



## Episode 1,743: Lockdowns Are Crushing the Developing World

Guest: Gret Glyer

**WOODS:** I don't know what to say. I can't believe, as I was just telling you, that we're still in a position where people think this lockdown approach is a good idea. Or I'm even willing to meet – not really, but sort of in principle – willing to meet these people halfway by saying, well, how about not locking down places that don't have any problem with the virus whatsoever? How about that? At least have some kind of compromise or something. And it's just been this crazy, blanket, one-size-fits-all policy that they've wanted to impose.

So let's start off first with your background. I mean, I know you've been on the program more than once, but I have a boatload of new listeners now because I gave a talk on the lockdown policy on YouTube that –

**GLYER:** Yeah, I saw that.

**WOODS:** Oh, thanks. I think it's over 800,000 views. It got me a lot of new listeners. People may not be familiar with you. You lived in Malawi for several years, which at that time was the world's poorest country, and you are the creator of the DonorSee app. So give me your life story in two minutes. Ready, go.

**GLYER:** Okay, sounds good. Well, hello to all of Tom's new listeners. I think this might be my fourth or fifth time on your show, so thanks again for having me. Yeah, I lived in Malawi for three years. When I was over there, I was exposed to global poverty for the first time. And I'm a private school kid, I grew up going to private schools, and then for this private school kid to graduate from college, move to Malawi, and be exposed to people living on \$1 a day, that was shocking for me. And so I started doing blogs and videos and trying to tell people back at home what I was seeing in Malawi.

And over time, I started doing these small crowdfunding campaigns, and people would donate and then I would send them these picture or video updates just like a blog on my website with a little PayPal button. And that's how it all got started, was people just funding small projects through my blog. And over time, that evolved into an entire platform that you can check out at [DonorSee.com](http://DonorSee.com).

And the way that DonorSee works is it's a way for donors to see where their money goes when they donate. So you go to [DonorSee.com](http://DonorSee.com), you find one of hundreds of projects available, and you can fund them. And that funding goes directly to the people that you see in those projects. And then our partners on the ground will send our donors video updates on exactly how their money was used to help that person. So if you want to help build someone a house,

you'll get to see the construction of that house. If you want to help someone get a hearing aid, you'll see them hear for the first time. So anything that you donate, even if you donate just \$1, we send you a high-quality video update on every single donation.

**WOODS:** It's an amazing service. It really is an amazing service that I myself have used multiple times, my listeners have used, I've promoted it quite a bit. I remember, I've told this story before, but I'll just say there was a Christmas where I have – you know, I have five daughters, but one of them at the time was not really old enough to understand what was going on. So the rest of them and I sat down in front of my computer, and we found people somewhere in the developing world, children who were the age of each of my children, and we would donate to something for each of them. And I think in this case, it was pitched as something deliberately for Christmas, and it would involve shoes and basic things that they needed. And then we got some kind of photo and video response showing them with the gifts sometime later. It was an amazing thing, and I think it was very good for my kids to be exposed to that. So definitely, definitely, definitely check out the DonorSee app. I'll link to it on the show notes page, [TomWoods.com/1743](http://TomWoods.com/1743), but it's just DonorSee. You can find it wherever you get apps for your phone.

So all right, so now we have to deal with what's going on in 2020. And the response has been, for the most part, everybody stay in your house. And okay, I mean, I suppose if I have to do that, if there's good reason for it, I would do it. I have been making fun of the medical profession a little bit by saying, for years and years, we've almost worshiped the medical profession because of modern medicine. And then when this happens, the best they can come up with is: stay in your house. But then they've come back to me and said, *Well, on the other hand, Tom, let's be reasonable. Viruses have a billion-year head start on us, so try to have some sympathy for what we're facing here.*

So anyway, you obviously keep an eye on the developing world, and you keep an eye on the world's poorest countries. So can we focus in particular, though, just for the time being on Africa? Because in Africa, they have not seen a big problem with the virus. And there are some explanations for that. Maybe Africa, the average age is quite low and this virus tends to hit people who are much older. But African has been largely spared.

**GLYER:** Yeah, that's correct. So one of the things that I saw happening back in May – and I started posting about this immediately on my blog, to our email newsletter that goes out to DonorSee every Sunday; I posted about this on Instagram. Back in May, I started realizing that the governments in Sub Saharan Africa, many of them were locking down their citizens. And at first, I think there was a brief period of time where everyone kind of said, okay, this two-week thing, I think I can kind of roll with it. And there was a brief period of time where I think a lot of people were kind of understanding. And then obviously, it just ballooned into something beyond what anyone had expected.

But what was going on in these Sub Saharan African countries – so Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda – is they were locking down their citizens. And here's what's weird about that. Here in America, we have social safety nets, we have all sorts of precautions in place to help people who are in rough situations. In a place like Sierra Leone, for example, when you lock people down, two-thirds of the country are living hand to mouth. In other words, they make enough money in the day to feed themselves for that day. So the government is telling them to lock down for weeks and then what turned into months at a time. When you do that to

people in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, many of these Sub Saharan African countries, what you're doing is you're sentencing them to hunger and starvation.

Now, this is something that, perhaps there was a period of time where they thought the coronavirus would somehow be worse than the hunger and starvation that the lockdowns would produce. And as you referenced, this is from *Science* magazine on August 7th, they say, "Four months after the first cases in Africa were detected, prevalence and mortality are still low." So these countries in Africa, which they're already suffering from tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, and they already have really big diseases that they're dealing with, they're not seeing a whole lot of coronavirus because they have a very young population. And yet the government's still locked down their citizens and are producing unprecedented hunger like I've never seen in my entire lifetime and I don't think that we may ever see again. It's horrific.

**WOODS:** So since coming back from Malawi, you've been working from the United States on the DonorSee project. Have you gone back since your move back here?

**GLYER:** Yeah, I've been back to Malawi. I went back in 2019. Yeah, I spent a little time there, and I also spent some time — I've done a little bit of other traveling, like to Haiti and so forth after the hurricane. So yeah.

**WOODS:** I mean, I don't know what the communications infrastructure is like, but are you able to be in contact with people you got to know?

**GLYER:** Oh, I'm in contact with all of them constantly.

**WOODS:** What are they telling you?

**GLYER:** Well, so thankfully, Malawi, is a country that the citizens — they were going to lock down their citizens, and the citizens rose up, they rioted, they protested, and the government actually relented.

**WOODS:** Whoa. Malawi, a model for the world.

**GLYER:** [laughing] Yes. They did a really good job with that. The one thing that that the government still snuck in there, which I think is too bad, is that the Malawi did cancel their schools. And not getting education is one thing, but a lot of the kids who attend these schools, they depend on the meal that they get from the schools on a daily basis. So I was frustrated to see that, but as far as the response has been for many countries, Malawi has done a really good job.

But I think one of the worst cases that I've seen is Sierra Leone. So we have a malnutrition clinic that we're in contact with over there, and what we found was during the lockdown, which lasted several months, people became very hungry. And it so they have zones in Sierra Leone, so similar to zip codes. And during the lockdown, you were not allowed to leave your zone, so you could not travel from one zone to the next. So there were people who were literally starving in the zone that was next to the zone where the malnutrition clinic was, and they were not allowed to go get treatment for themselves from the malnutrition clinic because it was illegal. So as soon as the lockdowns were lifted several months later, the

malnutrition clinic that we're in contact with in Sierra Leone got flooded with an enormous amount of malnutrition cases that had been pent up during this time of the lockdown.

**WOODS:** I want to read a little something from the blog post you sent me, and I'll also link to this blog post on the show notes page. And you have every right to point to your having been correct. You have every right to do that, and you should do it. It's necessary at a time like this. You write this:

"It was 122 days ago when I released my first video warning people that lockdowns in poor countries were a massive mistake. As I became more vocal, I got pushback. Doctors warned me that COVID-19 would wreak havoc on the medical systems in impoverished countries. They said that this virus would kill millions in Africa alone."

So here we are five months after the virus first landed in Africa. Who was right, Gret or the expert doctors? Well, one thing I know for sure, knowing how the world works after having lived in it for 48 years, Gret, is that you got a barrage of apologies in your inbox.

**GLYER:** [laughing] Yeah, so many people who had pushed back back in May are now coming back and saying, "You know what, Gret? You were right." And that's exactly what's happened.

**WOODS:** That's the way the world is, isn't it? So yeah, you were warning about this all that time ago. And for heaven's sake, that should have been obvious to pretty much anybody. And again, with a situation like when you're dealing with really, really impoverished countries, it is much, much clearer in a case like that that they are trying to balance a variety of bad situations. Now, in the Western world, you can say, *Oh, what's the big deal? Your kid doesn't go to soccer practice for a few months.* You can ridicule people. You can say, *Oh, I guess you just won't be able to get your coveted haircut for a while,* the way they made people feel stupid and ridiculous for wanting to live their lives.

But in this situation, it is so much clearer that it's not a matter of *I don't get to go to soccer practice.* It's *I could legitimately die from a lot of things stemming from these lockdowns.* You would think there would have been some sympathy for what you were saying. But the monomania – it really is a monomania – has made rational thought impossible. I don't know what else to conclude, other than if we can –

And by the way, one other thing. I'm not one of these conspiracy people, but I'll tell you this. I'm not going to spend my time lecturing them for being dopes or something, because at this point, I understand why people are looking for crazy explanations, because the ones that are on the surface make no sense. *Oh, yeah, they just care about the well-being of people in Africa.* They clearly don't. There is no way to account for lockdowns in Africa that come from a place of goodwill. That's impossible at this point. And certainly five months in, it's impossible. So when I come across people with crazy theories as to what the secret agenda is, okay, maybe they're wrong, but I'm not going to lecture them, because they're just trying to make sense of this and it makes no sense.

**GLYER:** Yeah, I think a lot of people have had a similar experience over these past several months, where a lot of institutions that they've believed in, they've started to massively lose credibility. And I have to say, after going online and spending a lot of time – it's not like I have a small platform. We have over 13,000 donors on DonorSee. We've sent over 10,000

videos to our donors. We have a pretty big platform. And a lot of our donors were very in tune, very generous during this time. But that's kind of where it ended. Trying to get the word out about the effect that lockdowns were having in poor countries – and I would love to get into the numbers in just a second, because there are numbers now.

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**GLYER:** I'd love to get to that in just a second. But having all of that, having that platform and trying to get out there and being met with silence was a frustrating experience. I was like, is there no one who wants to talk about this? It was and continues to be very frustrating. But yeah, I have some numbers here I'd love to just quickly go over.

**WOODS:** Yeah, because I've been very interested in this also, because what you get a lot of times when you try and talk about this, again, in the prosperous West, is – this is the argument I've heard – *Oh, you must not have known anyone who's died from it. If you knew someone who has died from it, you'd take it more seriously.* And my response to that, first of all, is number one, that's extremely anti-scientific. I mean, I'm very sorry if you've known someone who's died from it. But I wouldn't say, well, I knew someone who died of heart disease; therefore, the only priority we can have is heart disease. That'd be extremely selfish and weird.

So what I've tried to say is, but see, there are other lives also that are lost, because of what you think to be anti-COVID policies that you're advocating. And those people's lives matter, too. And we can't be so self-centered and anti-social that we think that the only lives that matter are the ones that we personally know. Other people's lives are important also, namely the ones you're going to talk to us about right now.

**GLYER:** Yeah, so here's the starting point. For the last 29 years in a row, every single year for the last 29 years, the child mortality rate for children under five who have died, has gone down. Every year for the last 29 years. So 29 years ago, the child mortality rate was about 92 kids for every 1,000 under five died. And today, miraculously – or I should say last year in 2019, miraculously, it went from 92 down to 38 kids for every 1,000 under the age of five died. So those are obviously very high numbers that probably shock a lot of your listeners, but the reality is, there's a lot of children who die from tuberculosis and malaria and HIV in the poorest half of the world, that we just don't have visibility on here in the developed world. So every year for the last 29 years, the child mortality rate has reduced.

I've made a prediction – we won't have the numbers for at least six months, but I've made a prediction that 2020 will be the first year in 30 years where the child mortality rate increases. And the reason I say that – and I've been predicting this for a while. And the reason I say that is because, as a result of lockdowns in poor countries in the developing world, there are now an additional 10,000 children dying a month, and there are an additional 550,000 children being struck by severe malnutrition each month due to the lockdowns. So that's 10,000 extra children just dying from literally not having enough food. Like they can't get enough food put it in their bodies to keep them alive. That's 10,000 children a month extra.

In addition to that, the lockdowns have created massive supply chain disruptions. So here in America, we have like a wonderful infrastructure that is top-notch in comparison to the rest of the world. That's not the case in places like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda. They just don't

have the same infrastructure. They don't have the same level of highways. They don't have backup semi-trucks, etc. So because of these supply chain disruptions – this is according to *The New York Times*, there's an expected additional 6.3 million cases of tuberculosis that cannot be treated, with an additional 1.4 million deaths this year in 2020. Most of those will be children under five. Those are the people who suffer from tuberculosis the most.

So these are numbers that I'm expecting will add up – and again, I don't want this to happen. I think it's terrible that it's happening already, and I hope I'm wrong. But because of the extra tuberculosis deaths, because of the extra hunger deaths, I'm guessing 2020 is going to be the first year we ever see a spike in the child mortality rate.

**WOODS:** It's unbelievable that the sorts of people who would normally be advocating for these people the loudest – I mean, they don't necessarily accomplish anything, but the sort of people who would loudly on Twitter – they'd put a tweet out on Twitter. They wouldn't go create DonorSee like you. They would put a tweet out and feel like they had done their duty. Not a word from them. Nothing. Because it's almost like it's politically incorrect to die of something other than COVID at this point. And I hate to sound like this. I really, really hate to sound belligerent and unreasonable. But I feel like we've been more than reasonable up to this point. We've been reasonable to a fault with people like this, for whom people dying from clearly preventable deaths have become invisible. Invisible. We don't care. And if you do care about them, then you're going to be called names for not caring about the people you're supposed to care about exclusively. It is absolutely a bizarre situation.

So meanwhile, you're trying to run DonorSee, and I would suspect – I don't know. I hope it's been better news, but I would suspect that you're having, let's say, trouble generating the kinds of funds you'd like, because so many people are living with so much uncertainty. Like in the United States, we have governors who are just plain voodoo practitioners at this point. They're pretending that their Phase II is super scientific. This is ridiculous. They're just trying to figure out what's going to be politically the best path forward for them according to the poll numbers.

But most of it is just voodoo pseudoscience, because when I look at graphs of the different states and the different countries of the world, and I look at the progress of the virus in terms of the phony-baloney case count – which is not a good metric obviously – but even deaths, hospitalizations, things that are objective, it follows the same pattern no matter what you do. I can show you all these graphs, and you will not be able to tell me which graph shows a state or a country where they had lockdowns. You won't be able to tell how long the lockdown was, how hard the lockdown was, when the lockdown was lifted, whether they had a mask mandate, when they instituted that mask mandate, when they lifted that mask mandate. You cannot tell, looking at these graphs. It's almost as if the virus does what it will regardless of our feeble attempts to stop it.

So with all that kind of uncertainty going on, they can't even say, *Look, when we accomplish this, when we get to this point, then we'll let you live your lives again.* It's so arbitrary that I think people are living with a lot of uncertainty, to the point where they feel like they've got to hang on to their money for their own self-protection. And meanwhile, you're trying to tell them there are people whose suffering, you can't even hold a candle to it, it's so, so terrible. Has it been harder to generate donations at this time?

**GLYER:** It has been harder to generate awareness than usual. There's so much noise and disinformation right now, that it's been very difficult to generate awareness. I'm grateful to say that a lot of our donor base, they're very in tune with exactly what's going on. I've been very vocal to them about what we're doing. So over the last six months, we've approximately doubled in size. So I'm very grateful for that. A lot of charities have not been so fortunate. In fact, the blog post that you referenced, there's an article there from *The Guardian* which reports that in the UK, the charities that are serving the world's poorest, the same people that we serve, half of them are expected to close within a year. So now a lot of charities are not having as much fortune as we are in terms of the ability to generate donations from their donor base. But thankfully, we have been growing in the last six months. And in fact, over the last year, we've about quadrupled in size.

That said, every dollar raised is a life-or-death amount for the people that we're serving. So we are growing a lot, and we're grateful for that. And we just added staff the last two months. But at the same time, we would love to do even more. There's a lot of people – for every person that we help, there are probably 10 or 20 people that we're not getting to yet. And that's something that keeps me up at night, so I'm very in tune with, we'll call it the demand out there for what we're doing.

**WOODS:** All right, Gret, as we close, I want to give you an opportunity just to speak directly to the folks listening here and tell them what you'd like to see from them, because you're talking to people of goodwill who are as horrified by this as you are. And what should they do?

**GLYER:** So I really only have one ask of anyone who's listening to this, and it's a very simple ask. It will cost them nothing, but I think it's very necessary at a time like this. And the ask is this: please share this episode and talk about it with your friends and your family in your network. We have a link where you can donate, and I would love to see some donations, and I'll tell you about that in a second. But the main thing that we need right now is we need people talking about this. Lockdowns in poor countries have caused the greatest hunger crisis of our lifetime. And if I could just summarize it in this one sentence that you can find on my blog:

Children will die in record numbers this year because governments mishandled a virus that primarily attacks the old. It's the most frustrating thing to – we're a video-based platform, so every day I'm seeing videos of malnourished children who need treatments, they need peanut butter paste, they need just these basic necessities. And it's frustrating to see this just be completely glanced over as if it's not happening.

In fact, I'll tell you one really sad story from Sierra Leone. We had a child come in who was just almost like skeletal and was barely able to keep his head up. It was a 12-year-old kid. I was sent a video, and it was uploaded to our platform to get help for this kid. And it was not in time. We uploaded the video, but within hours of just the kid arriving at the hospital, he passed away. And this is in large part due to it not being legal for him to go get the malnutrition treatment that he needed from the nearby clinic in the other zone in Sierra Leone.

So please share this episode. And then if you would like to get involved on a deeper level, we've set up a link, [DonorSee.com/lockdowns](https://DonorSee.com/lockdowns), and that's a fund for this specific malnutrition clinic in Sierra Leone. What that does is it will provide peanut butter paste and other malnutrition needs for the kids who are coming into that hospital who are specifically

suffering and malnourished because of lockdowns. And so I think we've raised about \$10,000 so far. Our goal is to raise 30,000, so if anyone would like to donate to that, that would be a big help. And again, your money any amount that you donate is going to this life-saving, very urgent cause.

But if you're going to do anything, please just share this episode. We need people talking about this. That's the main ask I have of your audience.

**WOODS:** All right, well, that is a pretty reasonable thing to ask. And I definitely intend to promote the heck out of this episode, because it is shocking how little anyone is talking about this. Human suffering is human suffering. Politics should be left out of it. I think back to the 1990s and the aftermath of the war in Iraq from the early 1990s, and it was a humanitarian catastrophe with malnourishment and people couldn't get clean water, and the equipment that they needed in order to make their water clean couldn't be imported because of various trade restrictions imposed on them.

And yet almost nobody talked about that. Almost nobody. I can remember Pat Buchanan – you know, that left-wing bleeding heart? – he wrote a column about what was going on and what a disgrace it was that nobody was talking about. And then everybody continued not talking about it. There are just some people whose lives are not politically convenient to discuss, because the whole establishment loved that war, so therefore, we can't talk about people who suffered.

And likewise, it seems like all the smart people, with their terminal degrees and their clipboards and their white coats, told us we needed to do the following things. It's been a catastrophe absolutely everywhere. And the collateral damage, which is how they would think of civilian deaths during war, if they even think about the deaths that have been caused by the alleged remedy – they would probably think of it as collateral damage, I suppose – just doesn't get discussed. It can't be. It doesn't fit in with the narrative we're trying to promote. And all this politicizing of suffering has led to a situation where you have to struggle to get people even to talk about the world's poorest people dying unnecessarily. That's the situation we're in today, and it's horrifying.

So go to the show notes page, [TomWoods.com/1743](https://TomWoods.com/1743). We'll have links up from what we've been talking about today, the blog post, the link that Gret just mentioned, the DonorSee app itself, and get involved and get the word out. Because for heaven's sake, we are all human beings, and that we've been turning a blind eye to this is a stain on the world that will not very quickly be removed. Gret, thank you very much for your ongoing work. We all appreciate it.

**GLYER:** Yeah, thank you for having me on, Tom.