

Mission to Sudan

By Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw

Traveling to the Sudan has always been somewhat of a journey into the past. We headed to Kuron, a Peace Village started by Bishop Paride Taban, which is located on the Ethiopia-Sudan border. There are five tribes in this area who have been in conflict for many years, with devastating consequences to the youth. The people in this area are pastoralists and have had little contact with the outside world. Their lives are much like those of generations before them. It was interesting to see what had happened in the last three years since we have been there.

Bishop Taban asked us to present programs that will help him in deepening the faith of his support staff at Kuron, and to impact the older boys at his school in the hope of planting seeds that will bear the fruit of peace for the future. The bishop currently has 30 people on staff, plus 230 young people attending school. Fifty of these are the young men were the target group. We saw many of the young men from our previous visits carrying around AK 47's and we were excited with the opportunity to touch them with the Gospel.



Departing from Nairobi on our charter flight, we flew for an hour over what seemed to be total wilderness, with no roads or towns visible. The Bishop and his entourage met us at the dirt runway along with cows, goats and herders to bring us to the camp. The next morning we arose and ate breakfast, then taught for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon, with Mass in between. We encouraged people to praise and worship and the young men showed none of the aversion of American teens to singing and dancing for the Lord. Kuron offered us the unique opportunity to work with people who do not have any real clear concept of Christ, the Cross, and salvation. We found it wonderful to be with them. Everyone was open and it seemed as if even the youth listened with attention despite the heat and long hours.

We began with teaching about a God who knows each of them by name and has a specific plan for their lives. We taught on their dignity, value, and worth as children of God and we gave each of them the opportunity to publicly accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, and enter into His Eternal Covenant of love. All seemed eager to embrace this God who asks so little and gives so much.

We also taught about the tactics of the devil and the need for repentance and forgiveness. It is always interesting to note that when we teach on the devil in most third world countries we do not have to convince them of his reality. The spiritual world is real and near to them. We told them that Jesus has conquered Satan, sin, and death and that they have nothing to fear. Fear seems to be deeply rooted in their society and we prayed that our teaching would break the stronghold over these beautiful people. When we taught on renunciation the sessions were long. Everyone seemed to have many things to renounce—fear, sickness, revenge, raiding, and so on. It was so rewarding to give them tools to use in their ongoing



battle with the evil one and to deepen their relationship with Christ.

Forgiveness is an enormous hurdle for many of the Sudanese. In their culture revenge and retaliation for raiding and other offenses is a way of life. The young men grow up with their elders speaking about great raids and killing and war as they sit around campfires each night. Killing is honored and a part of their passage into manhood. Yet when we talked to them about forgiveness and led them in a prayer to forgive all others who have ever hurt them, all seemed to enter in wholeheartedly.

As we shared about the need for Baptism in the Spirit everyone was excited and ready for a release of the Spirit's gifts and power. It was evident that the Spirit was moving in power. Later, as we prayed for healing, many people reported being healed and there were some good testimonies. One religious sister reported that she suffered with great pain in her shoulder for several months and that the pain was now gone. It is great when God confirms His Word with power!

Walking beside men of faith and courage like Bishop Taban is one of the most rewarding parts of our work. We were constantly inspired by how one person with a vision and the anointing of God can accomplish wonders. The Peace Village is slowly, in patience and love, carving out more ground for the kingdom of God. Next year he would like to once again invite teens from refugee camps, priests from the Diocese of Torit, and people from all of the southern Sudan for training and ongoing conversion. We truly believe our trip bore much fruit for the kingdom of God, and was a real encouragement for the people there who work in much isolation and loneliness, with little help. Below is a follow-up email from Emmanuel, who runs the Peace Village for Bishop Taban.

Your visit to Kuron was such a big event for the community. God did many wonders and miracles in Kuron after you left. People received a lot of visions through dreams with the biggest being open and forgiving one another. To me this was very big impact in the life of the community of workers in Kuron. I pray to God that such wonders continue to manifest in still many of the community members and the workers more so for a better Kuron. Please may the Almighty Lord continue to use you in your ministry to serve the poor communities who are searching for God. Till then have a Blessed time and pass my kind regards to your family and member of the Renewal Ministries.

God Bless you all,

Ira Emmanuel

Programme Manager & Administrator, HOLY TRINITY PEACE VILLAGE KURON-SUDAN