

SUNDAY LINE AND WORLD MINISTRIES



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Caring for children around the world

April 2017

VILLAGES OF HOPE AFRICA BRINGING LASTING HOPE TO VULNERABLE CHILDREN *with directors Sergio and Nancy Bersaglio*

A MOMENT YOUNG BETTY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER!

Villages of Hope (VOH) Chongwe opened in 2007 and is located only a few kilometers outside the capital city of Lusaka. The daily nutritional program includes a high energy protein supplement provided for the school and resident children. Education is available free of charge for preschool aged children until grade 6. Over 375 children attend the Chongwe VOH School and 8 children's homes provide care for over 64 resident children.

Betty, one of the young girls living in the VOH home in Chongwe, was asked by the District Government Office to present flowers to the Zambian Vice President upon the arrival of her visit to the Chongwe District. The visit was filmed and shown on the Zambian National Broadcasting Network. The Vice President encouraged Betty to pay attention in school, to study hard and to obey her House Mother!



Young Chongwe girl meets Zambian Vice President

KITWE, ZAMBIA

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MONGU, ZAMBIA

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The Republic of Zambia is a land locked country in South-Central Africa. While the overall economic outlook in Zambia has been brightening, many Zambians have yet to share in the benefits. Zambia has been hard hit by HIV/AIDS, and though the incidence is declining, the country's rate of economic growth cannot support the increase of population or the strain which the medical issues place on the economy. Life expectancy is averaged at age 52.



In Zambia, Villages of Hope have homes located in the central part of the country in Chongwe, in the central-north in Kitwe and in the west in Mongu.



THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:23

“But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.”

The most probable reason why Jesus was a stumbling block to the Jews was because the Jews could not reconcile how a Messiah could end up hanging on a cross like a criminal. According to the Torah, anyone who hung on a cross was cursed by both man and God: **“Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”** (Deuteronomy 21:23)

We certainly can understand the disappointment of why a crucified Messiah would be a stumbling block to the Jews. But it bids the question, why would a crucified Christ be foolishness to the Greeks? The probable answer is that it was not really the crucifixion that they found foolish, but, perhaps, it was really the resurrection that they found foolish.

When Paul was speaking to King Agrippa in Acts 26:6-8 it appears that King Agrippa didn't have a problem understanding the death of a person who had been crucified but, the incredible thing that King Agrippa could not understand, was how a dead person could be resurrected.

This caused Paul to say in verse 8 **“Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?”**

Therefore, what the Greeks really thought as foolishness about the gospel was not the crucifixion, but rather it was really the Resurrection. In the mindset of the Greeks, people who were killed by crucifixion did not live again in this world. They might possibly live in another world...BUT NOT IN THIS WORLD!

So the question that arises is: can the Resurrection be true? And the answer is: it is true, historically, theologically and experientially.

First of all, for the resurrection to be true we must have proof that Jesus died by crucifixion. We can say that it is true because Roman records confirm that Jesus was crucified. Tacitus, the Roman historian, records Jesus' crucifixion in the “Annals of Imperial Rome” stating that Christ had been executed in the Tiberias' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate.

Jesus' resurrection is also true historically because the church has proclaimed this truth for centuries, and if it were not true it would never have come into being.

We know that it is also theologically true because the resurrection is proof that God had accepted Jesus' sacrifice. The entire Old Testament sacrifices pointed towards the sacrifice of Jesus. The book of Hebrews tells us that the office of the High Priest, the tabernacle, the rituals were all a shadow and fore-runner of a better priesthood, a better sanctuary, a better sacrifice.

In order for the sacrifice of Jesus to be considered acceptable to God, Jesus had to produce Himself alive, and that is what He did on the third day. He produced Himself alive, and by doing so displayed that the sacrifice was accepted. The price was sufficient and accepted!

The resurrection is also true experientially because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit which God has sent into the heart of every believer. **“No one can call Jesus Lord except by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.”** (1 Cor. 12:3)

The fact is that the New Testament tells us more about the resurrection than the crucifixion of Jesus, and it is the resurrection which is the basis of our salvation.

Paul writing to the Romans in 10:9 says that if we **“confess with our mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, then we will be saved.”**

This does not mean that Christ's crucifixion is of no importance. On the contrary...the cross is immensely important, because it is the means for Jesus to pay for our sins, He must first of all be sacrificed. That was what Christ did at the cross. But

what He did next was also immensely important. As High Priest Jesus still needed to present His blood in the throne room of heaven before God. And in order for the people to know that Christ's sacrifice was accepted by God, Jesus, as High Priest, must then present Himself alive to the people, which is what He did.

Despite the evidence of the resurrection, skeptics still continue to try and undermine the truth by saying that they don't deny the crucifixion, but rather they deny that Jesus actually had died to begin with.

In 1970 a German scholar named Kurt Berna, after examining the shroud where Jesus body was wrapped, claimed that the blood stains on it were proof that Jesus was still alive when He was taken down from the cross. Like many he believed in a "swoon theory". He believed that Jesus was just in a coma when He was removed from the cross. He believed that the spear wound in His side was only a superficial wound, and that during the night in the coolness of the tomb Jesus recovered and His disciples nursed Him back to a measure of health so that He could live for another 40 days before He finally succumbed to His wounds and died; and afterwards the disciples secretly disposed His body and thus came up with the ascension story.

The problem with this story is that it would mean a total collusion between the Roman soldiers, the disciples and even Pontius Pilate who had given explicit instructions that the tomb be sealed (Matt 17:62-66), which would have made it next to impossible for a badly wounded man to escape.

As one scholar put it: "A Messiah who crept out of His grave, took refuge in retirement, and afterwards died from exhaustion, was **NOT** One who could satisfy the requirements of a community which had been crushed by His crucifixion."

As R.A. Torrey put it, "The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian Doctrine". Torrey further points out that the resurrection is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament and is the most prominent and cardinal point in apostolic testimony.

A.T. Schofield in England pointed out that even the Jewish authorities have never publicly denied the fact of the resurrection. The very worst they could do was to explain it away by saying that the body of Jesus had been stolen by the disciples.

The truth of the resurrection is further borne out by a transformation in the disciples themselves.

In Acts 4, Peter's preaching before the Sanhedrin was so utterly different from his earlier denial before

a young girl as recorded in Luke 22:56-57. In Acts 4:13 we read, "**Now when they (the religious authorities) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled.**"

A major transformation had taken place after the death of Jesus, and a swoon theory or temporary recovery theory would not have been enough cause for such a change. It had to be something much more...the disciples had personally seen the risen Lord.

For 40 days after His resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples and when it came time to say good-bye, we do not read about anyone shedding any tears. There were no expression of discouragement or disappointment. There is no record of them being shattered, dismayed or sad...but rather we read that after Jesus ascended into Heaven they returned to Jerusalem "**with great joy**". (Luke 24:52)

Why would they return back to Jerusalem with "**Great Joy**"? Because, for 40 days the disciples had been fully persuaded, fully instructed about the coming of the *PARACLETOS*, the Counselor, the Comforter - **THE HOLY SPIRIT!** It was this great news that brought the disciples joy despite the sadness of the departure of Jesus. Jesus was not abandoning them. You could almost imagine the disciples saying, "Lord, we can't wait for you to send us the Holy Spirit!!!!"

The entire Christian experience results from the actual incarnation of Jesus Christ in every believer. It is the incarnation of Christ in us by His Spirit... that is our hope of glory, and the assurance of our resurrection. What a great Hope we Christians have, and we have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who is God's deposit in us, which is our guarantee of our future glory.

We truly have a wonderful Saviour!!!!

Thank you for your ongoing support as you help to rescue the needy children from this dying world.

Blessings and love,

Pastor Roman

& Pat Kozak



Continued from front

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