

## THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

**“Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.” (Col 1:24)**

This has always been a most difficult verse for me to understand. It is still too profound for me. The best explanation that I can even partially understand was given me by Seth Wilson. He pointed out that the sufferings of Christ did not directly bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, the sufferings of Paul did. It is the plan of God to involve we mortals in the evangelization of the world. In this regard let us consider the sufferings of Bruce Olson that brought the Gospel to the Motilone Indians of South America.

- In 1961, at 19 years of age, Bruce withdrew his life savings and purchased a one way ticket to South America. He had no missionary training, spoke no Spanish, had only \$70 left, and the friend he expected to meet at the airport never showed up.
- The Motilones lived in a wild jungle area and no one who visited there had ever survived.
- Without the help of any church or missionary society, Bruce purchased a mule and some supplies and set out in the jungle to evangelize these Indians.
- On his first encounter they shot him in the leg with an arrow, and then pulled it out with a bit of his muscle hanging on the barbed end of the arrow.
- His life was spared but after several weeks in captivity he was almost dead from infection and diarrhea.
- Even though sick and barely able to walk something prompted him to escape. He later learned that the main chief of the Motilones planned to execute him the next day.
- Without maps or food he somehow made it to “civilization” too weak to even speak.
- Once stronger, he returned to the jungle, placed gifts on their trails, and waited a month for the Indians to find him.
- They took his gifts but placed 4 arrows in the ground as a warning for him to leave.
- Bruce removed the arrows and covered them with gifts - they decided not to kill him.
- Some time later he contracted hepatitis and was at the point of death when an oil company helicopter “accidentally” found him and took him to a hospital. His liver was “permanently” damaged and he was warned not to return to the jungle. He returned anyhow.
- Eating live grubs and other Indian food caused him to vomit repeatedly.
- Once when he had nothing to eat for days, he pulled an 18" parasite out of his mouth.
- He deliberately gave himself pink eye to help them understand the power of antibiotics.
- He survived epidemics of measles and other disease that ravaged the jungle community.
- His best friend and first convert was killed by poachers who were stealing Motilone land.
- His fiancé who was studying to be a medical doctor was killed in a car wreck.
- In 1988 Bruce was captured by the communist-inspired National Liberation Army and tortured for ten months.
- Before age 50 Bruce had learned 15 languages and pioneered in computer translation of tribal dialects.
- He has been close personal friends of four different Presidents of Columbia and has spoken before the United Nations and the Organization of American States.
- Through resolution #102 of the INCORA, the country of Columbia has set aside 108,909,000 square meters as a land reservation for the Motilone-Bari Community.
- The Motilones have sent out 30 teams among the non-evangelized tribes in N.E. Columbia.
- Bi-lingual schools and health clinics are springing up throughout the jungles.
- Thousands of new names are being added to the Lamb’s Book of Life in Heaven.

Perhaps in the life of men like Bruce Olson God is filling up what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His Body, which is the church.

Taken from the Book *Bruchko* by Bruce Olson