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The MINER WHO SAW A MAJOR MIRACLE!

In October 2010 I had just bought a TV broadcast camera in Beijing, China and decided to try it out in my hotel room. I turned on CNN and found that they were covering an amazing story about the rescue of thirty-three trapped Chilean miners. I decided to try out the camera by recording off of the TV this astounding rescue of some of them including Jose Henriquez – the one that the miners had nicknamed “the Pastor”.

Having interviewed some of the top Christian leaders in the world including Dr. David Yonggi Cho, “Brother” Andrew (“God’s Smuggler”), Brother Yun (“The Heavenly Man”), Hollywood’s “Machine Gun Preacher” – Sam Childers and others I attempted, in 2011, to interview Jose when he was traveling across Europe, sharing his story with the Chaplain to the President Pastor (now Bishop) Alfredo Cooper. His schedule was so packed that there was even fear that Jose could succumb to total exhaustion. The interview never took place in England.

Fast forward to the year 2015 when I was interviewing the much loved couple and prolific authors Bishop David and Mary Pytches (formerly of St. Andrews, Chorleywood and formerly the Bishop of Chile, Bolivia and Peru). After the interview David asked me if I was aware that Alf Cooper would be speaking at St. Andrew’s in a few weeks time. An interview was quickly arranged. As a result of that interview and my discussions with Alf I was invited to Santiago, Chile to speak at a first-of-its kind Media Conference for Christians in Latin America, share God’s Word in church and meet a number of Christian leaders in that country.

So here I was in May 2016 sitting in the Green Room of a Christian TV studio in Santiago, Chile. Bishop Alf Cooper is the host of a unique late night national TV chat show called “Hazte Cargo” (Spanish for “Take Charge”). I had just met the former President of Chile - Sebastian Pinera, as well as the Chilean TV host of “Master Chef” – Christopher Carpentier. All three had been guests on the TV show and it was my turn to interview one of the most famous men in the world for our own TV series “Perspective of Leadership” aired internationally! In November 2015 the story of the miners’ rescue “The 33” was released in cinemas across America. On my flight to Chile I had been privilege to watch the film of faith, courage and God’s provision.

Jose is a very humble man and has told the “spiritual side” of the story of the thirty-three in his book “Miracle in the Mine”. I had actually been standing next to the unassuming man without my knowing who he was. From the moment we were introduced we seemed to have a camaraderie. The film, itself, does not have enough space to delve into the background of the man who found himself at the “Refuge” (safe place) with 33 other men that day. An engineer, there were actually a number of teams present in the mine including the miners themselves.

After I filmed my interview with “the Pastor” – translated by Bishop Alf, himself, who is actually part of the story – we went to lunch. It was then that I was able to ask the delving questions that just did not fit into the formal interview. For weeks the miners survived on a spoonful of tuna fish which was in the “Emergency Rations” in the Refuge. My first question, as we dug into a delicious shared plate of Chinese food, “Have you eaten tuna fish since that time in 2010?”. The answer? A resounding “No!”. Other questions followed about the spiritual life of the miners. Jose had sensed God’s leading to give an invitation to make a serious commitment to Jesus Christ as their rescue approached. A total of twenty-two responded in the affirmative. All but one of the miners even wore a distinctive tan t-shirt that proclaimed “Gracias Senor” (Thank you Lord!) t-shirts with scripture verses on the back. (You can just make them out in the film “The 33”).

Our Chinese server was ecstatic when he found out that he was serving lunch to “One of the 33”! When the bill came to a “33” he found that the funniest “coincidence” of all! Everywhere Jose and the miners go in the world they find such a love for these men and for the story of the GOD that saved them out of the “pit” and brought them up. Jose has had thousands of opportunities to share God’s love and care with others and it is his privilege to have now actually helped to start a local church to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in his home area. He proclaims that God’s love does, indeed, reach to the highest high and the lowest depth!

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