

Make Way Partners

Sudan Mission Trip Information Packet

Make Way Partners works to combat and prevent human trafficking and all forms of modern-day slavery by educating and mobilizing the Body of Christ.

In countries of origin, like Sudan, where thousands of (primarily) women and children are being trafficked into the sex–slave trade or other forms of slavery, we reach out to those at risk, offering practical alternatives which include food, housing, orphan care, job training and placement. Stateside, we seek to educate and mobilize the Church about the difference we can make by working together. Our mission is for the church, all denominations unified in Christ, will lead the way in this battle.

A unique component of the Make Way Partners’ ministry is that we seek to minister to the persecutor as well as the persecuted, or the trafficker as well as the trafficked. For example, in the Muslim community of Sudan we offer Christ-like love, forgiveness and practical assistance to all in the name of Christ. In Eastern Europe, the same love is offered to those we have found operating as traffickers who seek restoration. We strive to actively build bridges of reconciliation, claiming Christ’s desire for complete restoration for all.

This trip is to the Make Way Partners active indigenously managed 40-acre compound strategically located on the border between the North and the South Sudan. Here we feed and educate 400 children, protecting them from the slave raiders; we also receive, disciple, train and employ former sex-slaves who have escaped from their Muslim captors.

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**Please sign, copy, and send in these two originals when you have been accepted.*

Sudan Background Information

What began as Islamic invasion and Christian persecution many decades ago has now expanded to ethnic cleansing and genocide. The Islamic militias (Janjaweed), directly receiving both their direction and funding from the Northern government began by killing all Christians who would not 'convert' to Islam. This persecution has raged since the withdrawal of Great Britain in 1956. It effectively abolished Christianity in Northern Sudan, while the South formed their own government to keep religious freedom.

Approximately four years ago, the same militias began killing the indigenous Sudanese in the North who had converted to Islam. These targeted Muslims are black Africans whereas the Northern government and its militias are Arab Islamics who invaded Sudan from neighboring Arab countries. This conflict is what is commonly referred as the "Darfur Crisis".

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It is nearly one-quarter the size of the US.

There are less than 25 miles of paved roads in Southern Sudan and no bridges. Therefore, during the rainy season, entire villages representing thousands of people are completely isolated from food and medical care for up to 6 months out of every year.

Southern Sudan is the poorest nation in the world with the highest per capita rate of victims of human trafficking and enslavement. At the same time, the Northern half of the country, run by the Arabic government and profiting from the oil and slavery of the indigenous (black African) South, is experiencing huge capital gains and building high rise apartments and hotels.

More than 2million people (mostly Christians) have been killed by the government- sanctioned Muslim militia. An estimated 4million have been victims of human trafficking, persecution and forced conversion when they were captured by the Slave Raiders.

Thousands of slaves are now escaping their bondage but have no where to go. This has created mass chaos, especially along the border villages to which thousands of refugees flee Darfur. There is no government infrastructure to receive the refugees or protect the thousands of orphans created from the persecution and genocide.

Make Way Partners Response:

Not just one more orphanage...but shoring up the Hope for Sudan through raising up the next generation of Christ-anchored Peace Makers.

MWP stands with the persecuted Christians in Sudan:

1. We educate, train, disciple, comfort, support, counsel and encourage the Sudanese Christians in their efforts to tend the remnant of His Church in Sudan.
2. We comfort the oppressed, with a special emphasis on the orphans and widows created through the persecution, slavery and genocide.
3. We evangelize and minister to their persecutors.

Make Way Partners Orphan-Care Network



Practical Information

Sudan Info

Temperatures: 125 F +/-

Conditions: No showers. Mud brick wash rooms are available to sponge bathe from a bucket of well water, squat latrines are our only form of toilets, you will purify your own water supply from a well with a system we provide, pack your own food and sleep in tents on MWP / NLM Compound. Black, Instant Coffee available.

Location: Nyamlell, Sudan in Aweil County

Cost and Payment

This total project is a faith project. God has used people from around the world to supply money, materials and volunteer service. Each team member is responsible for obtaining and bringing their personal supplies (tents, food, etc) and paying for all extra baggage expenses at airports.

The hard cost for team members includes: commercial flights to Kenya, chartered private planes in and out of Sudan (commercial planes do not go to Sudan), ground transportation, Kenyan hotel, travel insurance, ministry supplies, Sudan pass and 'exit' event in Kenya: \$5,000.

We realize this is a lot of money. We are going to one of the hardest (and therefore costliest) locations in the world to reach. This is the precise reason why the people of Nyamlell so desperately need our encouragement. The Sudanese beg us to come pray with them, remember them for they are so cut off; they often feel like a 'forgotten people'.

If team members are not able to cover these expenses themselves, we encourage you to include friends, family, church, corporations, etc. in your mission endeavor so that they may have the joy of standing with the people of Sudan by *sending* you!

*Now I want to tell you, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done for the churches in Macedonia. Though they have been going through much trouble and hard times, their wonderful joy and deep poverty have overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the gracious privilege of sharing in the gift for the Christians in Jerusalem. Best of all, they went beyond our highest hopes, for their first action was to dedicate themselves to the Lord and to us for whatever directions God might give them. So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to complete your share in this ministry of giving... Of course, I don't mean you should give so much that you suffer from having too little. I only mean that there should be some equality. Right now you have plenty and can help them. Then at some other time they can share with you when you need it. In this way, everyone's needs will be met. Do you remember what the Scriptures say about this? "Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough." **2 Corinthians 8:1-6, 13-15** (NLT)*

Payment: \$5000 to be made out to MWP. This is 100% tax deductible to you or your *senders*.

A deposit of \$1500 is required in order to process any application.

If MWP does not approve your application, you will receive a full refund of your deposit. However, once approved, please note that any funds paid toward the trip are **NONREFUNDABLE**.

Additional Items: See packing list on page 8 for additional items you will be responsible for, including: food, tent, clothing, shots, shoes, medications etc.

Carrying money: We recommend that you bring approximately \$300 - \$500 for emergency situations. Expenses you will need to pay while traveling are for all food in airports, 2 Kenya visas (have correct cash for these visas - \$25-50USD). There may also be opportunity for souvenir shopping in Kenya upon return from Sudan.

Insurance:

Make Way Partners provides every team member with a Short-term Membership. Go to <http://www.aaintl.com/> to learn more about the short term trip insurance.

Visas:

Kenya Visas: Upon entry into Kenya from overseas, each team member will be responsible to pay \$10 to \$20 for a Transit Visa. Upon entry into Kenya from Sudan, you will need to pay an additional \$10 to \$20 for a Transit Visa.

**Have correct USD change for these Visa Agents – please note that it could be as much as \$50 per visa. USD must be in all new bills year 2006 or newer. No travelers' checks.*

Sudan Visa: You do not need to apply for a Sudan visa. That is only for Northern Sudan. We are going to Southern Sudan via Kenya. MWP will obtain what is called a 'Southern Sudan Pass' in advance for you while in Nairobi.

****We will need:** 3 copies of your passport and 2 new passport photos prior to the trip.

Housing:

In Kenya: MWP will coordinate housing at Nairobi missionary hostels for both ends of the trip. Rooms are usually double occupancy and have no public baths.

In Sudan: Short-term missionaries will bring their own fully enclosed **2-4 person** (no larger) tent to hold all personal luggage and for sleeping.

Transportation:

Flights will be from the US to Nairobi, Kenya and will be arranged by MWP. Once the team meets in Kenya, we will be transported to a Kenyan hostel for one night, leaving early the next morning via chartered flight for Sudan. This Sudan flight is with a private chartered plane as commercial planes do not go where we are going. We will land on a desert floor strip in the village of Nyamlel and walk 20 minutes to the compound.

Important: NO pictures are permitted to be taken at any airport in Africa. If photos are taken, the photographer will be sent home on that same flight or the next flight available.

Contact Information:

For family who need to get a message to you while you are on the trip, the first way would be through Ida Mae Clayton at 205.240.8597 or idamaec@makewaypartners.org

MWP will have a satellite phone on the ground in Sudan. This number is for **true emergencies only** and may be received through Ida Mae Clayton.

You can provide mail and email contact info to MWP for any friends or family who want to track your time in Sudan. We will be in regular contact with the MWP office from Sudan and Ida (from the MWP office) will send out e-updates.

Typical Daily Schedule:

8:00 Devotionals

8:30 General Assembly with School Children

9:00 Work assignments begin

3:00 Rest until night worship

8:00 Group Worship

**All meals will be eaten as you have time. We will not have a formal meal time.*

Work Assignments:

Each team will have different work assignments that they will complete throughout the week in Sudan. Vacation Bible School, Medical Clinic, Evangelism, Discipleship are some of these roles team members will fulfill. Each work team will be assigned translators so that more communication will be possible.

Preparation:

Recommendations to prepare His temple in which you walk around each day:

- 1) If you are not already, we advise a vigorous exercise program including weight training and aerobic exercise. This will help to make you physically stronger. (Please work with your Doctor on this.)
- 2) If you don't already, avoid all processed and fast foods. Cut down or totally eliminate processed sugar from your diet. The only sugar to consume is that sugar naturally found in your food. You will feel much better in Sudan if you are not experiencing sugar withdrawals. (We do not recommend carrying sugar snacks to keep you going in Sudan; it is very hard on your body and greatly reduces your stamina.) A great website for good health and healthy eating: www.mercola.com
- 3) Avoid alcohol
- 4) Talk with your local Doctor and check out the CDC for the necessary meds/vaccines to take for Sudan.
- 5) Protect your heart as you plan for Sudan. The greatest challenge will not be flesh and blood but things that the evil one will throw our way hoping to discourage or dissuade us since he knows he cannot defeat us. Required advanced reading: Passport Through Darkness by Kimberly L. Smith, Waking the Dead by John Eldredge, The Liberty of Obedience by Elisabeth Elliot and God's Smuggler by Brother Andrew and John and Elizabeth Sherrill.

Packing:

MWP strongly recommends that you follow the following packing list closely as you will need most all items listed, but **extra items will cause a problem** as we have an extremely tight weight restriction on our flight from Nairobi to Sudan.

If you carry extra items, they will probably have to be left in Kenya, and you may not be able to get them back.

Please let us know in advance if you feel you need to make any deviations.

Sudan Team

Recommended Packing List

Please try to pack in 1 large backpack or duffel bag and 1-day pack or small backpack. Wear 1 set of clothes and pack only 2 others.

3 pairs pants (quick dry recommended)
3 long sleeved shirts (quick dry)
3 pairs hiking socks (wicking)
1 pair hiking boots (recommended) or comfortable/durable shoes of your choice
3 changes quick dry underwear
1 pair knee length* shorts [I recommend the pants that unzip at knee and convert to shorts] and loose t-shirt for evenings only (no tank tops).

** Shorts that are not at least knee length are not permitted.*

For women: 1 long skirt/dress for Sunday

1 pair flip-flops for evenings only

Hat with brim to protect face and neck

Lightweight Fleece Jacket

#50 sweat-proof sunscreen

Flashlight and/or headlamp

Extra batteries

“Survival” Knife

Optional: Bandana for hair and sweat and Eye Mask to block out light when sleeping.

Ear plugs

Medications: i.e., personal prescriptions, Aleve (or preferred pain reliever), malaria med, anti-diarrhea, 1 round general antibiotic, Benadryl

(pills and cream), Triple Antibiotic ointment
Optional: Deet lotion for skin/spray for gear & a sleep aid like Unisom

Small tent (2-4 person: large enough to keep your personal gear in)

Sleeping bag (light/fleece) & travel pillow

Rollup mat for softness under sleeping bag

Bible, journal, 2 pens

Camera (optional)

\$300-\$500 USD cash – should be all new bills year 2006 or newer. No travelers’ checks.

Beef Jerky, Protein Bars, Power Bars, Dried Fruit (prunes, apricots, apples, raisins, etc.) Trail Mix, Foil bag chicken or tuna if desired. Backpacker meals. Set your own ‘diet’ and bring what you will need to supply that diet. I do not recommend items with added sugar.) ** Hot Water will be available for coffee, tea, and backpacker meals.

Travel Coffee Mug

Tissues, toothbrush, mouthwash, toothpaste, lotion, baby wipes, towel (small, quick drying), shampoo and conditioner, antibacterial waterless Soap, 2 rolls of toilet paper

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE OR WEAR:

Expensive jewelry – including diamond wedding rings (only plain wedding bands allowed).

No Makeup!

Please dress modestly: No tank tops or spaghetti straps. No low collared shirts. No shirts unbuttoned low.

Preparing your heart, mind and body

Be FLEXIBLE and bring your sense of humor – we will be working on Sudan time and in Sudan heat; we will need these two to give our best to the children, community, and each other.

Be PRAYERFUL for each other and for those we will minister to: get spiritually fit **and** physically fit now so that you will have the energy to withstand all that will be thrown our way to deter the good that God would want to offer. The heat truly does slow you down and your good physical health before the trip will be a great asset to you while there.

Be PREPARED to be touched physically and emotionally, hugged, and asked for help, goods, and money. Remember, “silver and gold have I not but what I have I give you”. We are only there to offer Christ - nothing financial or even a small token will be given without first consulting your team leader (something as minor as a water bottle can cause a fight if one child receives this and others do not).

Make Way Partners Travel Guidelines

Make Way Partners Travel Guidelines are intended to bring honor to Christ by protecting the hearts, minds and bodies of missionaries traveling under its authority. In order to remain pure in Christ and not cause any others to stumble we set forth the following guidelines.

These guidelines apply to all members of the opposite sex who are not married to each other and may be traveling together in ministry for Make Way Partners.

1. All travel plans should be submitted for approval to the MWP office 45 days prior to travel dates
2. Opposite sex (not married to each other) do not sit next to each other on flights – always at least one person in between
3. Once on ground, travelers to be met by approved liaisons, indigenous partners and/or missionaries serving in county of destination and transported to place of accommodations
4. As tending to business on the ground, include above stated parties in transportation, meals and meetings where possible
5. When staying in hotel, never enter opposite sex's room
6. Always meet in highly visible public areas

Rules for the Road in Sudan

**Please read completely, sign, copy and send to MWP office.*

1. **Never give anything to anyone while on this trip**, unless pre-approved by your team leader. That might sound strange, but we have had people nearly killed fighting over a water bottle given away! That includes giving **NOTHING** to James, other African team members, the staff or the children – especially money, for accountability reasons.
2. In Sudan, **NEVER promise anything!** More than that, it is a strange thing to our western thinking, but if someone says to you, “We are really hungry. Our people only eat when you people bring us food. Can’t you help us to begin farming again?” and you say back, “Well, I am not sure. Let me talk to our leadership to see if that would be possible.” The translation *heard* is: you have just promised to help begin farming!
 - You will be asked many things. Your best answer is “No. We can’t do that right now. We will pray for your people.” They may not like it, but at least they will not feel deceived later. You can bring requests and ideas to us and feel confident we will truly do all we possibly can. **But, you will indeed feel overwhelmed by the vast unmet needs that you will see.**
 - I know first hand of several organizations that have been officially uninvited to ever work in Sudan again for ‘promising’ things and not delivering them.
 - Don’t worry – if you follow your leadership, cover yourselves in prayer offered in humility, and keep your eyes open – listening more than talking - you will do fine! **Remember that your best gift to those who suffer such persecution is your presence being the incarnational presence of our Risen Lord, Jesus. Be there and let Him love through you.**
3. **NEVER mention homosexuality in any context.** Homosexuality is considered such an evil it is never spoken of. Even if you are asked how you feel about it, just say I am not supposed to talk about it.
4. Always dress modestly and do not be alone with the opposite sex or a child of either sex. If you find yourself alone with a child, immediately walk out into the open to talk with the child.
5. Never leave the compound without your team leader’s approval.
6. **NO pictures are permitted to be taken at any airport in Africa.** If photos are taken, the photographer will be sent home on that same flight or the next flight available.

I, _____, agree to adhere to all of the above rules while serving in Sudan with Make Way Partners.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

**Make Way Partners
Mission Trip Release
(Please complete & return to address below)**

I, as part of my consideration for participation in the missions program conducted by Make Way Partners (MWP), hereby release and agree to hold harmless MWP's officers, directors, employees, and/or agents and any organization or person(s) working for or with MWP or sponsoring an event/program for MWP (the Releasees) from any and all liability for losses, injuries, damages, and/or death that may result in my participation in the missions program of MWP.

Furthermore, I do hereby assume all risk of personal injury, sickness, death, damage, and expense as a result of my participation in the missions program of MWP.

Additionally, I agree that I, my heirs, successors, and assigns will not make any claim or institute any lawsuit against MWP and/or the Releasees for any and all liability for losses, injuries, damages, and/or death that may result in my participation in the missions program of the MWP.

I have read and consent to the terms above and I state that the information given by me on this form is true, current, and accurate.

Photo Release

This document serves as a release for me to appear in photographs and/or videotapes while participating in the above stated missions experience for the purposes of publicity, staff training, and/or promotion.

X _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

**Make Way Partners
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Experiencing Life at the Margins

An African bishop tells North American Christians the most helpful gospel-thing they can do. [Interview by Andy Crouch](#) | posted 7/01/2006 12:00AM

*If you want to ask the Rt. Rev. Dr. David Zac Niringiye what's new in his ministry, allow some extra time. As assistant bishop of Kampala in the Church of Uganda, Zac oversees churches that are enjoying tremendous growth and confronting pressing needs. He and his wife, Theodora, counsel Ugandans who have suffered the trauma of war, advise startup businesses throughout Africa, and nurture Christian student movements and evangelistic efforts. His contributions to spiritual and cultural renewal in Africa alone would make him a valuable respondent to our big question: **How can followers of Christ be a counterculture for the common good?** But Zac, a protégé of evangelical leader John Stott, also has cultivated deep relationships with Christians in the West, beginning with theological studies at Wheaton and Edinburgh. As a senior adviser to Geneva Global—another product of Stott's far-flung network of students and friends—Zac is creating international partnerships that model the candid challenge he offers to American Christians in this interview.*

As a longtime friend and partner of North American Christians, what have you noticed about us?

One of the gravest threats to the North American church is the deception of power—the deception of being at the center. Those at the center tend to think, "The future belongs to us. We are the shapers of tomorrow. The process of gospel transmission, the process of mission—all of it is on our terms because we are powerful, because we are established. We have a track record of success, after all."

Yet recently, the Lord led me to an amazing passage, the encounter between Jesus and Nathaniel in John 1. Nathaniel has decided Jesus is a non-entity. Jesus comes from Nazareth, after all.

Nathaniel's skepticism comes from being in power, being at the center. Those at the center decide that anyone not with us is—not against us—[but] just irrelevant. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" It doesn't warrant our time. But the Messiah is from Nazareth.

Surprise, Nathaniel!

What's the problem with being at the center?

God very often is working most powerfully far from the center. Jesus is crucified outside Jerusalem—outside—with the very cynical sign over his head, "The King of the Jews." Surprise—he *is* the King of the Jews. "We had hoped ... " say the disappointed disciples on the road to Emmaus, but he did not fulfill our criteria. In Acts, we read that the cross-cultural missionary thrust did not begin in Jerusalem. It began in Antioch, on the periphery, the margins. But Jerusalem is not ready for Antioch! In fact, even when they go to Antioch, it's just to check on what's happening.

I have come to the conclusion that the powerful, those at the center, must begin to realize that the future shape of things does not belong to them. The future shape of things is on the periphery. The future shape of things is not in Jerusalem, but outside. It is Nazareth. It is Antioch.

If you really want to understand the future of Christianity, go and see what is happening in Asia, Africa, Latin America. It's the periphery—but that's where the action is.

But many American churches are already deeply involved in missions overseas.

Of course. Yet it's so difficult to get American Christians, even those who profess to love missions and their brothers and sisters on the periphery, to actually come and see what is happening where we are. This is especially true of those in the positions of greatest power in the church. I have asked a friend, a pastor of a large church that gives half of its money to missions, to come and spend time on the fringes. But he won't. He wants to spend his study leave in Oxford, in Australia. How can American pastors be leaders if they haven't seen what God is doing elsewhere? Every search process for a senior pastor should ask, "Do you have experience in marginal places, economically deprived places, places with HIV/AIDS? Have you gone to be among them?"

What could equip us to be more countercultural, living in a nation that is very much at the center of power?

We need to begin to read the Bible differently. Americans have been preoccupied with the end of the Gospel of Matthew, the Great Commission: "Go and make." I call them go-and-make missionaries. These are the go-and-fix-it people. The go-and-make people are those who act like it's all in our power, and all we have to do is "finish the task." They love that passage! But when read from the center of power, that passage simply reinforces the illusion that it's about us, that we are in charge.

I would like to suggest a new favorite passage, the Great Invitation. It's what we find if we read from the beginning of the Gospels rather than the end. Jesus says, "Come, follow me. I will make you fishers of men." Not "Go and make," but "I will make you." It's all about Jesus. And do you know the last words of Jesus to Peter, in John 21? "Follow me." The last words of Simon Peter's encounter are the same as the first words.

Can we begin to read those passages that trouble us, that don't reinforce our cultural centeredness? Let's go back to Matthew 25 and read it in the church in America, over and over. Who are Jesus' brothers? The weak, the hungry, the immigrant workers, the economic outcasts. Let's read the passage of this woman who pours ointment over Jesus. Let's ask, who is mostly in the company of Jesus? Not bishops and pastors! The bishops and pastors are the ones who suggest he's a lunatic! Who enjoys his company? The ordinary folk, so ordinary that their characterization is simply this: "sinners." Can we begin to point to those passages?

Yet this ability to read different passages, to read the Bible differently, won't happen until people are displaced from their comfort zones. I thank the Lord for deep friendships he has given to me beyond my comfort zone, beyond my culture, beyond my language. Until that happens, we will all be tribal, all of us.

Many of us want those relationships beyond our own tribe, but how does that happen?

It is very simple. Come and be with us, with no agenda other than to be with us. One friend of mine by the name of Mark, a pastor of a large church, amazed me when he came to visit. He came for three weeks, and he said, "All I want is to come and be with you." At first, I didn't believe him.

"Zac," he said, "wherever you go, I want to go. I'm not asking what I can do—I just want to come and be with you." So he came. We went to an HIV/AIDS clinic, and they asked us to pray. I had introduced him as Rev. Dr. So-and-So—I couldn't just be praying and have him be standing there. So I said, "Mark, you start there, laying hands on all these AIDS patients, and I'll start here." I didn't ask him for permission—I just told him to do it, because that's what you do. And he did.

We went to northern Uganda, where the civil war is causing such suffering. Mark didn't ask, "Is it safe for me?" That amazed me. If it was safe for me, then it would be safe for him. He was not unaware of his power, as a *mzungu*, and that people would think he has a lot of money.

He asked me, "What should I say? What would be appropriate?" "Just bring greetings," I said.

And I tell you what. He did just that. He was so humble. Of course, there are leaders who come to Africa, who go to Asia, and they come away the same. In fact, they come away worse, with a greater sense of how they are going to change the whole world! But we lose our legitimacy as Christian leaders in an affluent country like [the U.S.] if we can't use that affluence in order to experience the situation of those on the margins. "God so loved the world"—how dare we say we identify with him in that love if we don't go there, if we don't choose the margins?

What part does racism play in all this?

You never discover how racist you are until you have the opportunity to be a racist. The genocide in Rwanda was a very challenging experience for me. I came to Washington in 1995, and some friends were asking, "What do we do in Rwanda?" They were saying, "What do we do with these Hutus who are such killers?" As if the Hutus were created killers! "Actually," I said, "I am Hutu." I share an ethnic identity with them, as does most of southwest Uganda.

And until I got to Rwanda, I didn't realize how sympathetic I had been to the Hutu cause. Then it hit me, and I began the journey of being freed from that—freed from that history of sympathy for a cause that was just Hutu. Until the opportunity is given to you to face your own racism, you'll function under its power, under its spell. The only way to lose it is to go.

What do Americans need to understand about the main challenge facing Africa?

Africa's crisis is not poverty; it is not AIDS. Africa's crisis is confidence. What decades of colonialism and missionary enterprise eroded among us is confidence. So a "national leader" from the United States comes—he may have a good-sized congregation, but he knows nothing about Africa!—and we defer to him. We don't even tell him everything we are thinking, out of respect. We Africans must constantly repent of that sense of inferiority.

With its tremendous growth, how is African Christianity countercultural?

With all the growth of the African church, we are still facing the prospect of being a religious minority. It may be that in fifty years' time, Africa will be predominantly Muslim. One hundred years ago, Europe and America decided to take over Africa. They marshaled economic power, manpower; they transported their culture, education, and religion. Now sub-Saharan Africa is culturally Western. And Muslims today are applying the same energies to sub-Saharan Africa.

In Uganda, they are succeeding. Muslims are buying property in Uganda; they are sending their brightest young people to law school. They have established amazing charitable organizations. The mosque in Kampala will be opened soon by Libya's President Qaddafi. It occupies the most central place in the city.

The temptation will be to try to apply power, to try to overcome the incursion of Islam. But that's not the way of the Cross. That's not the way it happens. Remember when Jesus and his disciples were passing through the village in Samaria? For many Christians, the Muslims are like Samaritans—a minority that has left our faith and holds to a different faith. When the Samaritans were not hospitable to Jesus, the disciples said, "Just call fire down and blow these guys up!" Yet it's the Samaritans who listen to the woman who met Jesus at the well. Later in Acts, the same apostles go to the Samaritans.

The situation in America and Africa is not so different. Recently, an American evangelical leader said to me, "In a few years' time, it's going to be very difficult for anyone who wants to be a disciple of Jesus in America." But I said to him, actually, no, it is very difficult now. If you are truly a disciple of Jesus, it is very difficult. The same is true in Africa. When I speak in some countries where Islam is powerful, they shout me down. The Bible says, "When somebody strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other cheek"—but they ask me, "What happens when there are no more cheeks to turn?"

Whether in Africa or America, the Cross is not an easy place to be—it is the symbol of our faith, but we do not love the Cross. "Come down from the Cross" is the cry not just of the Jewish leaders; it's the cry even of us Christians. We want Christ to come down from the Cross. We don't like the Cross.

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Where Atrocity Is Normal

Understanding Christian soldiers who have seen the horrors of war.

Patrick Stone | posted 6/30/2006 12:00AM

Some of the news reports from Iraq regarding the conduct of U.S. soldiers have been disturbing these past months. We have heard about the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison and more recently the alleged mass killing of at least 24 civilians in Haditha, Iraq, in November 2005 by a squad of U.S. marines following an improvised explosive device (IED) that killed one of their comrades. How do we as Christians react to such events, especially when the men or women involved return to our homes and churches? Denial and feigned ignorance has generally been the historical reaction during previous wars. Let the former soldiers remember (and suffer) in silence. Let them work it out with God.

Nothing in this article should be seen as justification for war crimes, but Christians need to be informed and transformed as we struggle with the moral, ethical, legal, and spiritual issues raised by these events.

Several years ago, I was teaching at an African university when a Christian student asked to talk with me. She had heard that I had been a soldier. Over several hours, she struggled to share her story with me. At a young age, her family had emigrated from an East African country to the West where she was raised and educated. At age 16 she requested to return to her homeland to see relatives and discover her roots.

While visiting, a war broke out between her country and its neighbor. Because she was a legal citizen and had just turned 17, she was conscripted into the army. The young woman saw horrific combat, but one event disturbed her most. While on patrol, her squad captured eight young enemy soldiers. Since no prisoner of war facility existed in the country that could pass the Geneva Convention mandates, she and her squad were ordered to execute the prisoners. The squad leader went to each member of the squad and handed them one bullet with the instruction to either execute one of the prisoners or use it on themselves. This student took her prisoner into the desert where the young man pleaded for his life. They were close in age, and he showed her pictures of his family and his grade reports from school. With great difficulty she shot him, but two years later she told me about her daily memories and nightmares of her action and its victim.

Thirty-six years ago, I was in Vietnam where my platoon was set up for the night. Near a stream, I had trained two new men how to set an effective booby-trap. We knew the enemy had tracked our long-range patrol throughout the day and had every reason to believe that we could be attacked that night. Just before dusk, the booby-trap exploded followed by a brief silence and then moaning. We feared the sound would serve as a beacon for our enemy to locate us. As the equatorial night closed around us, my platoon leader whispered to me to take some men and "shut them up."

I was one week from my 20th birthday, a dedicated Christian, and the acting platoon sergeant. As my small patrol of three moved into the high grass, I struggled with what I should do. The man behind me sensed my hesitation, stepped in front of me, and shot the wounded person in the head, killing her. I felt relief as we headed back to our night location. But after talking to the shooter, I learned we killed a young Montanyard woman who had no weapon. She was missing both legs from the explosion.

I felt sick and vowed to God to never put myself in such a situation again. The next morning we discovered a young family of four children and a young woman hiding in some nearby rocks. It seemed likely that the woman we killed was the mother of several of these children and that she was simply looking for water. We fed the family and requested that they be taken out of the field with us by helicopter that afternoon when we were to leave the area. But when the choppers arrived, it became clear that we didn't have enough "lift capacity" to evacuate the troops and the family. As the helicopters departed, I watched artillery rounds envelop the area of our pickup. I believe the family was killed.

Why are these stories important?

We underestimate the role of environmental forces at work in our lives. In combat, you cannot predict with any certainty how you will act when your life is in extreme jeopardy and your friends have been gravely injured and killed. There can be a second's difference between a cowardly or heroic act. If you are in combat more than a few seconds, you will most likely have opportunity to display both.

Most of us cannot imagine ourselves acting in inhumane ways. Scripture refers to such presumption as "self-righteousness." Because we are good, decent, moral, born-again Christians, we think we would never participate in the evils that the battlefield holds. Combat, to many Americans, involves identifiable soldiers killing each other until some side "wins." This is sometimes true, but the reality of warfare is that given enough time in combat, most soldiers will be faced with moral choices that will take a lifetime to untangle.

Following my return from Vietnam I spent most Sunday mornings in a church pew wondering, "What does this have to do with what I saw and did in Vietnam?" This was especially true on one of many anniversary dates such as June 19 (first time I got shot at), June 23 (longest night), August 16 (two friends killed), November 22 (date I was wounded), etc. Since leaving Vietnam 36 years ago, I have rarely attended a Sunday school or church service where specific questions have been raised, let alone discussed, that addressed the events of my tour. Somehow I believe we Christians do not want to be soiled by the brutality of the battlefield, even though we are forced to confront our own involvement in the war as we pay taxes, vote, watch television, and occasionally have firsthand contact with survivors of combat. There is enough blood for all of our hands.

What are we to do?

It is the political leadership of this country who must ensure that whenever we engage in armed conflict, the "realistic" ends will justify the ugly means. It is the military's job to provide leadership, training, and, when necessary, ensure that soldiers make the best choices in impossible circumstances.

When soldiers finally return from war and we hear their stories, Christians can be more active. We must grasp the emotional and spiritual significance of combat for the veterans we meet. Most will move forward with their lives, but some must deal with their numbness and callousness, others may struggle with survivors' guilt, and some may remember too much, while others will remember too little. Each will be in a different place. Only God knows the actual path each will follow. It is our responsibility as family members, friends, and churches to provide refuge for understanding, reflection, and healing throughout their lives.

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SPEAKING OUT

Post-Traumatic Faith

Understanding the plight of Christians who have killed in combat.

Patrick Stone | posted 5/01/2006 12:00AM

Like most Americans in November 2004, I wanted to shield my eyes from the TV images of a Marine shooting a wounded enemy insurgent in a Fallujah mosque. For me, it was a reminder of events 34 years ago when I served in the infantry in Vietnam.

I was 20, a squad leader of 12 men, and a dedicated Christian who was serving my country just as my brother, father, uncles, and grandfather had in earlier wars. In late November 1970, on a Sunday morning around 9:00 a.m., we were in the jungles of the central highlands of Vietnam. One of our booby traps exploded. I followed three blood trails a short distance and saw movement in some bushes 15 yards ahead in the tall elephant grass.

I was afraid. Whatever was hiding in the bushes could kill me before I killed it. The idea that I should try to take this potentially deadly man prisoner did not seem an option. Instead, I fired almost 60 rounds of ammunition into those bushes, and when the movement still did not stop, I fired a rifle grenade. The explosion was higher and closer than I anticipated, causing a knee wound which finally sent me home, safe and sound. It also killed the teenaged enemy soldier who had lost both legs in the initial blast of our booby trap.

In 1995, when my wife, Barbara, and I revisited Vietnam, we came upon a graveyard for Vietcong soldiers. The graveyard faced the mountainside where I had killed my enemy and wounded myself. I carried his memory home and back again, and I was grateful for the opportunity to visit what was likely his grave.

Taking and handling prisoners in combat is always risky, difficult business. Stories abound among combat troops of suicidal enemies who want to take others with them to their graves and of booby-trapped bodies waiting for the uninitiated to make final and deadly searches. Soldiers learn not to take unnecessary risks with an enemy, living, wounded, or apparently dead. In each case, a soldier has only milliseconds to decide.

These facts in no way absolve soldiers from their obligations for the fair handling of enemy wounded. But the killing of fellow humans is a deadly necessity for a combat soldier. Fine lines between lawful and unlawful killing are drawn in retrospect, rarely under the watchful but often distorted eye of the television camera.

A larger truth

A truth that does not receive enough attention is that killing in combat is the beginning of a long journey for most soldiers. At the moment of killing, a soldier may experience relief, excitement, rage, sickness, sadness, exuberance, numbness, or even satisfaction.

It is in the years that follow that the decision of an instant works itself out within the life of the individual. The vestiges of these intense memories play out in the dreams, marriage, parenting, and work relationships of a former soldier.

On the home front, most non-combatants do not wish to confront the emotions these TV images engender. They rarely make the connection of their own personal involvement in these moments. The soldier is only the tip of the spear. The voters and taxpayers do not see their participation as meaningful, yet without them, young soldiers would not be in deadly positions that require killing.

The returning soldier often, though not always, feels a sense of estrangement, of being different, even when welcomed home. Medals and speeches about duty, honor, country, courage, and heroism all ring hollow and feel disconnected from the images of death, both of friends and foes, that are the reality of combat. No justification ultimately satisfies the soldier who has killed or witnessed killing.

Last year, while I was working as a congressional fellow in the U.S. Senate, advising on veterans and military mental health matters, I spoke with a senior Army officer who had recently returned from a month-long visit to Iraq. His convoy had been attacked and some enemy combatants had been killed. It was his first brush with combat, and he said it was changing him, though he could not articulate how.

As Christians greet and welcome home the men and women who have served in Iraq, we should not be naive about what they have seen and done. Many are committed Christians who will spend the remainder of their lives trying to make sense of the events they have endured. It is work they must labor on with God. Jingoistic, rehearsed responses will only put would-be comforters in the same league as Job's friends. Listen to their stories, and let your life be challenged and changed as God's way is revealed in their lives.

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