

How To Save a Life (or Thousands of Lives)

From the Editor: *This case study from Zambia is an example of the type of ministry that is badly needed but sorely lacking in the Frontier People Groups of Central, South and Southeast Asia.*

In May 2009, more than 400 people gathered in Kitwe, Zambia, for a training conference hosted by LIFE International. As a result, 67 ministries were founded, each with the aim of upholding the value of human life, of *all* people—people like Joyce.

My mother and father died of AIDS. I was alone. Relatives were picked to adopt me, but soon I was abused. My uncle forced me to have sex. When it was discovered that I was HIV-positive and pregnant, my aunt was so angry. She started punching me and said I was not worthy to live. ‘Just go throw yourself in the river. You are nothing. Just go kill yourself.’ I was chased out of their home like a dog. I was abandoned. I was powerless. I thought, ‘It is better to have this child die.’ It was better for me to die than to live.

Joyce was orphaned, homeless, pregnant, penniless, and HIV-positive. Any *one* of these factors would lead to despair; *all* of them would threaten to crush even the strongest person.

In my village there is a very deep and strong river. There is a place where often you hear of people being eaten by crocodiles. I was there, crying near the river. I was thinking of jumping into the river to die. But a woman came. I didn’t even know her name.

Iness had come to the 2009 LIFE International conference with a vision, and she left with the tools she needed to found the Khumi Children’s Village in 2011, an organization dedicated to bringing hope to children who despair of a better life. The center sat near the path to the river, where Iness watched Joyce pass.

Iness followed me up there and held me and said, ‘What are you doing here? This is very dangerous!’ I started crying; I could not even talk. She still just held me. She said, ‘I cannot leave you here. Let me take you to the children of God so you and the baby can survive.’ She brought me to the Khumi Center. I was rescued and I decided to change my mind, to live and to have my baby live.

God became Joyce’s hope, became her refuge and strength, an ever-present help in her time of trouble (Psalm 46:1). Iness joined God in His life-giving outreach to Joyce, and her life—along with the life of her child—was saved.

The day the baby was born I named him Abraham. Now I love this child. I want him to be a man of God. I know that Abraham will grow, with the help of God, to help my country. I was empowered and now I am able to start a business, have a home, and raise my son. I thank God for bringing me to the center. Without it I would be no more.

Holistic life-giving ministries like Khumi Children’s Village recognize the complexity of needs faced by suffering people: spiritual, physical, emotional. Iness didn’t just tell Joyce about Jesus then send her on her way. She cared for her—like the Samaritan on another long-ago roadside—seeing her need and showing her mercy.

Even though you may not live near a crocodile-infested river, desperate people are passing you each day on their way to an uncertain, possibly even despairing, future. Lives are being devalued in your neighborhood, in your city, and in your nation.

On which path has God placed you?

Who will be *your* Joyce?



BY **KURT DILLINGER**

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