

The 33 Rescued Chilean Miners and Campus Crusade

I wanted to share with you the amazing story of the rescued Chilean miners, including some parts that you might not have heard. This is excerpted from several sources: CNN's website 10/14/2010 article "The Story Behind The Chilean Miners' Jesus T-Shirts", Jesus Film staff members, our national Chilean ministry director and Jose Henriquez, one of the miners. These men were trapped for 69 days, but God was at work in their lives. Here is the story.

(CNN) As miners were being pulled from Chile's San Jose mine Wednesday, most were wearing tan T-shirts over their coveralls. The Chilean government told reporters the green coveralls were designed to help absorb the sweat as they ascended to the top.

But Wes Little, a CNN editor/producer in Atlanta, wondered why the miners were wearing the T-shirt over their coveralls. He noticed a logo on the T-shirt's left sleeve for the Jesus Film Project.

The Jesus Film Project is a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ International, the massive Orlando, Florida-based evangelical ministry.

Seventeen days into the mine accident, CCCI country director for Chile, Christian Maureira, started contacting public officials to see if they could send the miners a copy of the film. Barry Fiess, TJFP Director of Field Information Ser-



vices, said Maureira was able to reach a daughter and a brother of miner Jose Henriquez.

Through that family contact, the group was able to send an MP3 audio version of the Jesus film and an MP3 audio version of the New Testament in Spanish to Henriquez down in the mine.

It is unclear if the miners saw the resurrection story (of the empty tomb) as a parallel for their hoped-for rescue, but Jose Henriquez passed along a letter to CCCI's Maureira from inside the mine. Fiess shared the English translation: "Thank you for this tremendous blessing for me and my coworkers. It will be good for our spiritual edification. I am fine because Christ lives in me. We have prayer services at 12 noon and 6 pm."

"At the end of the letter," Fiess said, "(Henriquez) said goodbye with Psalm 95:4, which says, 'In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him.'"

A few days later, Henriquez asked Maureira to get them special T-shirts.

"The T-shirts were a gift from Campus Crusade for Christ Chile," Fiess said. "In the front you can read, 'Gracias Senor' - 'Thank you Lord.'" And on the back, Psalm 95:4.

"Apparently, all the miners liked them," Fiess said. "It kind of solidified them."

(CCC's Chilean national director, Christian Maureira) the day after the miners were being rescued: Probably you are watching on TV the rescue of the miners and also maybe you noticed a T-shirt they are wearing. All those T-shirts are a gift from Campus Crusade for Christ Chile. On one sleeve we put The Jesus Film Project image, and on the other sleeve Students and Professionals Crusade for Christ image.

The idea was to glorify our Lord with all this and also to express our love and concern for them by giving them the Jesus Film and the Bible in audio through the MP3s.

They received many gifts but they decided to wear our T-shirts and we praise God for this.

The Chilean TV says that 1 billion of people in this moment are watching the rescue.

From a phone call by Christian Maureira to José Henríquez on October 21, 2010:

“There are thirty-three different chapters; the door was shut for all of us in the same way, but everybody lived it in a unique way.” - José Samuel Henríquez, spiritual leader of the thirty-three

This morning was special, since I received a call from the Henríquez family. At last I had the opportunity to talk on the phone with José Henríquez. This was a special moment because he was still in Copiapó, and because we were accomplices of a little act that exalted the name of our Lord Jesus Christ around the world.



We talked about several topics; he sounded calm. He confidently told me: “There wasn’t a moment when I felt forsaken. I knew the Lord was working.” Concerning the first seventeen days, a period of time when they didn’t have any contact with the surface, the testimony is moving. “At that point, some started to wonder, why didn’t God kill us right away? Others started to write their letters to be read posthumously. Hope was slowly vanishing.” But he continues, “This amazed me greatly, I saw them all humbled. God was pleased by this attitude.” He trusted the Lord even more during these moments and let his companions know this from the beginning,

“If I’m going to take the spiritual leadership role, we are going to pray, because I believe in a living God.”

What happened on the sixteenth day, a day before the probe reached the refuge, is a moving testimony. “The food box was empty. Though we had rationed the food quite a bit, there was just a little bit left to appease our minds.” Even more amazing, this is the moment when he says to his coworkers, remembering the multiplication of the bread and the fish, “We are going to pray; tomorrow the box will be full of food. We will have food in abundance.” Through the phone, I perceived that this was the most moving moment for him; he got choked up by remembering that the next day the probe made contact with them. The multiplication was real; they saw how the box was filling up with food exceedingly. It was a miracle, a glorious moment.

José Samuel focuses now on the community aspect, “we were at the point where everybody sang. It wasn’t just a service for praying but for worshiping the Lord.” This made me remember that the first time we communicated through a letter; he had confided to me that he was trying to gather them twice a day, which he successfully accomplished.

Concerning the MP3 players, he told me that when they received them, “they were happy. They loved the dramatized story telling of the Jesus film. They listened to it several times and whenever they could since the conditions weren’t the best; there was dust, rocks and water falling due to the work they were doing above.” Anyways, “the Word was planted and now we must hope that God continues His work.”

As far as the possibility of the miners encountering Christ, Henríquez holds that at least “twenty of them indicated a decision.” Several have given testimony of their conversion through the letters they sent to the surface and the public thanksgiving to God when they were coming out of the mine. Their wives have also witnessed the change.

We came to the topic of the t-shirts; he said, “I told them that it was a unique opportunity to give the glory to God. It was an agreement. There was no problem; nobody said anything to oppose this idea. In fact, two of the rescuers were Christians and one came in saying, ‘there is nothing impossible for God’ a phrase that some started to write on the star of the t-shirt.”

José is, without a doubt, a man of faith: a Christian example in times of crisis. How would our faith be at seven hundred meters (around 2000 feet) underground, without hope of life? It is possible that most of us will never experience a dramatic and extreme situation like this. But at least it should be expected that our faith in Jesus Christ would be the same and that, like Henríquez, we would conclude, “I have peace having planted the Word of God, having experienced what the Word did in their lives; and now trusting that He will finish the work that He started.”

(This was translated by Paola Daly)