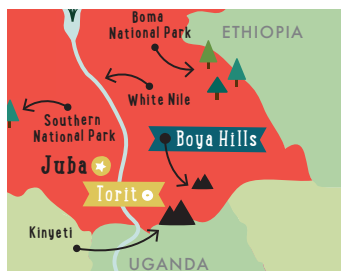




THE LAARIM

● A South Sudanese people group who are passionate about cows. They breed them, eat their meat, use them as dowry to get a bride, drink their blood and milk, and sleep on their hides.

● Believe in a god who controls all of life, including the health of their cattle. They believe spirits roam the earth. They pray to them and give them offerings.



WHERE ARE THEY?

The Laarim live in the Boya Hills, near to Torit. They live in small settlements in a rugged and hilly landscape. There are grasslands and scrub bushes. Roads are mostly dirt tracks. Missionaries fly in on small planes, landing on grass runways.



LIVES ARE BEING CHANGED

Susanna used to be a witch doctor in the Laarim community of South Sudan. That meant that she tried to use magic and superstition to heal people. She also sold things like curses and charms. Being a witch doctor was a very powerful job. It meant she had lots of authority and money. One day Susanna heard about the love and freedom that is found in Jesus.

Her friend Maria had been attending Bible studies at the home of an AIM missionary. When Maria got to know more about Jesus, she decided that she wanted to become

a Christian. Maria then told Susanna about all that she had learnt. She told her what Jesus means to her. Susanna could see now much Maria had changed. So she wanted to know more about Jesus too.

Now Susanna has decided to follow Jesus as well. She has left witchcraft and has given up all the power that job gave her. Instead, she is seeking a deeper knowledge of God's Word. She has even opened her home for a weekly Bible study. Together with Maria and more of their friends, they are sharing all they are learning about Jesus, as well as praises and prayers!



Most of the Laarim believe in God but few know what it means to follow Jesus. Pray that they would trust that Jesus knows best for them, even when the Bible clashes with their culture. There is a church and some small groups, about 30 committed Christians. Pray that the church would continue to learn and grow so that one day they will no longer need missionaries to help them.

MISSION IN ACTION

MEET ANDREW

One day I picked up AIM's magazine and God stopped me in my tracks. I read about people in Africa who had never heard about Jesus. God told me he wanted me to go. I argued in prayer but God kept replying that his power was made perfect in weakness.

SENT BY A CHURCH

Andrew's pastor John said: "When Andrew joined us, he already knew that God was calling him to be a missionary. We encouraged him to follow that call.

We were able to work with AIM to send Andrew to South Sudan. The stories he sent back were very exciting and really encouraged our church, as we supported him. We knew we were all part of what Andrew was doing."

RAYNERS LANE BAPTIST CHURCH is in Harrow. One of the most religious and racially diverse places in the UK.



Andrew Wallace

SINGING ABOUT JESUS

In July I got on a plane to join that team in South Sudan. I learnt some of the Laarim language before staying with a local family in their home built from mud for a week. It was a totally alien environment.

At first all I could offer were smiles and friendliness. I spent my first six months learning the language from recordings. I would speak to people, sitting under trees, and chat with local children.

AT FIRST I COULD ONLY SMILE!

After six months I crafted some basic Bible stories. Knowing these in Laarim meant I could speak about faith and pray. I also volunteered in the school to teach, as there was a huge shortage of teachers. We did a nativity play in the local language across the valley and wrote songs with the local children for them to learn and sing about Jesus.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

In 2022, Lisa joined AIM as a short term missionary. She committed to serving for one year. For six months she joined the team living among the Laarim.

Her team leader was a missionary called Jacob. He leads the youth work among the local boys, as well as leading a church meeting on Sundays and holding Bible studies in various villages. Love, another long term missionary who lives among the Laarim, and Lisa started a Bible study in Susanna's home. Lisa says, "Seeing how God has changed people's hearts and lives was unforgettable!"



Lisa Flach

