

12/10/15
Week 50: Fall Mission Feeding, last week
Toni Brinker Pickens

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: We've got -- I don't know how many of you are familiar with people who just talk and people are captivated, especially when they've been successful at meeting needs. If you've ever listened to T. Boone Pickens talk about energy and other things, let me just go ahead and tell you, he really knows what he is talking about and he can really help us correct some problems. I really have a lot of respect for him. I love to hear him talk about his childhood and the incredible principles that impacted his life forever. We like that a lot.

Well, he married a little blonde that was married to a very successful man and became the widow of Norman Brinker who did all the incredible restaurants that you appreciate. So as a widow, Boone thought this was a pretty good opportunity and they got married.

We had the privilege of spending some time with them in the presence of the Lord in a beautiful place where some of their friends just said let's just come and talk about the things of God. He married this lady, and Toni became his wife and she is with us. We really became friends because we had a common concern for this great nation and for all of you. You may say, "Wealthy people don't care about us." Well, I think you're wrong. There are a lot of them who care deeply and one of them is Toni Brinker Pickens.

Would you welcome Toni to *LIFE Today*? Toni, glad you're here.

[Applause]

We started praying together and I got to be honest with you, I'm shocked at where God took you. You are concerned about the urban community, about the inner city. You're concerned about racial minorities that so often are not only overlooked but they're perhaps hurt. But they also don't seem to have opportunity that you wish with all your heart they had. And you've become really concerned about the tension between one of the only sources of help and a secure meaningful future that they could ever have and that is law enforcement, that is the police. Somehow in your prayer closet you came up with *Operation Blue Shield*. So I want you to tell

the viewers all over America and all over the world, I'm going to ask you first off, how did this even come to you? Why did it come to you? Why did you care?

Toni: Well, I'll start in December of last year; Boone and I were in New York. He was giving a speech. And while we were there I saw people marching down the street. As they got closer I could hear what they were saying. What do you want? Dead cops! When do you want them? Right now. And I actually thought maybe I had misunderstood what they were saying but I turned on the TV and found out that I was correct. We left and we were back within another week and I saw not the same marchers, different marchers same message.

So I came back home and I called our police chief and I said, "Chief, I can't sit back anymore. As a citizen, I have to stand up, speak out, and do something to help you."

And Chief Brown said, "In 31 years I don't remember just a citizen calling me and saying, 'I want to help.'" Then he said, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I don't have the foggiest clue. I'll call you back," and hung up the phone.

So I called our mayor, and I said, "Mike, Dallas, Texas and the state of Texas, we need to do something about this. We need to show the rest of the country that we can come together. We have to turn this national narrative of hate around before someone gets killed." And of course, people have been killed on both sides of the issues.

He said the same thing, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I don't have the faintest idea. I will call you back." And again, I hung up.

So I contacted a firm called Ad Giants. They did, in something very true and dear to me, "I want my baby back, baby back rib" campaign.

[Laughter]

I thought, oh, I like this. Then they also do the Coca-Cola ad where you see the snowman going down the hill and they get to the bottom and they hold up a Coca-Cola. I thought we need something that is feel-good. We need something that unites. We need something that kind of touches the children in us because that's where the goodness starts.

So through the Christmas season we worked and we came up with *Operation Blue Shield*. We launched on February 16, 2015, a most appropriate day. That happened to be President's Day.

And we launched saying here is an organization and our sole purpose is to bring communities back to the table to talk. These are communities on both sides of the issue.

But the everyday ordinary citizen like you and me and my neighbors and law enforcement, we cannot talk about our problem anymore; it is time for us to do something about the problem. We can't sit there and cast stones at each other anymore. We need to get in a room. We need to do it consistently. And we need to do it in an environment where people feel safe so they can be heard, issues can be resolved and we can move forward because we are at a very, very pivotal point in our country and we need to make something positive happen from the grassroots portion; that means citizens making this country better.

James: And their response?

Toni: I will tell you the response has been overwhelming. As a matter of fact, I have hired a couple of people. I could hire a lot more. I've got volunteers that are coming and saying, "We love your message." Our message basically is, we're all in this together. So even on our web site when people go and make donations for many of the things that we're doing, what they call "swags" that they get sent to them individually, now go from the "we're all in this together" to "I'm all in together." Which basically means you and I together, we better hold hands and we better find a way to turn this around.

Betty: I feel like what you're trying to do is find common ground because it's okay to have differences but to be able to talk about them and try to find the solution for them, that makes a difference; doesn't it?

Toni: You do -- and you can't sugar coat it. There are serious issues on both sides. Law enforcement needs to address some issues that are longstanding problems for certain communities. But you just can't stand back and heave a bad word here and heave another bad word there. There's a reason why talking works. There is a reason why positive environments like churches help push a message forward a lot quicker than what you might have if you have a group that sits over here and says, "Well, we have this problem." And one who sits in another part of the city... if they don't get together and talk there is going to be no progress whatsoever.

James: Well, you've spent time in the Baltimore area. You've been there with church leaders, Harry Jackson, a black leader; who is the Hispanic leader that has...?

Toni: Bishop Angel Nunez.

James: And they're just incredible. I'm real close to Harry and have met Bishop. They're here with you, and here locally people are with you, the leadership is with you. You tell me if I'm

summarizing because we've got plenty of conversations, we've been able to meet with different key leaders in the African American community, inner city, urban community. You've met with police officers and national and city leaders. You want to see these groups that so desperately need each other, both of them tend to be afraid of one another, afraid of the police officer; the police officer is afraid of what's there. Everybody is uneasy. It's because they don't see themselves as friends. They see themselves in an adversarial fashion, which will never bring peace and harmony.

You want the inner city/urban community, you want every mother, every person that loves her family, every person concerned about their safety to know the greatest safety shield they have is Blue Shield. And that little pin you've got on is basically saying that with the American flag over it. You believe that's the way America is supposed to be -- a place of security and safety and shelter. Toni, how does Boone feel about this? He's got to be proud of where you are but how does he feel about your vision and your hope?

Toni: He's 100% behind this. He knows the need is there. He sees it.

James: He can see the problem very realistically.

Toni: He feels exactly the same way I do. Every person, no matter what our differences are, no matter what our skin color is, no matter where we went to school or where we didn't go to school, no matter whether we had one parent, two parents or no parents, the most important thing that I have heard from them and the number one issue once you get past "I feel this way," "Oh, no, I feel this way." Once you get past that, they want a safe secure place to live. We all do.

So when that happens, just take a mother, I will call her momma. So momma who lives in that neighborhood and there are neighborhoods, keep in mind, where momma is too scared to walk to the bus station to take the bus to go find a job. God bless that woman. I want to help her. There are children who live in neighborhoods where they have to study in a closet because they can't turn the lights on at night for fear that a gunshot will go through their windows. Now imagine us living in that environment.

So no matter who you are, if you're young, you grow up and the world is your oyster. But you put yourself in that environment for too long, that wonderful desire to do well in life, in an environment of fear, in an extended environment of fear for a long, long time turns into something else. And that's what we want to turn around right now because we are all in this together no matter where we live. But the longer that person stays in there with no hope, the more your life, my life, and everybody who lives down the street, their lives look better. So you don't want to take that hope and turn it into anger.

So it's this whole mishmash of anger now that is in our country. Some of it is fed by the media. And so we as citizens, we need to take this back on our own because we have the capabilities to do it.

Operation Blue Shield has been endorsed by the House and the senate; I'm telling you a story here, and our Governor. And on the day of our endorsement, some of my greatest and dearest, most wonderful friends who do live in the southern sector of Dallas, they boarded a bus at 4:45 in the morning, they wore blue and yellow, our colors, they drove to Austin to be in the gallery when we received this resolution.

They took their children out of school and said, "This message of hope, where safe neighborhoods lead to an environment where people want to live in them, they want to work hard, get a better place to live, have maybe buy a home, maybe open a beauty shop, maybe open a dry cleaners, barbershop. They now become taxpayers, they become voters and then that extra revenue goes to the mayor who now says, "This neighborhood is not distressed anymore. I have some more money because I've got more tax revenues coming in; I get to take that money and put it where? -- Back into the community that used to be unsafe."

So now momma doesn't have to worry about walking to the bus station. Now that child can turn the light on at night and he can study. Now that child says, "I've got a great school in my neighborhood. I can go to college." And they know the policeman who lives down the street. That's my buddy.

So they also know "When I'm in trouble, that's the person that I want to go see." So let's flip that. Now the police, who say -- and they're just as scared, believe it or not, they're just trying to protect us.

I will tell you, I talk to the community prosecutors in Dallas and I said, "What is your greatest need?" And they said, most of these women incidentally are smaller than I am, most of them are African American and they're the guys who go and knock on the door to get the drug lords out, to close that house down, to have it removed to get those gangs out -- their biggest need at one point in time: Bullet-proof vests. And that was a shock to me. So I've got a woman who is going out to tackle a drug lord and she needs a bullet-proof vest? That kind of wakes you up. So keep in mind...

James: You wanted them to have them -- whatever it took.

Toni: I want both sides to come together as a team. With God's blessing, we can change this world.

James: Go ahead, Betty. Excuse me.

Betty: Someone that's watching this is saying, "I want to be involved in something like that because I want to be part of that community that reaches out to those that need help."

James: That's what I was just going to ask her. Give us the web site because I feel like people everywhere and all over America, maybe in other nations, you say, we need that! So *Operation Blue Shield*, they've got programs that you can actually show others how to begin to launch this and begin to create the environment and take the right steps. But we also learn together in the process. What is the web site?

Toni: The web site is www.OperationBlueShield.com. Please make a donation. I always tell people, make a donation. Help me help you. It's a tax deductible donation.

If you live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin you're not going to want your money to come back to Dallas. You just mark a little X. I would be delighted to write a check and send it to the police department in Milwaukee to put back into these programs.

If I may, I'd like to tell you quickly about them. We have *Operation Blue Shield*, what we call "Power of One" speaker series. That is where we bring wonderful pastors together who talk about how important the church is because the church is a pivotal point in turning our nation around. We have had our "Power of One" speaker series, we're going into our fifth series and we have seen the results of what people have learned when they have come to listen. Be educated and become empowered of working together.

We also have church swaps where we will take a pastor from one church and a pastor of another, they will change pulpits and then go back to their congregation and talk about the lessons that they learned. So we call it our *Operation Blue Shield* Church Swap for adults, and we also do children. So we will do the eight, nine, ten year olds and we will have them swap.

So imagine if you are from a predominantly Caucasian church and you spend Sunday in an African American church or a Latino church and then you go back and talk to everyone about what you've learned. We have something called Murdock's Army, and this is a little dog this big, my husband's dog; it is a little Papillon, he's six and a half pounds. He rules the world.

The way to get children involved, we want them, we want the parents to go to the web site, make a donation, get our ribbons, tie them around the tree, tie them around your pet, send us a picture. We'll put it on the Internet and we'll make sure -- tie it on alligator or snake or whatever; I don't care what it is, just send it to us.

But then once a month and this will start, I think we're going to start this in January, once a month Murdock will have a lesson. It might be how do you cross a street? Or if you see a policeman and you're scared, this is what you should be doing. So it will be life lessons that Murdock will be teaching you.

James: You're going to a lot of trouble! Can you tell she's gone to a lot of trouble trying to help people? I want you to say thanks to Toni Brinker Pickens for caring about something that needs prayerful, compassionate attention. Toni, our viewers, I know are going to pray for you. I think they're going to help you. When we show them a need, they rejoice to meet it.

I want you to look in right now on a situation that only love can change -- just what you've been hearing -- and you're going to see it up close and personal. This is the last week now that we have an opportunity for you to help us with something very special as you'll see. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Jeanne: Nine thousand miles by air, and hours in off-road vehicles; our journey to reach these desperate locations are long but they pale in comparison to the suffering of those who await us. I'll never get used to what we see here in these remote areas. But when we visit the clinics, we're confronted with the reality of what happens when mission feeding hasn't reached a village.

Peter: Just look at the way she looks at you. I'm struggling. I'm actually struggling to survive. I'm just struggling to live. That's what malnutrition does to the body.

Jeanne: I want you to live. [Praying]

Jeanne: We can make a change for this little one and for many, many like her. It doesn't have to come to this. This little girl needs our help. This momma is doing all she can do, giving all that she's got. We can help her. We can help a lot of mothers like this. Don't you want to see that? Don't you want to see these little ones live? Thank you.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I just thank God for Jeanne Rogers. Billy Graham's daughter Ruth has been, Beth Moore has been many times, Kathy Troccoli, and Tammy Trent, so many have been to the mission field. Jeanne Rogers, one of the greatest singers that's ever lived and sang at all of our

crusades. Jerry Falwell said many times, he said it over and over when she would sing at a coliseum or up at his church, "Greatest singer on the planet, man or woman," -- of Jeanne. How does a woman that has sung to millions of people in person and such a great praise leader, what's she doing over on the mission field? -- Because that's where we went. There's a great singer, on her face before God holding children because the love of God sent her there. And millions of lives have been saved -- but only because you heard her heart cry and you answered. You literally extended the hands of God.

Betty, this is our last week. We need to raise enough money to get eight ten-ton trucks, we need another more than 70,000 of those heat-resistant bowls, and we're looking at over \$300,000 for that plus we've got 400,000 children that we've already located that need to be fed so they don't end up in a clinic where they're just fighting for their last breath, to get a breath. I'm believing everyone watching is going to help.

Betty: I believe it too. I think your heart was touched as you listened to Jeanne, as her heart was broken. You may be sitting there weeping along with her and that's good. But we've got to do more than weep, we've got to reach out. We've got to make that difference. We've got to get the food to them that these precious mothers want to give their children as they're watching their life slip out away from them. Please join with us and let's get the food to the children.

We also need the trucks, James. We need the transportation to get them there. And we need the bowls so that we can give them to the children. They cherish those bowls, James. They hang on to them because they come back and bring them for more food.

James: Well, I'm believing in this last week we're going to have a tremendous response and we need to. When you think about the trucks costing a little over \$30,000 apiece, and you've got 400,000 kids, you break it down though, think about this, for \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next several months.

I would encourage you, I'll always ask you, I don't think anybody needs to help you guard your money. I'll always try to get you to expand your hands with love and give. If you could help us take care of 10 children, you make a \$100 gift, would do you it? \$30 or \$50 is going to be real important to the three or five you help. If you could help us with those trucks, making a gift of a few thousand dollars, maybe you could give a truck. Who knows what God has enabled you to do. I believe you're going to do it.

Go to LifeToday.org, take your bankcard -- LifeToday.org -- you can make your gift right there online. Or you can dial the number, take that card, use it like a check, that's how you use those cards. If you make a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us what you're putting in the mail. We need to know because this is the last week.

We have some special gifts for you but you're giving the greatest gift. We want to say thank you. Some people are going to thank you throughout eternity because they've seen the love of God up close and personal. Thank you for sharing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Disease, malnutrition, starvation -- all terrible human atrocities being faced every day by people living in remote and impoverished areas of Africa -- and those at greatest risk are the children.

Life's mission feeding program is there able to feed and care for over 400,000 children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With previous food reserves gone and malnutrition levels in Angola rising due to increased food scarcity, we desperately need to replenish our supplies for our feeding programs immediately. Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for the next three months.

Also, please consider an additional gift toward our \$316,000 goal to provide eight all-wheel drive trucks and 76,000 new bowls for the children.

As our thank you we'll send you this soft-covered journal Bible featuring the gospels, Psalms, and Proverbs for your devotional time in the word. With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children please request the complete Holy Bible Journal edition perfect for keeping notes and insights as you read and study.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed 100 children, you may request this beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel" by Thomas Kinkade.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: You do know we're sending you the beautiful gifts to help you grow in your spiritual life, the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel." It is a beautiful canvas painting, already framed, beautifully, as it hangs here in our studio. If you can help us in a special way this last week, please do so.

Then there again, there is the web site, Blue Shield. You see it there? It will also be online or they can tell you in the prayer center if you want more information. I hope you'll get involved and let's have a healthy community in the urban community and the inner city. And let's have peace with the people and the law makers.

Would you say thanks to Toni Brinker Pickens?

Toni, we love you! You really did good for the first time on television you said! You hit it out of the park! You really did. Thank you so much for your help.

Thank all of you. God bless you!