

# Serving in Sudan

MARCH, 2004

## Food Falls at the Doorstep of People in Need

It wasn't front page news that morning, but in June, 2002, the Government of Sudan military launched violent dawn attacks simultaneously on four defenseless villages in south Sudan, destroying homes, burning crops and killing unarmed men, women and children. In a related event, the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), whose subsidiary PetroChina trades on the NYSE as PTR, began drilling for oil in this area of south Sudan.

As a result of these attacks, over one thousand people from the villages of Liang, Dengaji, Kawaji and Yawaji were killed. Without telephones or radios, these unarmed villagers died without being able to alert the outside world. Their only crime was being from the Mabaan tribe in an area suspected of having oil. The Mabaan are substantially Christian and live in a remote area of Sudan, a Muslim country.

Servant's Heart learned of these atrocities when refugees from the villages stumbled into our medical clinic, having walked for ten days. We were able to provide emergency relief to the survivors and their infant children and learn of the slaughter of their families and the destruction of their villages. A few months later, Dennis Bennett led a multinational team to visit the remains of the villages, walking 12 hours from the airstrip in brutal heat.

The Servant's Heart team brought back additional eyewitness



*Servant's Heart worked with the UN World Food Programme to provide grain to thousands of needy families.*

and photos of human remains to the outside world. While the US government officially denied that the attacks occurred, they could not deny that the region had suffered catastrophic destruction of crops and described the level of malnutrition as "among the worst we have ever seen".

As a direct result, the situation was brought to the attention of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA verified that the situation was as bad as reported and worked with the WFP and Servant's Heart to design a solution.

In record time, the WFP committed to provide emergency intervention, if Servant's Heart would be responsible for equitable distribution to the neediest people. Over the ensuing months, our country manager gathered village and church

leaders and set up a system for fair distribution.

What's a food drop like? It's not like shopping at a grocery store! The noise is incredible as cargo planes fly in with loads of grain in 200-pound sacks. Flying at less than 200 feet off the ground, the airplanes approach the "drop zone" with their cargo doors open. As each plane reaches the target, the pilot puts it into a steep climb, the heavy grain sacks slide out the open cargo door and plummet quickly to the earth. The air is filled with the sound of the heavy grain sacks plopping on the earth as the sound of the plane quickly fades away. Then silence, as everyone waits anxiously. At a signal, the men gathered around the drop zone rush to carry the heavy sacks to a staging area where the food can be distributed. As the next plane approaches, everyone clears the drop zone and another plane drops its' load.

Without your support, thousands more people might have died. Thank you for making a difference!



*A cargo plane drops thousands of pounds of grain to starving people.*

## Developing Self-Sufficient Farming Communities

Most people in Sudan are subsistence farmers. They grow food to feed their family and may end up with a little extra to trade for other things they need, but they are at high risk if the harvest is poor for any reason, including disruption from the war. In south Sudan, they have none of the conveniences we take for granted and they live with very little infrastructure, like roads, electricity, clean water, schools and banks. A farmer's 'wealth' is typically in his harvest and he has nothing set aside for "a rainy day".

In the south Blue Nile and Eastern Upper Nile regions of south Sudan, only a few wealthy families have donkeys for transportation. Communication is generally by word-of-mouth and "roads" are just footpaths through the woods. As a result, a farmer can have surplus grain and people can be dying from starvation in a neighboring village, but it is close to impossible to take excess grain from one place to another without grain sacks and transport.

In south Sudan, life is difficult just to feed your family. The local staple is sorghum, a nutritious, sweet grain, and sometimes maize (corn). Seed and food are the same thing, so each year, a farmer must decide how much seed to plant in May or early June, and how much to keep to eat until harvest in October or November. The past two harvests have been disappointing in most of south Sudan due to a drought and many families have starved.

These are the stark realities of subsistence farming in many parts of the world, but in Sudan, the war continues to displace families from their farms and villages, creating more difficulty. Over the past twenty years, government troops have often burned fields at harvest, starving entire villages and wiping out storehouses, grain sacks, tools

and other farming resources. Many have died without food.

Servant's Heart has been helping farmers get back on their feet in several ways. We have provided seed, tools and encouragement to subsistence and displaced farmers.

We have fed families until fields were harvested. We purchased excess grain from farmers in one area and transported it to those in need in other villages, encouraging farmers to

plant more seed than their family needs so they can help neighboring or displaced people in nearby villages. We hope to establish a long-term marketplace for excess grain and other needed goods.

Servant's Heart has a vision to help subsistence and displaced farmers to provide for their families independently. In 2003, we provided hand tools to make farmers more efficient. Each family received a set of tools that included an axe, a big hoe, a small hoe, a machete (called a 'panga'), a scythe, and a slasher, which is a machete with a

bent tip designed to cut weeds and grass efficiently.

These tools help them produce more food for the same amount of seed and be more efficient in preparing the ground and clearing grasses. Each family that received a

Servant's Heart has provided seed, tools and encouragement to subsistence and displaced farmers.

set of tools is expected to share it with other families in the area. Without these tools, these families would be doing this work using pointed sticks, since their tools

were destroyed by the war.

Storage is also a challenge. If a farmer has a bountiful harvest, he has nowhere to store the grain to keep it from animals, such as rats and monkeys. It provides a hiding place for one of the world's most poisonous snakes, black mambas. These tools provide resources to build storage bins to store grain.

Servant's Heart is working with farmers to create sufficient food to feed families. Please pray with us for farmers that are preparing to plant the next crop, that it will be bountiful.



*Distributing hand tools to farmers in Eastern Upper Nile, south Sudan*

## Entire Villages Destroyed by Oil Development

When the outside world learned of the attacks on Liang, Dengaji, Yawaji and Kawaji in 2002, it was a surprise to many that these four villages had strategic significance. It quickly became apparent they were in a prime location for oil exploration by the China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) and its partners. CNPC, sometimes under the umbrella of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, has been exploring and exporting oil from Sudan in cooperation with, and under the protection of, the Government of Sudan.

The Government of Sudan has aggressively pursued a “scorched earth” policy towards the traditional residents of land where oil is suspected, in order to facilitate the discovery and extraction of oil. Previously, the Government of Sudan was one of the world’s worst debtor nations with one of the highest per-capita national debt ratios in the world.

The human impact of oil exploration and export has been well-documented. The Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company is jointly owned by CNPC, OVL (India) (formerly Talisman Energy), and Petronas (Malaysia). Thanks to oil, the Government of Sudan now has the financial resources to pursue jihad against the southern Sudanese.

For example, around Bentiu in Western Upper Nile, Nuer tribespeople were killed or chased off their land by the Government of Sudan military and its allied militia forces (mujihadeen) as the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company extended its exploratory wells. It has been producing up to 200,000 barrels of oil per day over the past few years.

Something similar is poised to happen on the eastern side of the Nile River, in Eastern Upper Nile. CNPC, in partnership with OVL

(India) and Petronas (Malaysia), has begun pumping about 10,000 barrels of oil per day from the Adar Yel oil field and is aggressively seeking to expand its reach south towards the Ethiopian border, regardless of humanitarian impact.

In early 2003, CNPC built an all-weather road from the Adar Yel field south to Longochok. From March through May, they found production-quality oil in three wells. Once oil was discovered, in May and June a militia allied with the Government of Sudan attacked the unarmed village of Longochok, killing many civilians, including the pastor, and taking 16 women and children hostage.

The goal of the CNPC appears to be to reach a village called Guweng, a remote border town near Ethiopia. Chevron discovered and documented oil near Guweng in 1984, capping off their exploratory wells and leaving south Sudan because of the war.

The burning of homes and fields are typical tactics to clear the land in preparation for oil extraction in Sudan. It leaves villagers without food, shelter, tools or seed. When a village is destroyed, it brings long-term devastation to the area. Not only are

people killed during the attack, but household items necessary to sustain life are destroyed, leaving the weak, infirm, young and aged to die of malnutrition and disease.

When a village loses everything, there are no resources to share. For example, when metal tools are destroyed, there is no way to re-build houses, which are protection from wild animals and poisonous snakes and shelter from the elements, and more people die. When pots and pans are melted by fire, there is no way to cook food or carry water. Most importantly, when crops are burned and seeds are destroyed, there is nothing to eat but wild fruits and nuts and no way to grow new crops, which will take months once they are planted. Malnutrition and disease is common among survivors of village attacks, often killing as many people than died directly from bullets, grenades and the fires started by Government soldiers.

While the Government of Sudan has been unwilling to invest in the infrastructure of south Sudan, the all-weather roads built by the oil companies are enabling the Government of Sudan to move troops quickly and efficiently to remote areas. To get from the Adar Yel oil fields, which is also the regional military capital, to Longochok, previously took 12 hours of difficult marching on footpaths through the jungle. Now the travel time for government soldiers is less than three hours by military truck, over graded, well-tended gravel roads. These roads are maintained by the CNPC.

**CNPC is listed in the US stock exchange through it’s PetroChina (PTR) subsidiary and you can help by making sure you don’t own it as part of your personal investments.** Without a signed peace agreement, oil exploration will likely justify the unholy partnership between CNPC and the Government of Sudan and lead to more suffering and death. Please pray with us for peace.



*A family rebuilds in a displacement camp after losing everything.*



## Mission Statement

As a responsible Christian organization, Servant's Heart seeks to honor God by serving the Christian church in restricted-access regions of the world with the goal of self-sufficiency. Servant's Heart addresses the community's immediate relief and developmental needs of spiritual growth, educational programs, public health and primary medical care, and agricultural and economic infrastructure.

"Blessed are those who trust in the Lord. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green and they go right on producing delicious fruit." Jeremiah 17:47-8 (NIV)

We're on the Web!  
[servantsheartrelief.org](http://servantsheartrelief.org)

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Servant's Heart is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, EIN#91-2138423.  
All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Dear Friends:

The past few months have brought changes to the Bennett household and the Servant's Heart's offices that have been challenging. We've experienced God's grace and blessings in new ways. We moved our US office 3,000 miles from Washington to New York state in January.

Our toll-free number remains **(888)222-0793** and our direct line is now **(631)474-3258**. Our ministry address continues to be **P.O. Box 60075, Renton, WA 98058**. When this changes to New York, we will notify you promptly. The Servant's Heart U.S. office continues to be in our house, to keep costs down.

While both of us continue to work with the ministry, after prayer and discussion with the board of directors, Dennis re-entered the commercial world and moved onto the Board and Diane became Executive Director. Dennis' new "for profit" consulting position takes us to New York. He hopes to be able to return to Sudan in the next year with Diane. Our African management team continues to grow in depth and skills, managing many of the day-to-day responsibilities of the organization.

Our move brings us closer to the U.S. media and political centers on the East coast and three hours closer to Africa, which makes communication easier. This winter has seen two other improvements that have lowered our expense and increased communication. We can now use the satellite phone to send and receive emails to "the bush," allowing us to routinely exchange management-level information directly with our team in Sudan. We also maintain daily contact between our main compound in Sudan and our office in Nairobi using our new Kenyan radio license. Both changes improve safety and the speed of communication back and forth. We now receive real-time prayer requests from Sudan and can respond more quickly to emergencies.

We're making progress on the Physical issues in Sudan, detailed in this issue, to bring God's grace to hurting people. We continue to have a deep and continuing concern for the Spiritual needs of the people in southern Blue Nile and Eastern Upper Nile, Sudan. Join with us in prayer for peace in Sudan. We give thanks for your partnership.

May God richly bless you! *Dennis and Diane Bennett*

## Developing an "Attitude of Gratitude"

How do people half a world away say, "Thank you"? When Servant's Heart works with people who are hurting, they are grateful. The gratitude comes pouring out from people of all ages. We are often asked to be messengers to pass their gratitude back to you.

The mission of Servant's Heart is to address the various needs of people who've been hurt and discouraged by years of persecution. We work on emergency relief situations and longer-term infrastructure development, showing God's love. We address the needs of the whole person, no matter what god they worship, but many are Christians.

They are often thankful to God for providing for their needs. In the photo, villagers attending church gave an offering of grain, their only wealth. This offering plate is overflowing with maize.

This might not sound like where you worship, but this is common in the areas where Servant's Heart works. Our goal



*An offering of maize in thanksgiving in Eastern Upper Nile.*

is to encourage those who have been persecuted and to help them regain a perspective of thanksgiving to God for sparing their lives and giving them hope.

We want to thank you for your support for your partnership in the work we are doing. It's our goal to have an "attitude of gratitude". **Thank you!**