

Week 18

4/29/13

James: Thank you so very much. Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm James Robison.

Betty and I are thrilled to have a young evangelist. I get real excited when I get to meet young evangelists because I still want to believe I'm a young evangelist after 50 years of ministry this year.

By the way, don't you miss our 50th anniversary evangelism conference, Awaken Now. That's not an announcement, that's a charge -- that's a command from God and we must awaken: 18th through the 20th of July. You better register. There, I'm putting up a bulletin of all the speakers that are going to be there, at least the majority of them that you might know and you don't want to miss this. This is going to be very, very special.

Betty, one of our friends that we've had on this program many times, and who has been all over Africa, is Reinhard Bonnke. What an unbelievable ministry God has given him in the third world and even primarily the continent of Africa. Well, the successor to Reinhard Bonnke in the Christ for All Nations ministry is a young man, a young evangelist. There is no doubt in my mind that God's hand is on him; Reinhard and others certainly know that and he has been preaching those great crusades and will continue to do that.

He has also authored a book -- I love the title of it -- *Life before You Die: Wake up to God's will for your life*. It is excellent. His name is Daniel Kolenda. I want you to welcome Daniel to *LIFE Today*. Would you do that please?

Daniel, it's good to see you!

Daniel: Thank you! God bless you.

James: I'm really glad to have you. I'm curious about your story. I've been a friend of Reinhard's. I've tramped all over Africa, rescuing the perishing, literally, who were dying. And Reinhard has been winning people to Christ, which we have the privilege of doing that because where we feed the hungry or give water to the thirsty, the doors open, not only to the community but to the hearts of the people. I know Reinhard knows that because he's been a big part of what we do too. As a matter of fact, he

actually gave Peter Pretorius one of his big tents for Peter to use. So they've been good friends; they've utilized sound equipment and so forth together.

But it is quite remarkable that as a young man, now I think you say, what about eight years ago you began to work for them. Tell us your story. What happened? How did you happen to be with Christ for All Nations and how in the world did you get to preach in these crusades?

Daniel: Well, I love to tell that story. First let me say on behalf of the African people and as somebody who ministers in Africa and sees the great need of the people there, thank you so much for what you have done and continue to do. It really is -- James said that true religion undefiled before God is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted for the world. That is true Christianity, in my opinion.

I'm a 5th generation preacher's kid. My father is a pastor, my grandfather was a pastor, my great grandfather; on my father's side back five generations. My wife's father is a pastor. My mother's father was a pastor so I've been thoroughly pastorized.

[Laughter]

I think everybody just assumed that I would become a pastor myself. But the Lord called me as a young boy, seven years old, to be a missionary in Africa. Now I have to admit I didn't really know what that meant at that time in my life. All I knew is that when people would say, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I would say, "When I grow up I'm going to be a missionary in Africa."

It is amazing to see how that unfolded as the years went on. The story really gets interesting when I was 16 years old. I was in a place in Pensacola, Florida; I know you've preached there, Pensacola. I was in a meeting with a lady by the name of Suzette Hadding. She wasn't the speaker; she was just visiting the meeting. They asked her to get up and speak. And the evangelist said, "This woman is the head intercessor for Reinhard Bonnke." Now I'd never heard of Reinhard, I'd never heard of Suzette Hadding; I didn't know anything about the ministry. But when she got up and began to pray, the Holy Spirit spoke to me very clearly and he said, "You are going to work with the man that she talked about."

So I went back to my room. I wrote a letter to this guy with a funny name. I spelled it wrong, Reinhard Bonnke. I said, "The Lord spoke to me today. I'm supposed to work with you. I don't know what that means, I'll carry your bag, I'll polish your shoes, I just

know that is where I belong." So I went on the Internet to find the address; where do I send this letter? And then I began to see these pictures of millions of people gathered at these crusades to hear the gospel. And I realized, wow, this is a big ministry, and this guy will probably never get my letter. So believe it or not, I still have that letter to this day. I never mailed it. I put it in a shoebox that I had and I kept it and I said, "This must have been just the pizza I ate last night or something."

So then a couple years later, now I'm in Bible school, and on Pensacola Beach I met Reinhard Bonnke for the first time. I introduced myself to him and he instantly recognized my name because my great uncle was a missionary in Germany. And when he was a boy, he had been a real blessing to his life. So there was this instant connection and I thought, well, maybe this is true, maybe the Lord really did speak to me.

But then there was no more contact with Pastor Bonnke for about seven years after that. So to make a long story short, I ended up through a very strange turn of events working at the ministry, Christ for All Nations in Orlando, Florida in the warehouse. I was stocking shelves. I was sweeping floors. I had the lowest of the low positions within the ministry. And can I tell you, I felt so happy! I felt like maybe this was the fulfillment of what the Lord had spoken to me all those years earlier, that I could somehow help to build God's eternal kingdom; even if it was sweeping floors, to me, was fulfillment.

Then one day Evangelist Bonnke walked in, he saw me sitting at a desk. He went to my supervisor and he said, "Ask that young man if he wants to travel with me as an assistant."

So the supervisor walked in my office. He said, "Would you like to travel with Reinhard Bonnke as an assistant?"

I tried to keep my composure. I said, "Let me pray about it. Yes!"

[Laughter]

So that's how it started. I was traveling with him around the world as an assistant, carrying his bags, polishing shoes, and we came to know one another. Little by little he started to give me ministry opportunities, and finally the day came where he said, "I believe that you're supposed to be the one to take this ministry into the next generation." And the rest is history.

James: And he said that before he had even heard you speak?

Daniel: No, no. He asked me to preach. He said, "I'm going to give you 10 minutes." He said, "Don't go over 10 minutes and don't give an altar call." So I'll tell you, I had every word of that ten minute sermon memorized backwards and forwards. He must have liked it because he said, "I want you to come to the next crusade and do it again." So we do that for a while.

Then one day he said -- there's five big meetings in a crusade like that. He said, "This time I want you to do one meeting, the whole thing. Take the altar call, pray for the sick, do the whole thing and I'll preach the other four." So we did that for a while.

Then he said, "I'm going to do two meetings and you do the other three." Then he said, "You do three meetings and I'll do the other two." Then "I'll do one meeting and you do the other four."

And finally the day came when my heart almost stopped, he said to me, "I'm not even going this time. You just go and do it all yourself." But in that meeting, we saw how the crowds grew from 30,000 to 650,000 people in a single meeting. Amazing miracles taking place: the blind eyes opening, the cripples walking. And I sat there with the team at the end of that crusade, they were weeping and they said, "It really is possible. This can go on for another 50 years."

That's really the cry of all of our hearts. It's not about any man, it's not about a name, it's really not even about a ministry, it's about souls, it's about people finding their way to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ and receiving the most precious gift of all, the gift of eternal life.

James: I think this is as amazing a story -- I can't tell you how thrilled I am because our journey is so similar, in even the timeframes of certain things happening. The idea of being a servant is critical. I was amazed at how God blessed me and really, at the top of our evangelism ministry the Lord actually took me from the highly visible spokesman role to becoming more of a servant to missionaries and to people all over the world, and we actually multiplied in the people we are winning to Christ a hundredfold. It was amazing!

So there's that unique blessing on being servant. You came in with that attitude -- you're still doing it. That's exactly what you're doing and there is no question in my mind the anointing of God is on you to do it.

Did you tell Reinhard that you felt you had a call to evangelism? Did you even share that with him? How did... it still seems strange to me that you're suddenly up there on the platform. Did you tell him, "Well, God said..." and you kind of let him know the scoop or what happened?

Daniel: It's interesting you say that because I literally had never shared with him... before he actually asked me to preach, I never told him that I could preach. I had actually planted churches and I never told him I was called since I was a little boy to be a missionary. He heard it from the Lord. He said to me one day. He said, "Are you called into evangelism?"

I said, "Yes, sir. I was called when I was a little boy."

He said -- and this is the part of the story I didn't really tell. He said, "Well, if you're called, you need to stop following me around and go do it."

So I left the ministry for a while and had my own ministry, and then he invited me to come back and preach alongside him. When he finally told me that... the day he said to me, "I believe that you are supposed to take this ministry over," that was the very first time I ever told him what the Lord spoke to me when I was 16 years old because I never wanted him to feel...

James: What about the shoebox letter?

Daniel: Yeah... about the letter. I never wanted him to feel that there was any ulterior motive or any desire to get something. In fact, it never entered into my head that I could be the successor to Reinhard Bonnke until the words came out of his mouth. So it was totally the Lord's doing. It was orchestrated by the Holy Spirit.

And you know it gives me confidence because today, whenever we're facing difficult times I say, "Lord, I didn't put myself here. You put me here and I believe if you put me here then your grace is sufficient for me."

Now if I had maneuvered myself into some position, then I would feel the obligation to have to get myself out of these jams. But knowing that the Holy Spirit has orchestrated it all gives a great sense of comfort and peace.

Betty: I think that's what's so beautiful about your story is you did wait on God. You didn't try to find that place. You allowed God to place you where he wanted you. And

the tendency is, when we get excited about what we feel like God wants us to do in our heart, we can sometimes get ahead of God and then it gets all messed up.

Daniel: And I think if I would have pushed, probably the doors would have shut. So it's about trusting and about being obedient and faithful wherever you find yourself. If you're in the warehouse or if you're on the platform, you be faithful and the Lord sees -- he knows! He sees everything.

James: The Bible says that your gift will make a place for you. A lot of people try to make a place for their gift. They believe they have a gift; they try to make the place. I think they actually get things out of order and disorder follows and a lack of what God really wants to accomplish in his timing; really important that people understand that servant role. The greatest power that ever walked on the planet served in a carpenter shop for 30 years and he knew that all power dwelt in him in heaven and in earth. There's no question he would have done so much while he was still young but he waited for the appointed time, the fullness of time. I think we all really need to learn that as Christians. I'm learning that more and more every day. It's not like I suddenly finished learning it. I keep waiting because I have a tendency, I'm kind of forceful, I might want to push a door open, even tear one down because I'm convinced that door needs to open.

Daniel: You're an evangelist!

James: That's exactly right. But we really need to learn to let God open doors no man can open and close doors no man can close. When we learn to walk that way, it's amazing what God does. You're seeing that right now.

What do you see as the future of the Bonnke ministries right now? What's Reinhard wanting to do? You said something to me about him having a real special burden for the United States in some way, and I know we talked about it just a little bit. What's on his heart?

Daniel: Yeah, he just recently, within the last few weeks, the Lord has really put a burden on his heart. And I'll tell you where it springs from. The Lord spoke to him and said the United States had been instrumental in helping him to reach the lost in Africa. And the Lord said to him, "The United States is not just an offering plate but the bread that they have cast upon the waters is going to return to them. So he feels like in this season of his life, now he's 72 years old, in this final chapter, in this final season he believes the Lord is going to have him give back to that nation, the United States, that made in big ways this massive harvest that we've seen in Africa possible.

James: So when you say Reinhard has a burden for the country that has blessed so many people of the world and really still want to do that, this nation, as with the world, and really the whole church in the earth -- the church in the earth needs to experience a great spiritual awakening. So I feel like that's what's probably happening in Reinhard's heart. So it won't just be a matter of going out and say, winning the lost in America, but also winning the saved to the will and purpose of God -- the kingdom purpose of God so that America won't lose that.

Do you like what Reinhard's thinking about doing? Do you bear witness and say, "Let's call for an awakening?"

Daniel, I'm convinced God's going to use you all over the world. You have a marvelous gift. I want us to talk to you tomorrow a little bit more in-depth about the message of this book: *Life Before You Die: Wake up to God's will for your life*. We want to talk about this because I know God put it on your heart, and I'm really glad that it's been published.

But I want you to go over some of the things that hinder people's... accomplishing God's will, some of those things, set back. I know one of them you touch on is fear. That could have totally crippled and destroyed Betty's life. So I want you to do that.

Would y'all like to hear Daniel share a little bit more about what's going on... and in his book? And here is the book.

Is there a web site? I know this is in the bookstores but if they wanted to go on your web site would it be Christ for All Nations and if they wanted to order the book there could they?

Daniel: Sure. Absolutely.

James: Is that the best place to go?

Daniel: The best place for the book is www.LiveBeforeYouDieBook.com.

James: All right, I really do appreciate you. You made the comment when we opened the program that you really appreciate what we're doing. When I hear that expression of appreciation... I really pray you grasp this, Betty and I appreciate the kind comments and the compliments and the thanksgiving that we receive. I think we welcome and embrace it, and we don't have a problem with somebody saying it

openly because we want you to hear it because every good thing that happens through *LIFE Outreach* and *LIFE Today*, around the world happens because someone like you did something about what you're about to see. I don't know that I've ever seen anything in 50 years of ministry that moved me any more than this. I want you to watch.

On the mission field:

Janice: Look at this little tiny hand. It looks like the hand of a newborn, but little Julia is a year and eight months old. She looks so much younger because she is so malnourished. Frankly, she may not even make it.

When you see a child this thin, her ribs showing, and what's on her face is her skin dying because there is no nutrition to keep her healthy. Every breath she takes is a struggle. It's a struggle to just stay alive at this point. Her little heartbeat, her little ribs, you can count them just by looking. Her legs are about the size of my thumb.

I've seen this so many times over the years but I'm tired of that and I know that the solution is simple. This is not a disease that we have to find a cure for. This is the basic necessities of life; everybody deserves the basic necessities of life. I know little Julia does. And so many children just like her are out there. You don't get the opportunity every day to save a life but today you have that opportunity.

Come here. Jesus, Lord, I just ask you in Jesus' name to let little Julia live. Let her grow up and have a life.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Oh, boy! Every moment that I was looking at that little girl, I was saying, Julia, I love you, honey! I really do love you! And I want to make it well.

Betty, I remember Beth Moore weeping over little baby Matthew and I remember Peter saying, "I don't think he will make it a day." And we said let's help them, all those children, and you did. Matthew not only lived but he got healthy and Beth Moore went back a year or two later and he played soccer with her. And there he is.

And then, Betty, right there where that baby was, in that same nation of Angola, where they're having a terrible drought right now, it is killing so many little children like

that, and where we support a hospital. That's the final stage where they were fortunate enough to get to a hospital where we're giving them the supplies and the care. We were saving lives and Princess Di went, right there in that same country nearby, right close, and held that beautiful little baby that was so chubby, that we'd saved. And Princess Di asked the world to feed the hungry. That's what I thought with Julia. I wanted her to know we love her. Julia did not live until the next morning.

Betty, we always ask our viewers, "Let's do some more." They'll never watch this program that we don't ask them to help.

Betty: James, this doesn't have to happen. It doesn't have to get to this point of hopelessness. Julia didn't make it but there are some other children that can make it if we will help them, if we will get the food to them, the nourishment that they need. That's the cure. It's not some disease that there is no cure for, as Janice said in that spot you just saw. There is a cure -- food for them. They need the food, the nourishment that can make the difference in life and death. And we can help them do that.

James: I just want to say please do what it takes -- please! The missionaries are so special. They love God and they love the little Julias, and they feel so helpless when they can't help them. And the missionaries have said, "The only way we can help them -- we don't want to be going off -- we don't want to have to go to our states, or to our own cities to raise money, we want to stay here. Would you help us?"

I said, "I will. I'll do all I can to get people to help."

So would you go to the phone? Right now, dial the number or go to LifeToday.org. Go online, just LifeToday.org and you make the best gift you can make to save little Julias, children like that, and get them before they get to that stage. And we can, that's what we do in those feeding centers; that's what we'll even do with feeding in school areas to try to keep them coming to school. \$30, \$50, or \$100, we can feed three, five, or ten children for several months; that gift just keeps giving life.

Please go to the phone. Take your bankcard, use it like a check. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE*, because that's exactly what you're giving. We're going to send you some beautiful gifts to bless you and to help you grow, a devotional book, 365 Good Words for a Great Day. The Family Reading Bible, you can read it to your children, grandchildren; it's set up just for that. We always want to bless you.

The commemorative bronze -- listen, if there's any way and I'm telling you, the situation is serious. You could help us feed 100 children. Make that special gift. Please

whatever you can do, you do it right now for the glory of God, and to save precious lives.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: At this very moment a child is drawing his last breath, struggling to stay alive due to a lack of food. Sadly, this impoverished child is not alone, and without our help many like him face death as well.

Today you can make a difference. You can help save a life. Life's mission feeding teams are in place right now ready to answer the hunger cries of 400,000 suffering children in remote areas of Africa.

With previous food reserves gone, and parts of Africa facing its worst drought and food shortage in years, we desperately need to replenish our supplies immediately. Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift, we would like to send you A Good Word for a Great Day, a 365 day devotional providing an inspirational new word, Bible verse, and promise for each new day.

With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children, you may request The Family Reading Bible featuring easy-to-use reading tracks, questions, and fun facts to help engage your children in God's Word.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and save the lives of 100 children, and you may also request the 50th anniversary commemorative bronze, Brotherly Love.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

On the mission field:

James: As I kneel here by these beautiful children, I want them to be healthy. You can look at this little girl's complexion right here, if she'll step out in the light. See, she's got some of the beautiful glow but she still has a little bit of the red tint in her hair, which simply means we're bringing them up to a norm, and this is a very poor area, and if we

don't continue to feed these children they will just reverse and they'll go back into serious trouble. We want to keep that going.

We want these children to have an opportunity to get ahead in life. We don't want them to just survive. We want them to have a future and a hope because this is what God has for them.

But it won't happen without your love. So I pray you'll respond today. Make the largest gift you can. If you could put arms around them... see, here's five children right here. If you just put arms around these five or maybe you could extend your arms all the way back here and you just take ten children into your arms, would you help care for these ten children? Would you do that?

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I just, with Betty, say thank you for helping save a little Julia before it's too late. Please do! Do it joyfully. Boy, what a joy to think we can give somebody like that a chance. That precious little girl never had a chance; she's so cute.

Daniel, I want to thank you for being here. You can see our love for the African people that you're ministering too; the book, *Life Before You Die*. He's going to come back and be with us tomorrow and talk about it. But wasn't that a precious little baby? When you love the children, it opens the doors to preach the gospel; doesn't it? And that's what the missionaries do for you and for Reinhard and others.

Would you just say thanks to Daniel and Reinhard Bonnke, Christ for All Nations ministry? Daniel will be back tomorrow. We're going to talk about this great book he wrote. Tell your friends to watch. Thanks so much for your help, your love, and your prayers!

Announcer: Join James and Betty Robison July 18 through the 20th for the Awaken Now Conference at Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas! Featuring inspiring speakers such as Governor Mike Huckabee, international author and speaker, Christine Caine, Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, speaker and bestselling author Lisa Bevere, and many more including musical guests such as Phillips, Craig, and Dean!

Register today for this once in a lifetime event, celebrating fifty years of ministry with James and Betty Robison. Go to lifetoday.org.