

Revival Amidst (Islamic & Communistic) Persecution

by Peter Hammond

The church in Sudan is facing severe persecution, but Christians are responding with tenacity and steadfastness, and many Muslims are turning to Christ.

Duration: 58:07

Scripture: Psalm 16:10, Psalm 68:18, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Persecution"

Description

In this video, Peter Hammond from Frontline Fellowship in Cape Town, South Africa, discusses their work in Sudan. They focus on three main areas: Love and Action, which includes medical assistance, literature distribution, and providing Bibles in multiple languages to different regions, even in enemy territory. They also emphasize leadership training, having trained hundreds of pastors and conducted Muslim evangelism workshops. The video highlights the testimonies of Sudanese Christians who have endured persecution and suffering but remain joyful and steadfast in their faith. The ultimate goal is to see Sudan become a strong Christian nation once again, with the church growing rapidly and the potential for even northern Sudan to be won to Christ.

Transcript

The next few moments are packed with inspiration and information. We'll take you hundreds of miles behind the front line of a war zone into the Nuba Mountains in central Sudan. You'll hear the factual, first-hand account from a front-line missionary of what is actually going on there.

You'll hear the personal testimonies from Sudanese Christians concerning the horrendous persecution they endure at the hands of Muslim fanatics. You'll discover that in Sudan today, Christian pastors are being crucified while other members of their congregation are being sold into slavery. And in the midst of all this, you'll learn the secret of revival amidst persecution in Sudan.

Our guest today is missionary Peter Hammond, founder and director of Frontline Fellowship, a South African-based mission working for Jesus Christ in the war zones of the Dark Continent. In a recent interview, I asked him, Peter, what is the state of the church in Sudan today? The church in Sudan today is under severe persecution. The Christians in both southern and central Sudan, even northern Sudan, are being persecuted so severely for their faith.

Without exaggeration, hundreds of Christians in the Nuba Mountains in central Sudan have actually been crucified. Not only that, but many tens of thousands of Christians have been enslaved and taken away by Arab slave raiders swooping down on their villages. Some have been branded.

Some have been literally having their hamstrings, their tendons cut to prevent them running away, runaway slaves. Many of them have been tortured in terrible ways. Literally one million Christians in the Nuba Mountains, most of them Christians, a million Nubans have been put into concentration camps in central Sudan, in South Kordofan, and there they are forcibly Islamized and Arabized.

The official policy of Arabization and Islamization is being enforced upon the Christians there. Most of the churches in central Sudan have been burnt down. Most of the villages have been destroyed.

Most of their wells have been poisoned. Most of their cattle and sheep have literally been taken away, have been looted. It is no exaggeration to say that the church in central and southern Sudan is facing an attempt to eradicate it, something akin to genocide.

Are they accepting this, just sitting down? Not at all. In fact, the policy of trying to convert people by force to Islam is in fact very counterproductive and is rebounding upon them. They use many different tactics, refusal to provide food, access to water, even medicine is being deprived unless people convert to Islam.

People are being forced at the point of a gun to be converted. But let me give just one example to demonstrate the tenacity and the resolve of the Christians in southern Sudan not to give in to this pressure. There is a man in the Nuba Mountains who had his kneecap smashed, shattered by a AK-47 bullet when the Muslim forces combed through his village or they scorched earth through his village.

They took him to a concentration camp in agony, of course, his kneecap shattered. They refused him medical care. They even refused him water.

They said, first you must renounce Christ, curse Christ, and you must accept and recite the Islamic creed, there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet, and then we will give you medical care and water. He refused. They smashed his other kneecap with rifle butts in anger.

He still would not renounce Christ or recite their creed. They left him in the sun. Now, the heat over there, Bill, is incredible.

We are talking about 118 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. In the sun, one has to take the thermometer out about 136 before it explodes. It is extremely hot out there, especially in the Nuba Mountains.

Well, this man lay in the sun for the rest of the day. That night he escaped. He did not have the use of his legs.

All he had was his arms. Yet with two shattered kneecaps, he pulled himself by his arms across the parade ground under the barbed wire all night across the stony, rocky, thorn-ridden ground. He hid all day under a bush.

The next night, he pulled himself further for several days until he got behind the lines. Today, he has got a crutch, a wooden leg, and an AK-47, and he is fighting for the freedom of the Nuba people. That is the kind of tenacity one does find often amongst the people in southern Sudan.

In fact, one Nuba man says, we have not been resisting the Muslims for just 40 years. We have had Christians in Sudan resisting Islam for 1,400 years. They have a 14th century heritage of resisting the southward expansion of the slave raiders.

Why is the government of Sudan so intensely persecuting the Christian Church? The government of Sudan has taken the official policy of Islam and Arabization. The government is called the National Islamic Front Government, and under al-Tarabi, the Speaker of the House, who is the spiritual leader, the power behind the throne in Sudan, he is manipulating the government which came to power through a coup d'etat. General al-Bashir took power militarily, but it is believed that al-Tarabi, the Speaker of the House and the head of the National Islamic Front Party, that this Islamic cleric is actually the one determining the ideological policies for Sudan.

They say that in fact it is the policy of Sudan to turn the country into a nation with one culture, the Arabic culture, one language, Arabic, and one religion, Islam. This is the official, often stated policy of the government of Sudan, and they just see the Christians as an obstacle to this path. Well, how are the Christians in Sudan responding to their suffering? The Christians in southern Sudan are responding with the most incredible tenacity and steadfastness.

What is the most amazing to myself as a visitor to that country, on the many occasions I have been able to visit them, is to see how they put the cross on top of all their huts, how they put the cross on top of their hillsides, how they carry the cross, how they wear the cross, how they paint it in their clothing, and this is illegal. This is an Islamic state. They are literally defying the Islamization, Arabization policies.

They attend church in droves. People are turning to Christ in such great numbers. The church is growing in Sudan today, probably faster than anywhere else in Africa today.

And the reason is that the people are just resisting and saying, we have a heritage. The church has been planted in southern Sudan all the way back in A.D. 37. The Ethiopian eunuch brought the gospel here.

We have a heritage of standing firm against Islam for 1,400 years. And so what one sees is incredible tenacity and resilience. The churches are overflowing.

The people, when their churches are bombed, they move into the outside areas, into the forest, and they will have a temporary structure there, and they will meet there. And if they're chased out of one area, they'll open the church somewhere else. And even in the concentration camps we're here, even at the threat of death, they will have their prayer meetings.

These people are not bowing at all. In fact, they are winning the Islamic persecutors to Christ. We're talking to Peter Hammond from Cape Town, South Africa.

Peter, you're director of Frontline Fellowship. What is Frontline Fellowship doing to help the church in Sudan? Well, we have had the great challenge brought to us from years back to help the Christians in Sudan. When I first heard that the oldest community of Christians in Africa was suffering the worst persecution in the largest country in Africa, I could not believe that this could be possible.

How could I not have heard of it? I thought I was well-informed. I was well-connected. I was well-read.

I was amazed that this could be possible. I investigated. The more I investigated, the more I realized that this is absolutely true.

We actually have the oldest community of Christians in Africa suffering the worst persecution in the world today, the worst human rights abuses, and it's in the largest country, in the grip of the longest war of the century, many superlatives, but with the fastest church growth and with real revival in some places. So we decided we had to do something. Now, Cape Town is 5,000 miles away from Sudan, and this is an incredible logistical nightmare to be able to overcome all the many border obstacles to go and help these people.

But you don't have interstate highways. No, we don't. Many of the bridges are down even, and four-wheel drive is essential, and it's a tremendous logistical challenge.

But Frontline Fellowship has risen to the challenge, and over the last three years, we have been regularly going into Sudan. At the time of this taping, we are busy with our 22nd mission into Sudan. We have taken in over 17 metric tons of Bibles just in the last year.

In the first half of this year alone, we took in nearly 30,000 Bibles and Christian hymn books, and at this moment, that number is about to double with the present trips that are in progress. We've run leadership training courses, scores of them. We've conducted over 450 leadership training seminars and lectures, church services and chaplain's prayers inside Sudan.

We have run even medical workshops and helped to restore two hospitals and are working on a third. We've brought other missions in. So Frontline Fellowship's work in Sudan, you could summarize in three L's.

Love and action, which includes the medical, literature distribution, and we've taken in tens of thousands of Bibles in over 13 languages to seven different regions, even into the Nuba Mountains in central Sudan, way beyond enemy lines. And, of course, there's leadership training. We've trained hundreds of pastors.

We've run Muslim evangelism workshops and even gone as far as having God and government seminars for government leaders in the resistance-controlled south. What role does the UN play in this? Do they help you in any way? Well, I'm afraid not. The United Nations, these blue-helmeted denizens of the new world order, are somewhat of an inconvenience.

They forbid us to do our work in Sudan because they somehow think they're in control of the situation and they will not allow Bibles to go into southern Sudan. And literally every flight I've ever had into southern Sudan has been cancelled, banned and forbidden by the United Nations. I have never once done any trip into south Sudan.

I've done many, but I've never done any of them with the UN's permission. In fact, it's been a direct contravention of their orders. One United Nations official actually said to me face-to-face, as close as we sitting here today, if you dare to fly Bibles in southern Sudan, you'll be blown out of the sky.

And he literally threatened us that they would alert the 14 helicopter gunships stationed at the Muslim air base in Juba and they would intercept the aircraft. And the United Nations are so serious about stopping Bibles coming to Sudan, they search hand baggage. One poor missionary who is part of a cross.

A cross is the largest Christian relief agency working into southern Sudan. They do relief work. They're not doing Bible distribution or anything like that.

They're doing relief work. Legitimate, on the ground, medical and other kind of agricultural support as well as giving out food to the starving. Well, the United Nations banned all of their flights for a month.

Cancelled them all because one person on one plane of a cross attempted to take some Bibles in his personal luggage. Well, think about that. That's thousands of Sudanese deprived of medicine and deprived of food just because a UN official wanted to make a point, we don't like Bibles.

It seems very arbitrary for them to do that. And it's almost incredible to think that they would support things like Buddhism and build Buddhist temples in Thailand and yet not let you do something for Christ in Sudan. So it's not that they're just non-religious or anti-religious.

They are in favor of religion in various places but they are anti-Christian. Yes, in fact, I've heard South Sudanese people say this. It's not that the United Nations are against religion, they say.

It's just that they're against Christianity. They perceive this. The Muslims demand that they take their crosses off when they go onto their planes.

Here's a Red Cross plane trying to air evacuate a wounded civilian and a UN person will say, take off your cross before you can come on a plane. Well, these Sudanese won't even take the cross down in the face of an AK-47 being held by a Muslim government soldier. Do you think they're going to take it off because a United Nations official says we won't let you on the aircraft? They are so petty in their vindictiveness against Christians that the local church has complained many a time.

There was a missionary trying to show the Jesus form in one area in Apnau and the United Nations forbade him to. Well, the local resistance movement said you must show it and count them on the UN official and the film was shown. But time and again we've seen the United Nations is hostile but we've got our effects.

For example, when I've challenged the United Nations about what they're doing and I've said, why do you stop Bibles? They say, we're just doing our job. We're just enforcing the law of the government of Sudan. If we didn't do this, they wouldn't let us fly under relief aid.

But that's not true. Their planes, the United Nations planes, are flying an alcohol into Sudan in violation of the National Islamic Government. That's also against Islamic law.

But they're doing it for their own workers inside Sudan. Also, we know that the United Nations planes are actually flying in Korans into Islamic towns because the government forces wanted the Korans. So they can't say they're not having anything to do with religion.

In fact, we have been told, and I believe it, the United Nations is taking the relief aid to the besieged government-controlled towns in the south and then trusting it into the hands of the government forces, into the hands of the Muslim forces, and trusting them to distribute in a free and equitable manner. But all information is that the government forces use it as a conversion tool. You convert to Islam, you recite the Islamic creed, you put down an Islamic name, or you won't receive food.

And literally, they're putting weapons into the hands of the government. Not to mention that by supplying the besieged government towns in the south of Sudan, by enabling the government forces to have about 100,000 Arab troops in the south of Sudan, what they're doing is providing a logistical support arm for the government of Sudan, thereby prolonging the war by prolonging the sieges in these towns in the south.

How are the Muslims responding? Well, this is one of the most amazing things.

The Islamic government is vicious and vindictive. Their policy in the north of Sudan and in central Sudan, in Nuba mountains in particular, is called Tamsit, or it is a combing. This euphemism actually means scorched earth.

I've heard them actually describe it as we drain the sea to catch the fish. By that, they mean the Christians. They're draining the sea.

They're destroying everything in this region to sustain life. Scorched earth. And they're even doing forced removals.

One million Nubans on concentration camps in the Nuba mountains there. That's barbed wire enclosed, machine gun tower observed, shoot on sight if a person attempts to escape. Forcible Islamization, forcible Arabization, and forced labor.

Genuine concentration camps. One million people, most of them Christians, in concentration camps in the Nuba. And scorched earth is the official policy of the government of Sudan.

In fact, they've declared jihad, holy war, against the Nuba. But that is what the government of Sudan is doing. But the Muslims on the ground, in many cases, are turning to Christ.

And this is the most remarkable thing. I've specialized in Islam in my theological and missionary training. I've worked amongst Muslims for many years.

And I've seen a very, very small amount of Muslims respond. But in Sudan, they're coming to us and asking us to lead them to Christ. They're coming to us and asking us to disciple them.

They're coming to us to plead for Bibles. You do not have to go looking for Muslim evangelism opportunities in Sudan. They're coming to you.

And I don't know how to describe it, except there's literally villages and battalions of Muslims coming to Christ. I have one documented case where Commander Thomas Cerilio, an Arab commander with 300 men, 300 troops of the Arabs, under arms, in uniform, they came across the line. They said, we want to become Christians.

We want to fight for the South. We can't smuggle enough Bibles to provide for all the people who come into Christ in South Sudan, let alone provide discipleship training courses for them all. The challenge in South Sudan is so intense.

But if one is to say, how is it possible that so many Muslims are coming to Christ in Sudan? Well, I think that one could say, first of all, the Arab government in Sudan is so vicious, so cruel, so harsh and vindictive, that I think the very severity is repelling many Muslims who are ashamed of this ugly face of Islam and are turning away to Christ. Secondly, the Christians in South Sudan are so tenacious and so courageous. They are so steadfast that they are challenging so many Muslims to come to Christ and therefore I think the Christian South is attracting Muslims to Christ.

Thirdly, what is going on in South Sudan, and this is perhaps very significant too, is the Muslims have a place they can escape to when they convert to Christ. In most of the Muslim world, our biggest problem is, what do we do to safeguard the lives of Muslim converts? When a person is converted from a Muslim

background, it's normally the death sentence. He must escape, or he will die.

And this is a tremendous problem because we never have a bridgehead in a Muslim community, because the moment we get a bridgehead, a person gets saved, he's got to flee, or he gets killed, and you've got to start from scratch. You don't have that continuity and momentum of a new convert winning his neighbors and friends and family members to Christ. Not in a Muslim state, you don't.

But in South Sudan, what's happening is, because there's a resistance movement fighting and resisting the Islamic terror and the scorched earth, there are places, there are areas of Sudan that are liberated and free where a Muslim can flee to and find religious freedom. What can we learn from the churches in Sudan? We learned a lot from the Christians who suffered under communism. What can we learn from the Christians who are suffering in Sudan? And why did Christianity die out in Northern Sudan? Well, those are two very big questions.

We can learn so much from the Christians in Southern Sudan. I see, first of all, they have a tremendous overwhelming conviction that God is sovereign. The sovereignty of God is one of the biggest foundation stones of their Christian faith.

They do not feel self-pity. I'm amazed to find there's not much questioning as to why they suffer. They will point to the scriptures and say, well, Isaiah 18 says that we will suffer great hardships and much death, yet there will be revival amongst them.

And they accept this as part of God's sovereign will and then it will be used for His glory and for the extension of His kingdom. So this is one thing that's amazing. I've found very little self-pity.

I've found, in fact, no self-pity in Southern Sudan. What I'm finding there is a conviction God is in control. We may not understand, but we can trust God.

God controls our future. He understands our future better than we understand our past. And what's going on over there is extraordinary.

They definitely put a high priority upon the Bible, upon Bible memorization. They put a high priority upon prayer. Most communities that I've come across have devotions every night.

The community comes together in that village or that compound or that community and there will be evening prayers. And prayer is the main... it takes up the majority of the time, unlike many of our prayer meetings in the West where prayer is the smallest item in the prayer meeting. So there's no doubt that these are people of prayer, people of the word, people who hold to the sovereignty of God, and they're tenacious.

Many other countries that have suffered much less in Sudan, most of the people have fled outside as refugees. But the South Sudanese tend to stay inside the country. Many internal refugees, many people displaced.

But there's very few who fled internationally. And the reason is they see themselves as a biblical people. They're the people of Isaiah 18 and Psalm 68, verse 31.

The people of Zephaniah 3, verse 10. They're the people that the scripture speaks of. And they do not want to leave their land.

And this is the extraordinary thing. They're the people of Cush, Cush being the grandson of Noah. And they have this great sense of heritage.

And also, and this is the second point that you brought up, the church has been in Sudan a long time. It's the oldest community of Christians in Africa. They go all the way back to Acts chapter 8. The gospel came to Sudan before it went to Europe.

And the Ethiopian eunuch was the treasurer of Queen Candace. The Ethiopian eunuch actually was going to Jerusalem to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the temple. And he came back with a book of Isaiah in his hand.

And God supernaturally led Philip from a revival in Samaria. You would have thought, what greater priority did he have? But he was led from a revival in Samaria to this deserted road to witness to one individual. But what a strategic individual.

A treasurer from the court of Queen Candace who was the queen of what is today northern Sudan. It was the kingdom of Meroe then. And we know from history that that is when the church began in Sudan.

And some people would say, but I would have thought the Ethiopian eunuch went to Ethiopia. Actually, Matthew, the Apostle Matthew, took the gospel to Ethiopia. And Ethiopia is the second oldest community of Christians in Africa.

That happened much later. In fact, Matthew died there. He was axed there.

He was martyred in Ethiopia. However, in Sudan what we had was the church steadily growing. And by the 5th century, Christians formed a majority.

And from the 5th all the way through to the 15th century, Christians were the majority in the three northern kingdoms of Sudan. Nubia, Makaria, and Dattawa. And these kingdoms were reigned by Christian kings for literally a millennium.

There is a thousand years of Christianity predominating in the north of Sudan. Peter, do you think we should invite some of our African friends to give testimony and sort of give another perspective to this? Yes, I'm sure we should. Because, you know, the question that you raised just now about why did Christianity die out in northern Sudan, this is something that we really need to ask.

Because from this great strong Christian series of kingdoms, these three Christian kingdoms, we today find in northern Sudan that Islam predominates. And the Islamic constitution says Islam is the guiding religion. It's the binding code that directs the laws, regulations, and policies of the state.

And the government of Sudan now is exporting terror. The north of Sudan is sending slave raiders south. How did this take place? Well, the fact is that the churches in the Nubian kingdom in the north of Sudan were very closely associated with the king.

In fact, the king himself was often a priest. And it was common practice for bishops and priests to hold leadership positions in the government. Also, it would seem that the common people were not very well evangelized.

Christianity was the religion of the elite and of the educated. It was religion of the court and of the royalty. And the church was heavily centralized and ecclesiastical hierarchy was there with the separation

between the clergy and the laity.

And this was, of course, unhealthy. But even more seriously, the churches in northern Sudan relied heavily upon the services of foreign bishops and priests. Most of the leaders of the church were Egyptian.

Some were Greek Orthodox and some were Coptic. And these languages, Greek and Egyptian, Coptic languages, they were understood by the king and by the educated people, but not by the common man. Hence, Christianity in northern Sudan actually was top heavy.

It didn't have a strong rural base. It was very much centralized in the cities and in the courts. This over-dependence also on the foreign bishops and the priests starved the church of leadership when the Muslims took over Egypt and cut the ties between Egypt and the rest of the world and Sudan.

And as the Muslim armies attempted to destroy southern Sudan and failed, they realized they had to cut off the cultural links with Egypt. And as the bishops had been actually appointed by the Greek and Coptic patriarchs in Egypt, the Islamic stranglehold made it very hard for the church in Nubia to continue to grow. So the lack of leadership training and indigenous leadership really impoverished and weakened the church.

Simultaneously with this, the Arabs continued to migrate in as traders and as nomads. And this eroded the Christian dominance in Nubia and it spread the influence of Islam. And then there was intermarriage with Muslims.

And this brought dissension. But probably the worst thing was that in order to safeguard the stability of their kingdom, the Nubian kings were finally persuaded to sell slaves, a quota of slaves, each year to the Muslims as part of a peace treaty to give peace. So they sold not land for peace but people for peace.

And this really eroded the moral base and made it necessary for, of course, God to judge them. The Muslims, of course, eagerly exploited the divisions that interfered. The church got really eroded from the inside.

The church didn't collapse from external attack but from internal decay. And another tragic contribution was that the Christians in Sudan, in northern Sudan, back in 1450, that's just about the time of Wycliffe and after the time of Hus. The Christians from Sudan sent ambassadors to the king of neighboring Ethiopia which was a Christian nation, a fellow Christian neighboring nation.

They begged the king to send them priests and monks to teach them. But this desperate cry for help was ignored. And Christianity didn't die out in northern Sudan because of external persecution or attack.

The churches were empty and abandoned long before Islam poured into the vacuum and became well established. And, you know, if we look at this we can see the church was too closely allied to the political structure and when the kings fell the church fell with the political power structure. And by compromising with Islam and allowing a quota of their own people to be sold into slavery to buy assurance of peace I think the Nubian kingdom condemned itself to be judged by God.

So the lessons for us today are clear. We've got to give priority to literacy training, to Bible teaching, to leadership training. We've got to build healthy, self-supporting, self-governing churches, self-propagating churches.

We've got to teach and we've got to practice decentralization and the priesthood of all believers. We've got to be careful never to be co-opted by any secular politicians to advance their own political agenda. Peter, as we turn the tape in just a few moments we're going to be hearing you're going to introduce us, I think, to some of the brothers there that you've met, that you've worked with and we're going to hear some of their testimonies.

Yes, these people have a testimony. We really just need to learn from our Christian brothers. They've suffered so much but they're joyful.

Every night I hear singing and they've got so much joy and so much zeal. They've suffered so much. They've got so little.

They're some of the poorest people on the face of the earth and yet they've got a vision. They've got a vision of creating a strong Christian nation in Sudan again. Sudan was the last nation to become Muslim.

It'll be the first to be freed from Islam, I believe. And I believe we can see Sudan won back to Christ. In fact, we see in the beginnings now when the British left in 1955 there were only 2% of the total population were Christian.

Today it's grown back to 20%. And so the church is growing so fast. By God's grace we could see in the next few generations in fact even northern Sudan won to Christ.

This is the end of side one. Please turn the tape over now. We'll continue our interview with Peter Hammond of Frontline Fellowship based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Peter, you were recently at the battlefield in Sudan. What can you tell us about the situation there? Well, Bob, I was absolutely astounded. I was delivering medicines and large quantities of Bibles up to the Christian chaplains serving the soldiers and the resistance movement in Sudan.

And what I saw was just absolutely remarkable. They were in the midst of a whole offensive. They were winning victories.

The Christian flag, the distinctive red cross on Blue Square and the white flag were flying over the newly liberated towns. We were in towns where the crosses had been destroyed and the churches had been vandalized and even Christian graves had been vandalized. But the Muslim invaders had been thrown out and the Christian resistance movement was actually liberating territory from their oppressors and bringing religious freedom to areas that had never known it.

And this was extraordinary. There was a joyful atmosphere of thanksgiving to God for the remarkable series of victories that the soldiers had so recently experienced. Many soldiers were in hated close calls and answered prayers that they'd experienced during the recent battles.

Several of the commanders of the resistance movement actually commented that they saw the turning point in their war of survival against the Islamic assault from the north. They said the turning point was when they started to receive Bibles from Frontline Fellowship and they appointed chaplains. And they said from the time that all of our parades and operations were begun in prayer and Bible reading that is when God started to bless our movement with victory.

And one officer said our situation seemed hopeless two years ago but as we've turned to God He has begun to bless us with great victories. Another one said every chaplain is worth many battalions and brigades of soldiers that have done a great work in strengthening our men. Another commander said the Bibles you bring are more powerful than the bombs of the Muslims.

And there is no doubt that the tide has turned. The strategic initiative has shifted and it would look like the resistance movement from the south is on the advance. They have basically liberated an area about the size of Texas within which the church is free and where religious services are being carried out unhindered.

And by the way I've seen many hundreds of destroyed churches in my ministry but I've never seen a destroyed mosque in southern Sudan. And the mosques while there are very few people going to them they are there and they are operating and there are some people going. And I think it's very commendable that the Christians are allowing full religious freedom in their areas.

They are returning good for evil. Absolutely. That's what we've seen.

We've seen no sign of vengeance. In fact I've seen Muslim soldiers who were captured being treated as brothers literally because they accept that they were deceived and these men are given the opportunity to change and to join their forces and it's remarkable. There are prisons of war camps we've got access to them.

We're distributing Bibles to Arab troops within the resistance controlled areas in the camps. But we've seen many of those soldiers choosing of their own free will to actually serve the south. So the Arab assault and persecution of the church and scorched earth policy has actually been counterproductive because now more Muslims have turned to Christ and the Christians with moral indignation on their side are liberating areas from the Muslims.

So the situation over there was remarkable. I managed to actually get a couple of interviews with some of these folks on the battle front and here we were literally within a few kilometers of the enemy garrisons and I was able to record from the people there soldiers in command on the battle front what they had to say. Excuse the quality of some of it you'll hear some radio noise in the background and some of the noise of the soldiers bustling around.

That's correct but this is their words from the Sudanese Christians themselves in uniform at the battle front. And we are not free at all. Whenever you are got a Christian you will suffer a lot.

Especially when you were in school we were really by now very difficult to see when I was on that thing. SPLA soldiers who had been captured by Sudan government had been killed when we were seizing Juba. UN military that had been supplying this to our people.

They should not think that the Sudan government and the Muslim government is going to defeat us because we have a will to fight them up to the last man. It has really repeated the same problems which face us at first. There was a lot increasing.

There was opposition of Christianity especially. The Arabs were opposing their Sharia Islamic law. Innocent people.

The message I could give to the outside world is that they should really help. Not to bring us weapons but to help us in our movement. To bring some medicines for our casualties.

That means that treatment and also to convey our we don't kill our captives and their treatment and they are really being treated as our brothers. They are treated as our brothers because we don't want to kill them. This is the attitude of Christian soldiers in the SPLA the Sudanese People Liberation Army.

They request from the outside countries to pray for us. want to kill them. We don't want to kill them.

We don't want to kill them. We don't Peter you're going back into history now so we hear a lot about the reconciliation walk. What would be our attitude toward the reconciliation walk?

I am not at all comfortable with this first of all when people start to want to parade across the Middle East apologizing for the Crusades first of all, what disturbs me about this is that we've been commanded to go and preach the Gospel, not to go and apologize for the Crusades I didn't take part in the Crusades, neither did my father and my grandfather nevertheless, let's be honest the fact is that most Christians today have no Gospel history and it's of the utmost foolishness for Christians to run around apologizing for what they haven't got the foggiest clue about and they don't understand the fact is that the Crusades of the Middle Ages, 900 years ago they were a reaction they were a reaction to the Islamic invasion of the Holy Lands when the Muslims took over those places where the

Lord was born and where He lived and where He ministered and was crucified and raised from the dead these lands were considered sacred by the Middle Ages Christians and they took pilgrimages there or when the Saracens, as the Muslim invaders were called desecrated these Christian places of worship and severely persecuted the Eastern Christians in these areas pilgrims were prevented from visiting these sites, sacred to their faith and in this situation, the Crusades rose up also, people need to understand Jihad you cannot run around apologizing for the Crusades which was an exception in Church history while Jihad has been the norm in Islamic history for 14 centuries we've had Islamic Jihad and it's carrying on today while thousands of Christians are being slaughtered and hundreds are being

crucified and tens of thousands are being enslaved by Muslims and millions of Christians are being forbidden religious freedom and Muslims who convert to Christ are being executed and beheaded it seems to be incredibly inappropriate for Christians to travel across the Middle East apologizing to Muslims for the Crusades that happened 900 years ago but here's the fact whatever we may believe about the Crusaders we have to admire the Crusaders' incredible devotion and their steadfastness which inspired over 15,000 Crusaders speaking about the first Crusade 10% of those Crusaders were knights only 10% had horses the other 90% were foot soldiers they had to journey 3,000 kilometers that's nearly 2,000 miles and they sacrificed life and limb many thousands of them died of disease, drowning and

of course from the fighting the first Crusaders were away from home for 4 years later Crusaders were away from home for up to 16 years one widow sold the only thing she owned, her house to pay for her only son to go and free Jerusalem now, I know that many will raise all kinds of protests and objections but I for myself, I'm myself a one having studied the writings and the prayers and the battles of the Crusaders I'm very impressed by the evidence and sincere devotion of many of the Crusaders many of these were true Christians they deplored their sins they longed to do something noble and lasting for the Lord and for the Savior, Jesus Christ their prayers, their fastings, their sacrifice, their courage, their devotion they make a lot of hours look juvenile they saw need, they rose up to

meet that need they committed themselves to liberating the Holy Land and they steadfastly persisted to overcome all obstacles all dangers, all discomforts for years and for thousands of miles by foot and horseback in inhospitable terrain under unbelievable heat until they reached their objectives though at incredible cost they sacrificed and they suffered unbelievable deprivations people should read the history and realize what they are complaining and apologizing for these Crusaders suffered hunger and thirst and boiling heat and freezing cold and storms and floods fire and vicious hand to hand combat to honor their commitments and to fight for the honor of their Lord and Savior they lived in a feudal system this is the middle ages this is the ages when people fought for honor the Lord

Jesus Christ's honor was being impinged his holy places were being desecrated the Saracens, the Muslims were saying that Jesus Christ was not who he said he was he was not the son of God they were indignant that their Lord was offended in such a way they were willing to fight for his honor now we may say that this was an overreaction but how many of us can sincerely say that if we hadn't lived in the middle ages we would not have been a Crusader I for one think I would have been not only that but they fought to defend the religious liberties of their fellow believers in the eastern churches who were being persecuted the average Crusader might well have known more about Christianity than today's average complacent pure woman churchgoer but the other point which is vital for people to

realize is the Crusades were a reaction to three and a half centuries of Islamic Jihad the Muslims had murdered and wiped out over half of all the Christians in the world when the church began it started in the Middle East and North Africa in fact North Africa was at one time very much a center of the church Augustine, Oligarch, Tertullian these men came from North Africa the Muslims wiped out the churches that had descended from them and the Middle East the church used to be the majority in Persia and what is today Iraq and Turkey they wiped them out now in reaction to Islamic Jihad and I might add to a large extent in self defense because the Muslims had swept North Africa and the Middle East they were pushing into Spain and Portugal they took over most of Spain and Portugal they even

were in France threatening France at one time in fact at another time they wiped out the entire eastern Christian empire of Byzantium and they destroyed Constantinople and they swept through the Balkans and they were even threatening the very gates of Vienna in the heartland of Europe now when one looks at that in fact how many of these people are going to be walking across there apologizing for the Crusades how many people realize that if the Crusades had not taken place they today may well not be alive because the Muslims may well have killed their ancestors and if they were alive the women would most certainly be wearing veils and the men would most certainly be in Islamic dress because there wouldn't have been a Christian Europe if there hadn't been Crusades to protect them from this

incredible overwhelming onslaught and flood of Islamic invasion because of Jihad Jihad made the Crusades essential if the Crusades had not taken place I dare say there wouldn't have been a United States of America in fact how many people realize that it was only once the Muslim invaders had been fully eradicated and removed from Spain and pushed out of Spain and the last Islamic fortress at Granada had fell in 1492 that Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain were able to send out Columbus on his exploratory journey which discovered the New World and from which America has come because they couldn't do it until then it was only that year, 1492 that incredible year when the Muslims were swept out and Spain was at last free that was when Columbus could set off he had been wanting to do

it for many years but only then could he set off and discover America I dare say there would not have been a United States of America and there certainly would not have been a Protestant United States of America

unless there had been Crusades now before we ignorantly condemn brothers and sisters in Christ from nine centuries ago and before we ignorantly run and apologize for what in fact may have been a great time of sacrifice and devotion for Christ let us study their history in fact I would challenge those who have been guilt manipulated by this revisionism and this rewriting of history to study Islam do they have any understanding of what Jihad has done the forcible conversion, the destruction of the church throughout the whole of the Middle East and North Africa do they have any

understanding of the Jihad that continues today of the 1.5 million Christians who were slaughtered in 1915 in Turkey the 1,500,000 Armenian Christians crucified, roasted, burnt alive, hacked to death by the Muslim Turkish government back in 1915 do they know any of these historical facts I don't see Muslims apologizing for Jihad or for Black September or for the PLO or for the various Islamic terror attacks that continue to this day or for the National Islamic Front government in Sudan and so I'm concerned about this reconciliation walk I think it's going about it in the wrong way to put the Crusades in the proper context we've got to study the rapid expansion of Islam by the sword across North Africa into Spain and the Middle East and the Balkans the Islamic Jihad of the 7th to the 10th

century is what made the Crusades essential and how many people know that the croissants that we have today were in fact a celebration by the bakers of Vienna of the victory over Islam back in the 17th century when they managed to push back the last besieging of Vienna and the bakers had discovered this because they were working late at night preparing their bread as they normally would the night before so it could be fresh and they heard the sound of Turkish engineers bowing underneath the baker's shop and they alerted the Vienna guards who broke into the tunnels and they used this as an occasion of momentum to thrust back the Muslim invaders and because of that they made croissants in the shape of the crescent moon to celebrate the victory of Christianity over Islam Wow Peter you've

certainly brought us up to date on that now what should be our approach in terms of evangelizing Muslims we do want to win them for Christ how can we do that?

Well I think it's very important that we engage our Muslim neighbours in discussion you know I find the Muslims incredibly open to debate and discussion they like a good argument they like an intellectual argument they like theological arguments the Muslims like conflict to be honest and the Muslims respect nothing but strength and they despise nothing more than weakness Christians grovelling and apologising for their great Christian heritage is not going to endear us to Islam I think we should be rather upfront and straightforward and engage the Muslims in intellectual debate and theological debate to clear up the misunderstandings and this is important they've often got the wrong understanding they often think that we worship a trinity of God the Father, Mary the Mother and Jesus the

Son that's in fact in the Quran they misunderstand the doctrine of the trinity they think we worship three gods and they think that's blasphemous well of course it's blasphemous every Christian thinks that's blasphemous let's clear up the misunderstandings they've got all kinds of strange ideas about Christianity much that I'm afraid they've picked up from Catholicism from a distance and they've obviously got a very bad impression of Christianity and think some of us are idolaters which to be honest many of those eastern religions versions of Christianity do look a bit like idolaters statues of Mary and all the rest of it so we need to clear up the misunderstandings let them know we're the people of the book people of the Bible and I find Muslims respond well to that kind of intellectual

discussion they think of Jesus as a prophet even Islamic people think of Jesus as a prophet don't they? yes they do and this is the amazing thing in fact bear in mind that the Muslims accept the Bible as the word of God they accept the Torah of Moses the books of Moses they accept the Zabur of David the Psalms of David they accept the Injil the Gospels of Jesus as the infallible word of God without any error they accept that the words of God can never be changed they accept Jesus as miraculously born of a virgin the Muslims believe in that they actually say Jesus was born of a virgin without any male intervention they believe that he was holy faultless that he performed miracles that he healed the sick that he even raised the dead Islam teaches that it even teaches that Jesus ascended

into heaven they don't accept his death but they accept his ascension to heaven and they even teach that Jesus will return again from the dead Islam believes this about the Lord Jesus so we've got stepping stones we've got the beginning points we've definitely got something to work with because we can ask the Muslims of what prophets can it be said that he was holy faultless, born of a virgin performed miracles healed the sick, raised the dead or is coming again and is raised into heaven in fact let's compare Jesus Christ with Mohammed and let me not say anything bad about Mohammed let me just quote what the Muslim sources say about Mohammed according to the Hadith which is the second most holy book of Islam the Quran is the word of God in their opinion the words of Allah which were

dictated to Mohammed and so that is their Bible so to speak and then the Hadith is the traditions of Mohammed it's Mohammed's teachings and his life which is considered inspired and authoritative in fact some regard it as equally inspired and authoritative as the Quran but certainly it's the second holy book now just taking the Hadith Mohammed was a traitor he was in fact a slave trader he transported and sold amongst other things slaves he was also a slave owner I didn't say that no Christian said that that's what the Islamic Hadith says Mohammed was a slave trader and he was a slave owner and he had 14 wives now according to the Islamic law Muslims may only have 4 wives but Mohammed had 14 wives and his youngest wife Aisha his third wife was only 9 years old when he married her and

that's according to the Hadith now most countries in the world have laws against that and that constitutes de facto child abuse Mohammed attacked caravans for loot he attacked many caravans like a bandit in fact they were called this he had over 600 Jewish men in Medina his home city dig their own mass grave and he had them slaughtered 600 Jewish men and then he had their wives and their children sold as slaves all these are facts of history recorded by the Islamic Hadith this isn't the words of any detractors of Islam this is the words of Islam now how can we weigh up Mohammed and Jesus on the same scale Jesus Christ taught us to love our enemies Jesus Christ never murdered anybody he was born a virgin he was holy he performed miracles he healed the sick Mohammed the only miracle I can

record about Mohammed if you ask a Muslim and I've asked some of the finest Islamic authorities in the world such as Ahmadiyya what miracles did Mohammed do the only miracle they ever have pointed to in all of my debates is that once when he was fleeing from his enemies he hid in a cave and a spider spun a web that covered the front of the cave so when his people came past the enemies they thought that nobody could have been there because of the spider's web and they kept going well I wouldn't want to make a spider's web my foundation it's a bit of a flimsy foundation I prefer the empty tomb in Jerusalem what about other miracles that we read about in the Bible are there any corresponding miracles in Islam not really no the authenticity of the Bible is something we need to continually

point to when we are dealing with Muslims the authenticity of the Bible is attested to by many miracles such as the parting of the Red Sea the fire that came down Mount Carmel when Elijah called down the fire

that's in 1 Kings 18 our Lord feeding the thousands from a handful of food walking on the water calming the storm with a single word raising Lazarus from the grave and countless other events the authenticity of the Bible as God's revealed word is clearly proven by this but in addition to this we can refer to the countless prophecies the Bible contains hundreds of detailed prophecies our Lord Jesus fulfilled 300 ultimate prophecies in his life on earth we need to point these out the Messiah was to be born of a virgin we read in Isaiah 7 verse 14 in Bethlehem we read in Micah 5 too he

was to be a descendant of Abraham Isaiah 9 verse 7 483 years after the decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem he would enter Jerusalem this is in Daniel 9 he would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver we read in Zechariah 11 he would be betrayed by a friend we read in Psalm 41 his hands and his feet would be pierced he would be crucified in other words we read this in Psalm 22 his robe would be gambled for he would be buried with the rich we read this in Isaiah 59 yet he would rise from the dead Psalm 16 verse 10 and he would ascend into heaven Psalm 68 verse 18 there are 300 prophecies like these in the Old Testament which Jesus Christ fulfilled now unlike the Quran the Bible is convincingly attested to by countless miracles and detailed prophecies but if you ask the Muslims for their

prophecies they don't have prophecies they don't even have miracles there were no miracles to convince the heroes at that time or the skeptics at a distance if you compare the Bible with the Quran it's no contest the Bible is 66 books the Quran is 1 book the Bible was written by 40 different prophets and apostles the Quran was written by 1 author the Bible says that out of the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses everything will be accomplished but in fact the Quran is only written by 1 author it's 1 book and it was written in 1 language in 1 geographic area over 23 years but the Bible was written by 40 different prophets and apostles in 3 languages Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek on 3 continents Africa, Asia and Europe over 1500 years now how can you weigh the Bible in the same scales as the Quran and

more to the point you can go to Medina and you can see the tomb where Muhammad is buried but if you visit Jerusalem you'll find an empty tomb the Lord Jesus risen he's the way, the truth and life no one comes to father by him we can use these when we are dealing with Muslims and by the way we can also ask some other questions notice that you wash yourselves before you pray this is good physical cleanliness is good but how do you cleanse your mind and your heart how do you wash your soul I find that the hardest how do you do it and I've yet to find a Muslim who could answer that when you're dealing with prayer you can also say how do you pray and explain how they pray and what they say 10 times each session they pray these set words and they do it 5 times a day so 50 times a day they

repeat the same formula we could say you know the Lord Jesus said that when you pray don't use vain repetition like the pagans do but how do you manage when you pray we can ask the Muslims how do you manage to maintain a vibrant relationship to God and sincerity when you're saying it for the 50 thousands time and there's questions like this we can just get them to think and what's very powerful is when we can go into the stories of the Old Testament because they really believe in Abraham Abraham's very important and when we describe that Abraham went up the mountain and he was willing to sacrifice his only son he loved God so much he was even willing to sacrifice his only son and they know the story and then you can go straight on to the analogy of just as God so loved us that he's

willing to give his only forgotten son as a sacrifice for our sins and at that point they know there's no forgiveness of sins in Islam there's no atonement for sins how is sins forgiven in Islam they have no answer for that we've got many different avenues we can begin to use in discussing with Muslims but let's not be impatient it takes often months of relationship to break through the walls of misunderstanding and

confusion Peter, to wrap up this program tell us how we can best serve the persecuted church in Sudan this is of the utmost importance we need to stand by our brothers and sisters in Christ in Sudan they are suffering the most severe persecution in the world today we must be informed subscribe to newsletters like Frontline Fellowship we'll send out our reports free to anyone

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Box 74, Newlands 7725, Salaf Ghat P.O. Box 74, Newlands 7725, Salaf Ghat and if you write to us we'll send you documentation and reports please get informed listen to independent radio stations subscribe to independent newsletters we must be informed and on the basis of that intercede and get your church praying for the persecuted church especially for the church in Sudan on the basis of good information launch intercession remember them regularly and thirdly let's get involved this means speak up write out write to your leaders in Congress or Parliament see that they will forward the case and the plight of the persecuted that they will put pressure on the government of Sudan that is persecuting their citizens and speak up for religious freedom we can also get involved in other ways by investing in sponsoring Bibles or medicines there are many different ways let God guide you as to what can you do what is God in your hand that you can use to the alleviation of suffering and the encouragement and strengthening of our Christian brothers and sisters in Sudan Thank you for watching

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