

Matthew 24 End-Times Realities Manifesting in This Nation

It's been just over two months since the South Sudanese government declared famine conditions in parts of the country, according to Relief Web. Now we're getting close to what's called the "lean season" in South Sudan from May to July.

The latest UNICEF report says over five million people—almost half of the South Sudanese population—will face severe food shortages and over one million children will be acutely malnourished.

World Mission carries out ministry in South Sudan. Greg Kelley with World Mission shares on the situation, "Because the infrastructure has been gutted over decades of war that's going on, the infrastructure is almost non-existent in every capacity of the word—including educational, from a business standpoint, from a development standpoint, agriculture—just the entire infrastructure is in shambles. So there's millions of people who are entirely dependent upon humanitarian aid."

Kelley says, now more than ever, this isn't a time for the church to sit on the sidelines.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus and respond to these precious people in South Sudan, not only with these acts of relief and kindness, but also with the *Treasure*, which is our solar-powered audio Bible, in their language so that not only do they receive a cup of cold water, but they also are told very clearly the motivation behind it—which is the love of Jesus Christ."

However, there are several challenges to ministry and relief

work in South Sudan. With six more humanitarian aid workers killed in March, that brings the total number of relief workers killed in South Sudan to 79 since the start of the conflict in 2013. It's getting dangerous to carry out humanitarian service in South Sudan, and even more dangerous as tribal conflicts continue.

Kelley explains it as conflicts between people groups or 'nations'. "Inside of one little country, South Sudan, you have 78 [nations], and there's a lot of challenges with it, not to mention the war. Even recently, they're talking about acts of genocide that are actively going on right now, nation against nation. So that creates all kinds of challenges and complications."

For World Mission's outreach, he says, "Our distributions are over across about a dozen different nations and different languages, like the Dinka and the Shaluk and the Bari and the Zandi, all different nations, very distinctive, fighting against each other for grazing grounds and the animals. It's not so much a religious issue. Most of them are animist. But it is, nevertheless, a great amount of bloodshed."

Despite the overwhelming hurdles, God is moving and the Church in South Sudan is growing. One example Kelley gives is the Dinka people. "They're kind of in the middle of the war that's going on right now. The Dinka *Treasures* that we're sending in, we're getting reports from the church on how it's strengthening the church, it's encouraging the followers of Jesus because so many of them, they can't read at all. So they're walking around and listening to the *Treasure* day and night.

"We heard another story from the Bari people in the village of Tali where 40 people just in the past few days have given their lives to Jesus because of listening to the *Treasure* in their language!"

Kelley shares that the *Treasure* containing God's Word is "even going into the hands of government officials. We've gotten photos back that are even too sensitive for us to share of government officials who are actually not only receiving and listening to the *Treasure*, but they're actually helping distribute the *Treasure*. The same goes with relief—U.N. and Red Cross workers—distributing *Treasures*."

So what can you do as a believer to get off the sidelines and do something for South Sudan? You can lift the country and the South Sudanese Christians before the Lord.

"We need to be praying for the national leaders. It is one of the most challenging environments to be a minister of the gospel. So we need to pray for these national leaders, that God would raise them up with great spiritual depth and capacity. But also, we need to pray for them to have courage, because they're literally facing the end of the barrel of a gun in many instances, and they're going into some of the more rural places."

Also, says Kelley, "We need to pray for these hundreds and hundreds of refugee camps. We're distributing *Treasures* inside of these, but these are complicating, challenging situations. So we need to pray for the refugee camps and the opportunities to minister both physically and spiritually in them."

It takes just \$40 to send one *Treasure* into South Sudan, and on average, around 100 people benefit from each unit as they share and gather in groups to listen to Scripture. [Click here](#) to donate in support of World Mission's Gospel work in South Sudan.

And finally, thank God for the ways He is using the Church in South Sudan to be a light to the rest of the world, even in the midst of seemingly devastating circumstances.

"Interestingly, as unstable and undeveloped it is, we're even seeing people mobilized and launched out into other unreached

areas, other neighboring countries, where there's not a receptivity or an openness to the gospel. We're seeing Sudanese ... sending missionaries into other neighboring counties, which just shows that God can do anything He wants in the most unusual and unscripted way in order to see the gospel going forth." {eo}

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