



## Monthly Missions

### Focus: Sudan



Location: Northern Africa, bordering the Red Sea, between Egypt and Eritrea  
Area 2,505,810 sq km – slightly more than one-fourth the size of the US. Africa's largest country.

Population: 40,187,486 (July 2005 est.)

Capital: Khartoum 10,000,000.

Ethnic groups: black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, foreigners 2%, other 1%

Languages: Arabic (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages, English. All languages 132.

Religion: The constitution offers some religious freedom, but in practice those freedoms are arbitrarily abused. Sunni Muslim 70% (in north), indigenous beliefs 25%, Christian 5% (mostly in south and Khartoum)

#### Answers to Prayer

- 🌍 Due to the long and terrible warfare, Christians have spread all around the country, leading to a multiplication of congregations in areas with many unreached peoples.
- 🌍 The massive growth of Christianity in the southern peoples from 5% in 1960 to perhaps 70% in 2000.

#### Challenges for Prayer

- 🌍 Sudan's civil war has been one of the world's longest conflicts in the 20th Century. Pray for peace and the formation of a viable multi-cultural, multi-religious society.
- 🌍 The human tragedy of Sudan was long ignored until it was revealed that the Islamic government had sanctioned the re-institution of slavery.
- 🌍 There has been persecution of the Church over much of the past 50 years, but much more since 1985. Pray also that the sufferings of Christians might become widely known and that peace, justice and religious freedom be firmly established.
- 🌍 Sudanese Christian leaders have achieved so much against all the odds. Many have lost their lives in serving Jesus. Few have had opportunity for formal theological education.

(Statistics are compiled from *Operation World* and *CIA – The World Factbook 2006*)

### Muslim Baggara People of Sudan

The clattering of hooves and the screams of women fill the dusty air as Baggara militiamen round up their prey like livestock. Finally the Dinka tribal victims are subdued with ropes and chains. As their huts burn, they are led away cut and bruised.

Are these women and children being taken as slaves, or as prisoners of war? Will they be sold, or ransomed for money? In an "Overview of the Sudan Situation" found on ReligiousTolerance.org, the point is made that there is an ancient tradition among the tribes of Sudan where women and children are abducted for ransom. The purpose is to force a tribe's enemies to pay a ransom to redeem their families.

Government-backed militia members who conduct these raids are often from the Baggara tribes of western Sudan. They were especially active in the Darfur region last year. When the people are released for ransom, it looks like the release of slaves to outsiders. Well-meaning Christian organizations have paid the ransom, only to make the "business" more profitable for Baggara thugs.

Most Baggara people are actually nomadic cattle herders, though many join militias. Almost all of them are Muslims. (*Global Prayer Digest – March 27, 2006*)

### Muslim Arabs of Sudan

Panic gripped the Sudanese woman. She hastily gathered together as many of her belongings as she could carry and, with her little son, ran as long as she could before collapsing on the ground. She got up, caught her breath and started to run once again.

This woman has good reason to panic. The Janjaweed militia was heading towards her village. She knew that meant killings, rapes, kidnappings, and destruction. This young mother joined the one million displaced people who have had to leave southwestern Sudan's Darfur region during the last two years.

The need for protection in Darfur began when rebels, in February 2003, began their uprising. Previously there had been clashes between African farmers and Arab nomads over scarce land and water resources. UN estimate of deaths in this war until the fall of 2004 was about 50,000.

But another reason for the conflict in Sudan is oil. The mainly Muslim Arab northerners who run the government, want to take advantage of the oil deposits in southern Sudan where most people are Christian or animistic. (*Global Prayer Digest – November 8, 2005*)