation.

Although we realistically need to purchase six new vehicles, we have started the process to purchase the first two that will be built to endure the harsh South Sudan environment. The cost for these vehicles will be \$74,000 USD (\$37,000 USD each). To assist in these essential purchases, please notate "Bush Vehicles" on the enclosed gift card or call our North American office at +1 (951) 677-4474.

battle-seasoned chaplain who has been shot five times in combat, including once in the head. I have always felt close to Lino, because like King David's mighty men of valor, he has a true warrior's heart. I asked him if he had thought that he might lose his life during the three hours of fighting. Lino said without hesitating, "Wes, I never think about dying, just the task that is ahead." It blesses me to see that his life is not something that he holds onto tightly, but it is Christ alone who numbers his days.

Until the oppressed are free,

Wes Bentley
Wes Bentley

CRISIS: SOUTH SUDAN



Physically, we cannot stop the atrocities in South Sudan, but we must do all that we can to bring as much relief as possible to those suffering through this on-going war. Having chaplains deployed all across South Sudan, we have a strategic advantage in providing food, medical supplies and the hope of Jesus Christ to those in the greatest need.

To be a part of this emergency outreach, please indicate "SUDAN CRISIS" on the enclosed gift card. Donations, large and small, will ensure that we can respond in an expedient manner that will have the greatest impact.

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Follow us to get the latest news about our ministry of bringing the Gospel to those lost and suffering around the world.



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