

FAITH UNDER FIRE IN SUDAN

—by Peter Hammond

It was extremely hot, over 45°C in the shade. We had been walking since 2:00am descending from one cluster of the Nuba Mountains across this great plain to ascend the other mountain range. I could feel blisters on my feet and

heat rashes wherever my clothing chafed.

Jihad

We carefully strode through the scorched earth, scanning the sky for enemy aircraft and watching where we placed our feet to avoid landmines.

We were in an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. The National Islamic Front government of Sudan had declared Jihad (Holy War) against the Christian Blacks of the Nuba Mountains.

One Frontline Mission team had been strafed by two Mi24 Hind helicopter gunships upon entry to the Nuba Mountains. Each night, as we showed the 'Jesus' film to remote villages in the

Nuba, we could see flares and tracers light up the sky in the distance, and hear the crump of mortars and rattle of machine gun fire, reminding us that we were behind the lines of the longest war still raging. Most of the four tonnes of Bibles, school books, agricultural tools and seed that we had flown into the Nuba Mountains had already been distributed. However, we still had boxes for the Nuba tribes on the other side of the plain and were on our way to reach them with our life saving cargo.

Our escorts had stopped for some water in the shade at an oasis. My eyes could not believe what I was seeing in front of me. There was a Nuba man sitting on his donkey. Something looked horribly wrong. Then I realised, the man had no feet! How could he have lost both of his feet?

A life of hardship

The man was an enthusiastic evangelist. In order to prevent him from taking the Gospel to neighbouring villages the Arabs had chopped off his feet with an axe. Where his feet should have been, there were now just stumps. Yet, incredibly this evangelist was determined not to allow the inconvenience of not having feet prevent him from fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. His knees were calloused. When not riding on his donkey he was attempting to 'walk' on his knees, to reach the neighbouring tribes with the Gospel of Christ. Suddenly, my blisters and heat rashes seemed quite trivial.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings Good News, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation..." Isa 52:7.

This Nuba evangelist no longer had any feet, but yet he had beautiful feet. Despite the cruelty of the National Islamic

The Christians of Sudan have been persecuted, bombed and attacked regularly by the Islamic government. A hidden people, fighting a forgotten war, they need us to remember them...



Front, he was persevering in proclaiming the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. How puny our excuses appear as to why we cannot take part in the next local evangelistic outreach!

Later that day we reached the village of Kauda and showed the 'Jesus' film to the people there. Many of the people told us: "We have never seen a film before!"

I have had the privilege of showing the 'Jesus' film in many different languages in very remote parts of Africa, but the reactions of the people in the Nuba Mountains forced me to look at the Gospel message with fresh eyes.

The people openly wept and wailed in anguish as the whippings and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus were depicted on the screen. People fell to the ground and sobbed uncontrollably, some literally for hours.

Encouraged by the Nuba people

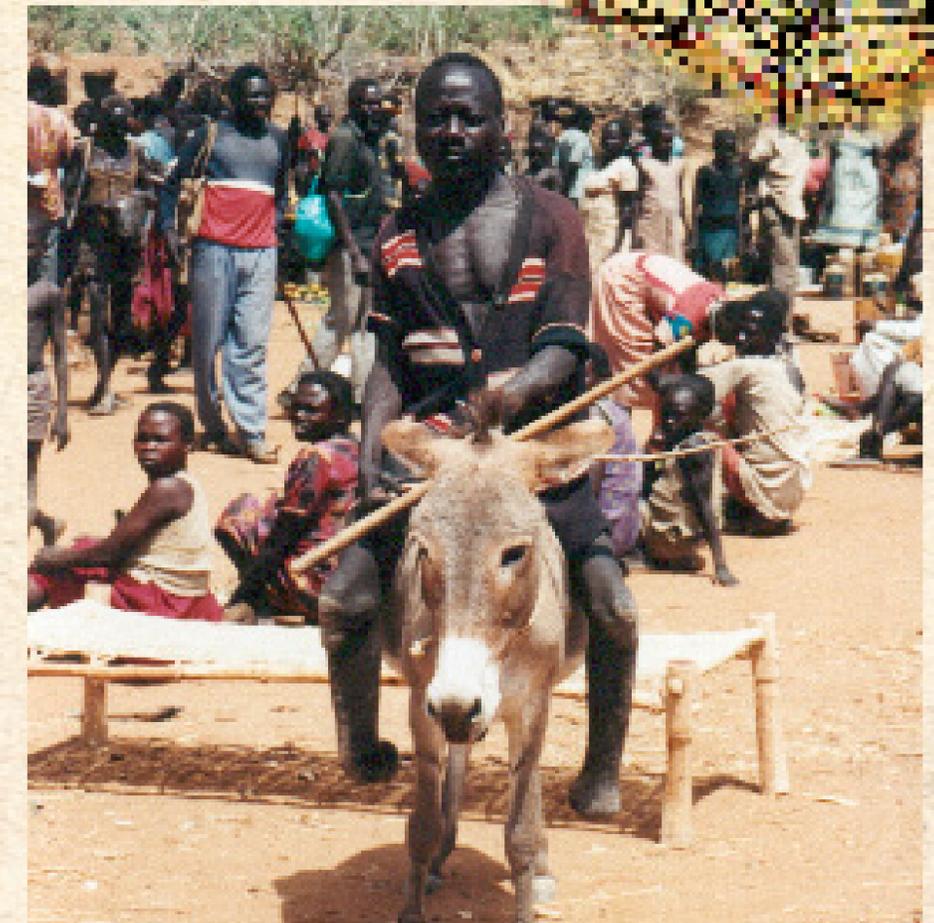
I had walked a long way to support the Christians in Kauda. Their church and community had been bombed 10 times in the previous 18 months. On one occasion 19 children and two adults were killed when their school was bombed. I went there to encourage them - actually they encouraged me! Not only was the church building standing, but it was full, packed to overflowing with enthusiastic Christians.

They were not willing to have 18 air raids keep them from the highest priority of worshipping our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Over the years I led 27 missions into Sudan. We distributed over 300 000 Bibles in 22 languages throughout 14 different regions. We trained hundreds of pastors, teachers, medics and chaplains and establish and equipped many Christian schools.

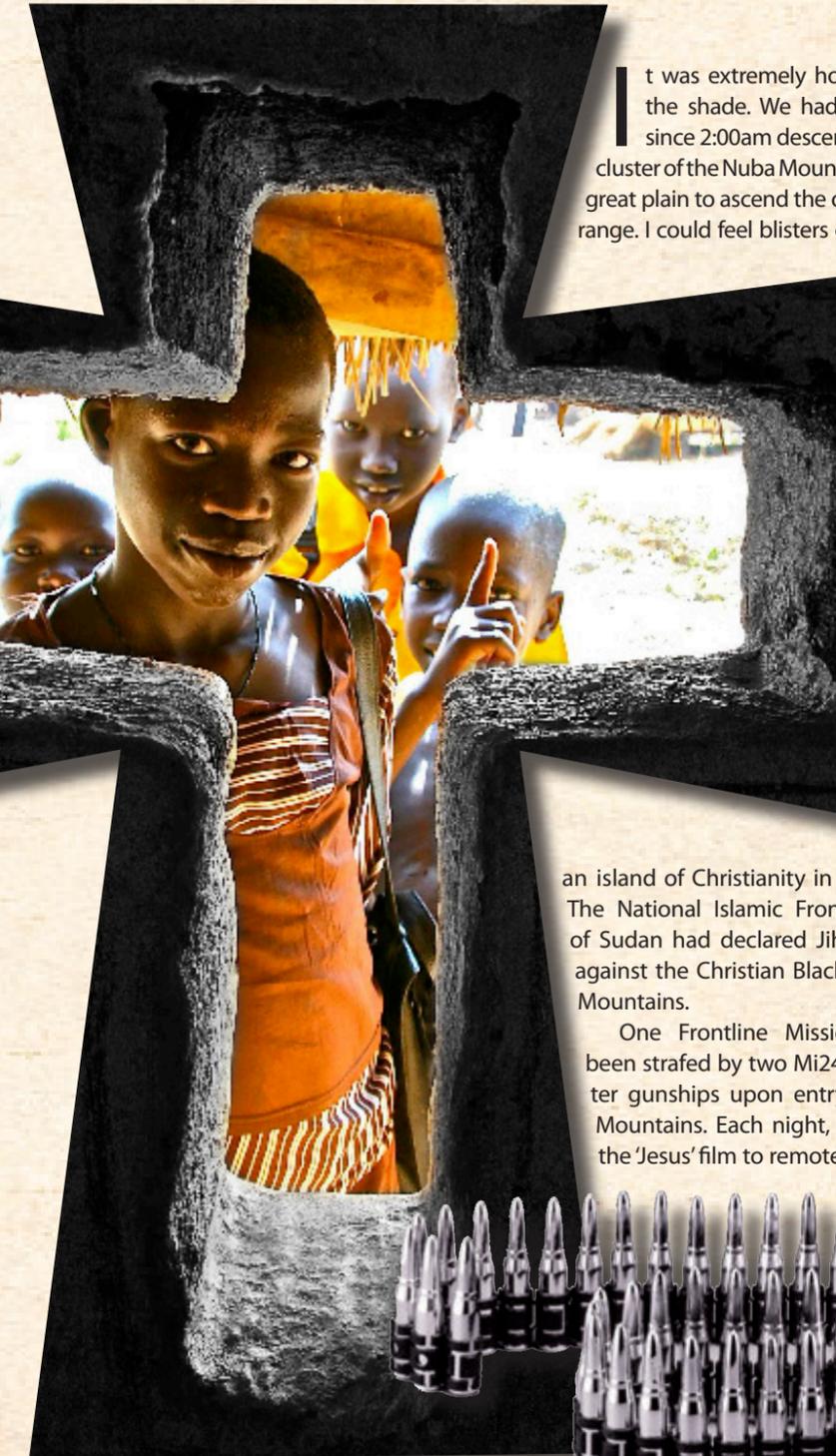
We experienced artillery barrages and aerial bombardments while preaching in church services. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve the persecuted Church

in Sudan and to learn from them. When I first began going behind the lines to serve our suffering brethren in Sudan they told me: "We are a hidden people, fighting a forgotten war. You must be our Ambassador and tell the world what is happening here."

To fulfil that charge I have written »



This Sudanese Evangelist in the Nuba Mountains had his feet chopped off, yet he still preaches the Gospel



FAITH UNDER FIRE IN SUDAN



Sudan's history of bloodshed

- shortened article by Arrie Preller. Please see www.joymag.co.za for full version

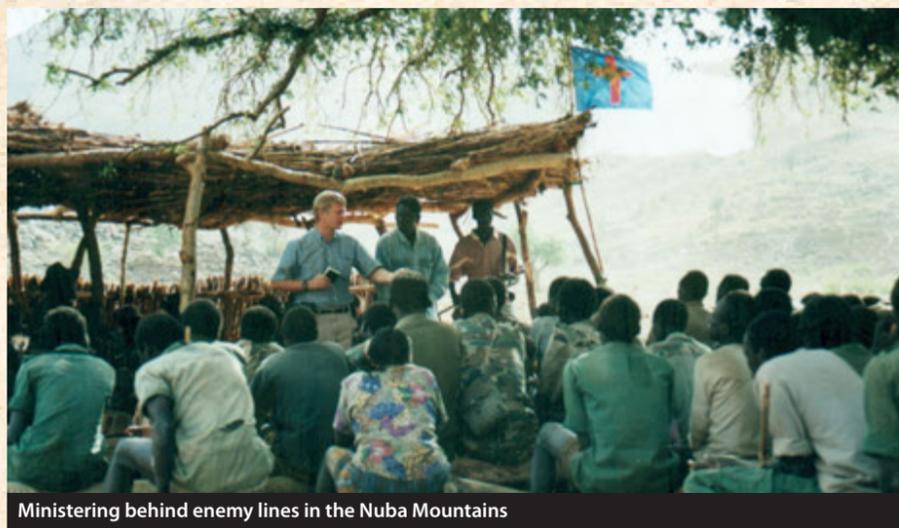
- Sudan has nine neighbours and several of its tribes flow over political borders. Naturally this has political implications. The population can be divided into South, West, North and East Sudan
- Over centuries most Sudanese experienced the horrors of violent conflict first hand. In the last six decades alone at least four civil wars were fought in the country. The last war between the South Sudanese and the Khartoum Government lasted about 21 years with millions of lives lost. Most recently media reports graphically portrayed the Darfur crisis as a war of genocidal proportions
- Sudan has the highest number of unreached Muslim ethnic groups in all of Africa.

How you can get involved

- Several missionary organisations work in Sudan. You can support their work financially or by encouraging them
- Other people pray on a regular, structured way for the country and its people.

Missionaries working in Sudan

- In Pretoria Sudan Support Network (SSNet) serves as a South African hub for Sudan. The network was founded in 1997 and continues to lift up the Sudan cause. Prayer mobilisation, advocacy, networking, partnership development, outreaches as well as connecting needs and resources are the main activities of SSNet. Contact norman@sudanpartners.org or phone 012 460 7877
- Frontline Fellowship, headed by Peter Hammond works extensively in Sudan and the rest of Africa. They also produce books, DVDs and audio CD's about Sudan. Call 021 689 4480 or see www.frontline.org.za for more info.



Ministering behind enemy lines in the Nuba Mountains

many articles, spoken on over 1 000 radio programmes, produced the 'Faith Under Fire in Sudan' book and taken film producers to produce documentaries such as: 'Sudan: The Hidden Holocaust' and 'Terrorism and Persecution'. There is so much we can learn from our beleaguered brethren in Sudan and from a missionary perspective, Sudan is

were conducting the Evangelism Workshop. Amidst a crescendo of bombs screaming through the air and exploding all around us, the ground shook and I was pummelled and buried by debris thrown up by the blasts. Yet, incredibly, no one was killed. I had some cracked ribs, but we were overcome with the exhilaration of knowing that God had

There is so much we can learn from our beleaguered brethren in Sudan. Many of them come from a Muslim background, yet despite the danger, stand tall for Christ.

a most strategic country in the 10/40 window. There are millions of Evangelical Christians in this officially Islamic country. Most of the Christians in Sudan speak Arabic. Many of them come from a Muslim background. Sudan was the last country to become Muslim - and it could be one of the first countries to be liberated from Islam since Spain.

Continued support needed

It has been our priority to assist Christians in Sudan, not merely to survive the severe persecution, but to thrive and to win their enemies to Christ. On one occasion I was leading a team sent to help train pastors, teachers, evangelists and chaplains. On our first Sunday morning in Sudan we were bombed by the Sudan Air Force. Eight 1 000 kg bombs were dropped in and around the church compound where we

protected us. The ground was covered with shrapnel. The trees were pockmarked with shrapnel. Yet we weren't!

Before long the church was overflowing with over 300 people. How many churches do you know of that would continue with the church service after being bombed? It was a powerful illustration of the resilience of the steadfast Christians in Southern Sudan that within an hour of being bombed they were packing out their targeted church to overflowing. This was yet another example of the fact that Jesus Christ is building His Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). ■

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News!

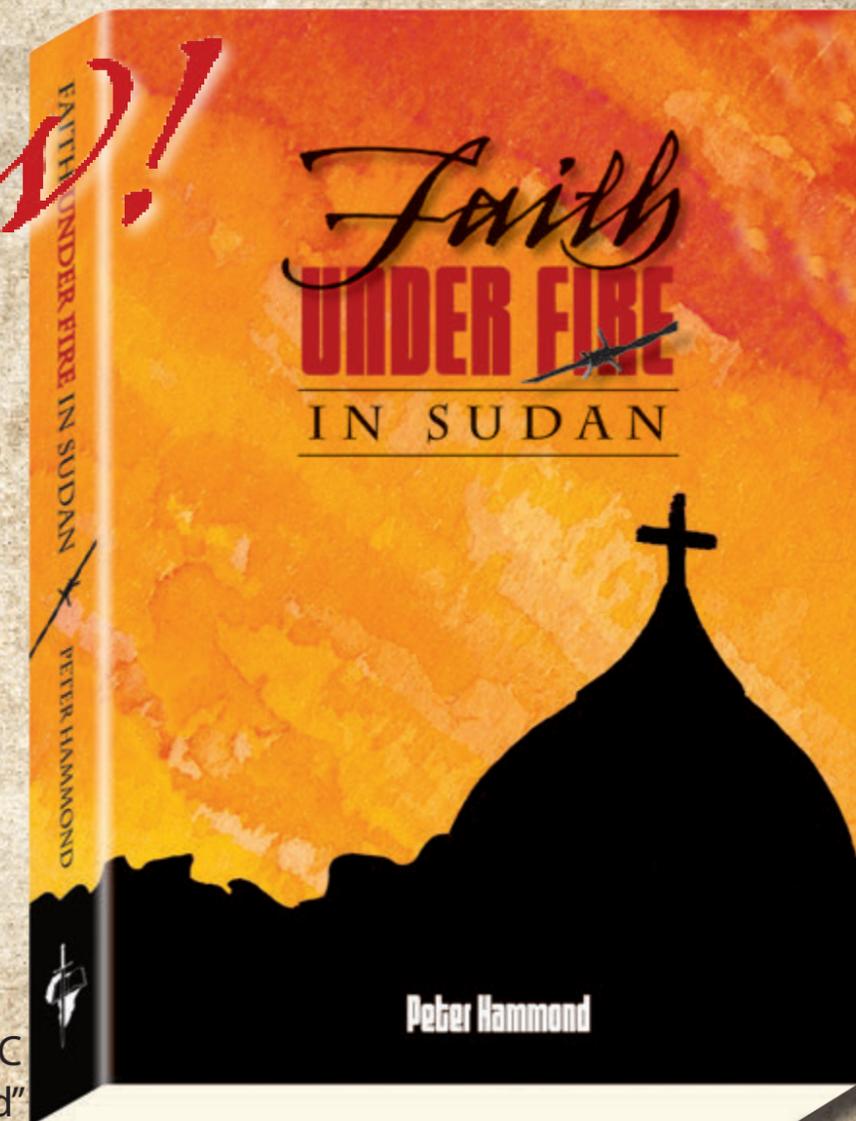
3rd Edition just launched
320 pages & 200 pictures
Hard Cover - R175
Soft Cover - R105



"What a story, what courage to obtain it.. Faith Under Fire in Sudan is a vital publication... it deserves a global distribution." Patrick Johnstone, WEC Missionary, Author of "Operation World"

"Christians everywhere need to be reading Faith Under Fire in Sudan by Dr. Peter Hammond" Dr James Kennedy, President of Evangelism Explosion

"Faith Under Fire in Sudan is an important document for Christians of all denomination at this time in the history of continent" Bishop Frank Retief, Church of England in South Africa



Frontline Fellowship's best selling book on Africa's forgotten war is available again. This new, much expanded and thoroughly revised Third edition is 320 pages and includes over 200 pictures and maps. Faith Under Fire takes you behind the lines of one of the longest wars of recent years, and introduces you to the unforgettable Christian heroes of this colossal conflict

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