

The Myth of 'Christian Karma'



Have you ever heard of the terminology "Christian Karma", as in "if I do X for God then he is sure to bless me", or "if I do the wrong stuff things won't go well for me"? The thing is, I wonder how much our own culture of performance and reward effects our thinking about our circumstances.

Judas Bobo is the treasurer of the Chaba Christian Care Group (see <http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=22>), based in Zambia, whose vision it is to help empower the poor in the community towards sustainability. He was trained in Foundation for Farming principles in 2009 and has since been the catalyst to train over 150 people in his community. They have seen an average crop yield increase of 700%, which has a huge impact on families' lives. Judas spends a lot of his time with the farmers, visiting about three times each season by bicycle. As a result of this investment of time by Judas, the loan programme is still 100% repaid after 6 years. We once asked him why he would give up his successful tailoring business to help his community. He looked at us like we were slightly odd, saying "my own business just helps me, but being involved in the partnership and giving my time helps the whole community".

I got a text from Judas the other day, he had been saving up to buy 270 baby chicks to grow for sale. It was a business that would help send all ten of his children to school, and support his family as he continues training and mentoring in Foundations for Farming. In the first week more than 50 died, and after 2 weeks another 150 died, leaving only 70. They were supposed to be vaccinated by the people he purchased them from, but it seems they had failed to do so. Being Zambia there is no real recourse in these circumstances, so it is a total loss. In Judas' words: "this is a calamity, my kids won't go to school, and I can't feed my family well". So much for "Christian Karma"!

Later he texted me with some verses from Ecclesiastes 7: "when times are good, be happy, but when times are bad, consider; God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore a man cannot discover anything about his future." We don't know the future, but God does, so we can have faith in him, to use whatever circumstances come our way so he can develop our character and heart closer to his own heart.

God looks at our heart to see if we are just doing things 'for' God only to get stuff from him in return, or just to be obedient to where God's heart is in helping the poor and vulnerable – or in fact just because he is God - despite any circumstances that may come our way.

We pray for Judas to have wisdom to help him through this time, and for him to continue to allow God to draw his heart closer to his own.

Jerry Field
Zambia Partnership Facilitator

Bright Hope News

The big news for us this month is our upcoming Bright Hope World Summit, here in Christchurch, on April 8 and 9.

This is our fourth summit and we are very much looking forward to catching up with our supporters and others interested in the work our partners do around the world.

The summit starts with dinner on Friday night and runs all day Saturday, finishing with dinner on Saturday night.

It's a chance to hear about what God is doing in the developing world and to share encouraging and challenging stories from the 'front lines'.

The summit is completely free with meals (apart from Saturday breakfast) provided.

If you live in New Zealand, we'd love you to join us, and we guarantee you'll be inspired and encouraged by what you hear.

If you'd like to register, please go to:

<http://www.brighthopeworld.com/summit.asp>

If you have any questions about the summit or want any further information, please email admin@brighthopeworld.com or phone Heather on 03 341 0933.

Hope to see you there!

Life Change Story – Fountain of Hope



An update from Gideon and Jennifer:

“We are glad to let you know that our first field day in the community of Makamure went very well. It is really a blessing to work with this community that has a passion to bring transformation into their community and to make God glorified. All the farmers have already prepared their fields according to farming God's way principles and are waiting for the coming of the first rains. We ran this field day to encourage and motivate them as well as to sell the concept of Foundations for Farming to other people in the community. All the community leaders, which includes the village headmen, chief, and councillor as well as the representative of the Member of Parliament, attended this function and were given the opportunity to see for themselves what the people of the community had done in their fields”.

“One encouraging thing about the farmers is that they have really believed in this way of farming and have been encouraging one another even in our absence, and also recruiting their own people whom they are training. One old lady recruited seven people whom she brought to the field day celebrations, another Pastor recruited nine more people and many people from the community are now practicing this kind of farming”.

“We are very much encouraged by these people, by the way they want to get out of poverty and hunger through farming God's way and nutritional gardens. Our biggest challenge now is the rain. The community and the entire nation of Zimbabwe is completely dry, dams and rivers have dried up. Please join hands with us in praying for rain”.

Read more about the Fountain of Hope - Makamure Community Development (ZIM02c) at:
<http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=320>

Prayer and Praise

We really appreciate your prayer support – for us and for our partners around the world.

1. Pray for Judas Bobo and his family as they live with the loss of their chickens.
2. Praise for the incredible impact Foundations for Farming has had in the Chaba community in Zambia and Makamure in Zimbabwe.
3. Pray for rain for Zimbabwe.
4. Praise for a very beneficial and enjoyable team gathering in Nelson at the end of January.
5. Pray for the Bright Hope World Summit to be held in Christchurch on 8/9 April.

