



# FAR REACHING MINISTRIES



## THE KILLING FIELDS: SOUTH SUDAN



**PARENTAL WARNING: GRAPHIC WAR IMAGES**

I once visited the former Roman city of Pompeii, which was destroyed in a single day by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. From the archeological remains, you can see how the people once lived, laughed and played. What remains in the aftermath of the volcanic destruction is the haunting silence of a place that, in an instant, became devoid of life. It was the same with the siege of Masada, Israel, where an entire group of Jews passed into history in 73-74 AD. I did not think that I would ever witness, firsthand, this level of total destruction in my lifetime; but the city of Bor, South Sudan, a place with families who had hopes, dreams and loved ones, was utterly annihilated.



Over the last two months, reports of death and destruction have flooded in from South Sudan. The magnitude of innocent civilians that were massacred is almost indescribable. Beginning in mid-December, the White Army, named for their practice of smearing light-colored ash from burnt cow dung on their bodies, and known for their deep demonic traditions in witchcraft, executed a murderous rampage on innocent civilians, including women, children, men and clergy, with a callous and ruthless disregard for human life. Women, as old as in their sixties, begged to be killed rather than be raped. No mercy was shown: they were raped and then murdered. The rampage didn't stop there. Knowing that there would be little to no resistance, and to cause further collateral damage, the rebels entered local hospitals and shot all the sick in their beds. Pastors of the Anglican Church were forced at gunpoint to lay down on their backs. The rebels pulled back their collars and slit their throats. A few have survived to give account of these atrocities.

After the coup d'état, when the government forces recaptured the city of Bor following several bloody battles, the stench from the dead was so overpowering that the military had to camp outside the city.

In one night alone, I received 37 phone calls on the rapidly deteriorating situation in South Sudan. I spoke directly with a top general who requested that more chaplains be quickly deployed to the front lines. After dispatching additional chaplains, I began making immediate preparations to fly to South Sudan. A group of chaplains traveling with a military convoy were deployed to Bor. About 70 kilometers outside Bor, at a place called Sudan Safari, the convoy was ambushed by over a thousand White Army rebels. Surrounded, the fighting went on for hours as the men fought for their lives. Three chaplains were wounded during the firefight but none were killed. Many of the rebels were killed in the fighting and they were ultimately defeated. In the aftermath, the chaplains were carrying men to medical aid stations and ministering to the wounded soldiers in their convoy. When the sun arose the following morning, all the soldiers gathered around the chaplains to hear the Word of God. The soldiers said that they would rather have God's Word read to them than receive medical attention. The FRM chaplaincy flag was mounted to one of the military trucks, becoming a place of worship as all the men gathered for prayer.

When I arrived in South Sudan, we quickly assembled another team of chaplains and we prepared to go to Bor. Being in contact with military leadership, we asked what the greatest need was and we were told "tents." In the capital city of Juba, where we stayed before proceeding on to Bor, we purchased 100 field tents, along with many other critically needed supplies. We met with military personnel for a briefing to better assess the danger that we would be facing as we preceded to Bor. The men knew that the cost to their personal safety would be high, but not one of them showed any hesitation in going.

There was an ominous feeling in the air as we started the 200 kilometer trip towards Bor. The roads were deserted. Village after village was destroyed and abandoned. Everyone had either fled or had been killed. Arriving at the site of one of the first battles, the smell of the dead would stay with us for the rest of our journey.

As we continued further into the region, we came across four destroyed Russian-made T-72 tanks, it was apparent that a major battle had taken place, with dead bodies all around. We stopped to assess what had happened but began to hear gunfire in the distance. The military

soldiers that accompanied us began to lock and load their weapons, should we be attacked. We were not equipped to handle a large force of rebels so we moved on.

Although the distance to Bor is only 200 kilometers, the roads were so difficult that it took us seven hours to make our destination. Arriving at dusk, we were greeted by one of our senior chaplains, Elijah Mading. Elijah took us to the field headquarters where we were debriefed and joined by 30 more of our chaplains. Elijah told us that the chaplains had helped bury 600 people that day and that there were still numerous dead bodies that needed to be buried.

Our journey to Bor was long and difficult and everyone needed a few hours of rest. After a time of prayer and strategic planning, we prepared to bed down for a few hours of sleep. I had planned on sleeping under the stars, covered by a mosquito net, but the military had taken over one of the local lodges and we were given a room to sleep in. With heavily fortified machine gun teams posted outside, we were able to rest.

The following morning, we first met with the general in charge of the region, then we surveyed the city. Every home was vacant. Homes were looted, riddled with bullet holes or burned to the ground. Except for the presence of the military, the city was almost entirely devoid of human life.

Peter, one of our chaplains who had been wounded ten days earlier, chose to come back to the city to check on his home. Before the attacks even began, Peter was given discernment about the events that were about to take place and he got his family out of the area just in time. We gathered up the men and went over to Peter's home. While we were inspecting Peter's house, our guards spotted a young boy. When the little boy saw the men in uniform, he took off running. It appeared that his family had either been killed or fled the city, and he was left all alone. I suspect he was foraging for food in the miles and miles of destroyed homes. I sent the men to look for him but he had vanished. It troubled me deeply to leave him behind but it was clear that he had no intention of being found. We prayed that someone would find him; possibly one of the chaplains or even one of the foreign aid workers that would be coming to the area.

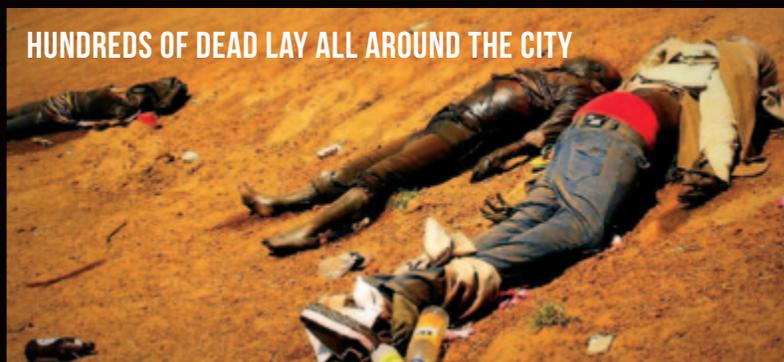
The former Vice President and rebellion leader has publically announced his intentions to wage war on the South Sudan government. In a recent statement to international news agencies, the rebel leadership of the White Army stated, "Civil war in South Sudan has begun



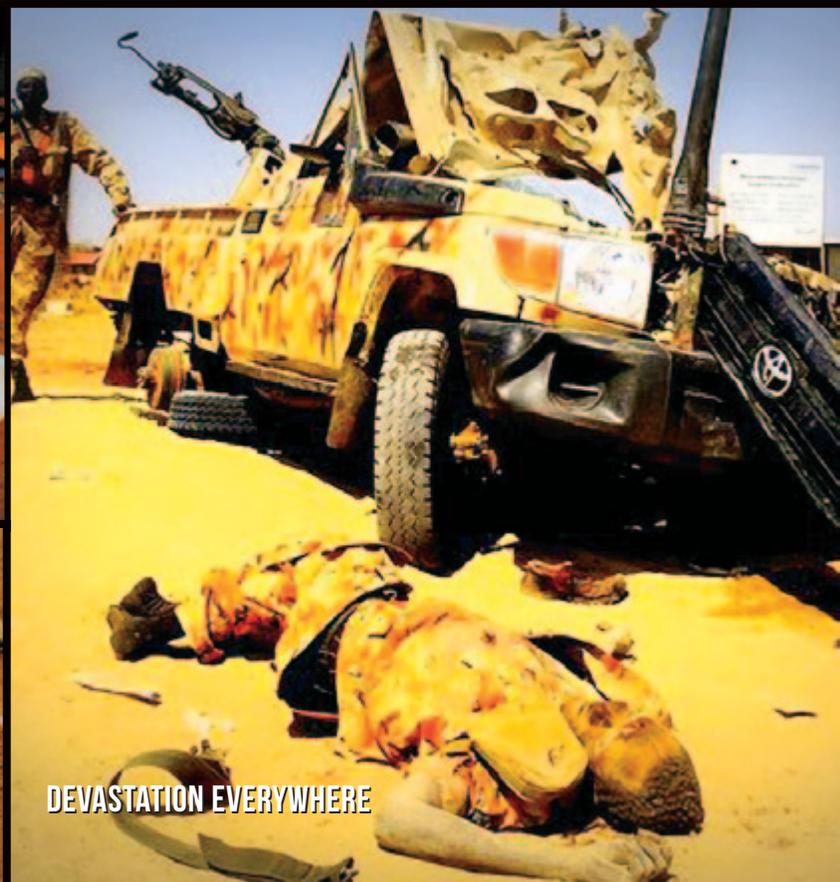
WES & CHAPLAINS PRAYING OVER THE CITY OF BOR



BOR: A CITY IN RUINS



HUNDREDS OF DEAD LAY ALL AROUND THE CITY



DEVASTATION EVERYWHERE

## NEW BUSH VEHICLES ARE NEEDED!



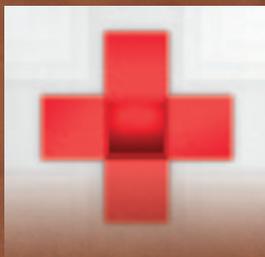
In South Sudan, transportation for our ministry is not a luxury, it's critical. Our current vehicles are between 12 and 14 years old, and it's unheard of for any vehicle to last as

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.

## 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.

and the Nuer White Army will wipe out the SPLA army from the face of the earth." I, personally, do not believe that they have the strength to win a war, but they can bring great instability to the nation and death of many innocent people for years to come.

Fighting continues in South Sudan in spite of a cease-fire agreement signed by the government of South Sudan and the rebels last month. In one instance, on February 7, a group of rebels attacked a small village killing 22 women, many who were pregnant, along with several men and small children. It has been reported that there are 400,000 new refugees from the recent attacks and that the number will only grow with every new attack.

I had hoped that all the years of war and senseless killing had come to an end; however, it has become abundantly evident that it will be many years before this Dark Continent will experience true and lasting peace. I must admit that I am feeling worn and fatigued. However, the Bible says, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." I ask for your prayers for the ongoing strength to press in hard.

Hudson Taylor, who started China Inland Missions, spoke of his prayer life and said, "I will not allow the sun to rise in China without it finding me on my knees." This level of commitment is what will be required to change this nation.

Until the oppressed are free,

*Wes Bentley*  
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