

Hear Sheridan
live @ Beauty for Ashes
Conference in JHB!

OUR Resurrection YEAR

—Interview with Sheridan Voysey

After ten years spent trying almost every means possible to start a family - including special diets and courses of fertility-boosting supplements, special prayer meetings and chiropractic sessions

(you'll try anything), numerous rounds of costly IVF treatment, an agonising two-year wait on the Australian adoption list, followed by even more rounds of IVF - we had been told that we were pregnant.

Freedom from the wilderness

Pregnant! We could hardly believe it.

'Hi Merryn,' the voice on the phone said, 'it's Emily, from the clinic...I'm afraid,' Emily said, 'your pregnancy hormone levels have dropped significantly.'

'But, you said we were preg...'

'I am so sorry.'

And with that cruel twist, our ten year dream of having a child came to an end.

Some weeks before all this, I had interviewed the British author and poet Adrian Plass on my radio show. Our conversation continued off-air where, somehow, I had shared a little about our wilderness of infertility. 'In the Christian scheme of things,' Adrian had replied, 'new beginnings come after the death of something, just as Jesus' Resurrection followed His crucifixion. After what you've been through, I think a Resurrection Year is just what you need.'

A Resurrection Year - a year of new life after the death of a dream. The phrase struck a chord with us."

Resurrection year

Sheridan Voysey who will be the keynote speaker at this year's Beauty for Ashes conference, 22-23 May, will speak about his latest book 'Resurrection Year: Turning Broken Dreams into New Beginnings'. We spoke to Sheridan to find out more about his book.

Q. For your Resurrection Year, you and Merryn left Australia to resettle in the UK. Tell us about your



"Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy."
Psalm 126:5

broken dream

A. Our broken dream was not being able to start a family. We had pursued that dream for ten years - through special diets, healing prayer, numerous rounds of IVF and a two-year wait on the local adoption list. By the end of those ten years Merryn was in a mess. She needed a new beginning. Apart from longing to become a mum, Merryn's only other dream was to live and work overseas. When she was offered a job at Oxford University, we saw it as God's way for that secondary dream to become a reality.

Q. How did you finally decide to stop trying to have a child?

A. In short, we stopped because we simply couldn't continue on anymore. Proverbs 13:12 says that hope deferred makes the heart sick. Well, Merryn's heart was sick. The constant waiting picks away at the

After 10 years of fertility treatment, Sheridan and Merryn, put their dream of having a child aside and trusted on God for a new beginning.

fabric of your being - waiting each month when you're first trying for a child; waiting for blood test results when you're doing IVF; waiting for the phone call when you're waiting to adopt. Your emotions get a battering during this wait, as your hopes are constantly raised then dashed. As we approached our tenth year of waiting, we decided to try one last round of IVF before bringing the journey to an end. As readers of Resurrection Year will discover, that final round was eventful for all the wrong reasons.

Q. It's well known how difficult infertility can be on a marriage. How did you prevent it affecting yours?

A. Our marriage is more important than having a child. The IVF counsellor was relieved when we told her that and said, "I'm so glad to hear you say that. Only last week a woman told me in front of her husband that if she didn't have a baby their marriage was over."

The pressure of infertility on a couple can be immense, whatever route the couple takes to rectify it. But that commitment to put our marriage first made all the difference in surviving those pressures. »



Celebrate
what matters!
22-23 May 2015
with
Sheridan Voysey & Linda Isaiah



SHERIDAN VOYSEY After ten years of tear-soaked prayers and repeatedly dashed hopes, Sheridan and his wife came to the heart-breaking conclusion that their dream of having a child was over. Empty and confused from a decade of disappointment, they left their jobs, packed their bags, and embarked on a journey in search of restoration. That journey took them to the United Kingdom, resulted in the memoir Resurrection Year, a short film called A Journey Through Broken Dreams, and a very unexpected ministry helping those with broken dreams start again. Sheridan is a writer, speaker and broadcaster on faith and spirituality.

LINDA ISAIAH experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse as a child and a series of difficulties in her life including marital problems. She believes God delivered her from agony so that she could reach out and help pull other women out of distress. "I pull back the curtains on my life and share with women that even when we feel hopeless and burdened with pain, God is able to bring us out. God took my misery and turned it into ministry." In her practical, straightforward and humorous style she infuses hope into the hearts of her audience.

Venue: New Life Conference Centre,
1 Grosvenor Road, Bryanston, Johannesburg
Times: Friday night 22 May, 19:30 - 21:30
Saturday 23 May, 08:30 - 16:30

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Beauty for Ashes celebrates 20 years ministering to women!

OUR Resurrection YEAR



Linda Isaiah

You need to attend Beauty for Ashes 2015 to hear Linda Isaiah's powerful testimony. You will be amazed at her courage, enchanted by her personality, and uplifted by the message of hope she shares.

Linda experienced physical, emotional and sexual abuse as a child and a series of difficulties in her life, including marital problems and caring for a seriously ill parent. She believes God delivered her from agony so that she could reach out and help pull other women out of distress.

"I pull back the curtains on my life and share with women that even when we feel hopeless and burdened with pain, God is able to bring us out. God is a restorer and he lives in us. He can take every wrong and make it right. The Lord took my misery and turned it into ministry."

In her practical, straightforward and humorous style she infuses hope into the hearts of her audience. "I believe that all women have a destiny that is bigger than any one role that they play. We get so busy in our lives, trying to take care of everybody else that we are just worn out. My vision is to give women hope so they can fulfil the call to help build God's kingdom."

Linda is the founder and president of The Lay Counsellor Institute and creator of the women's conference "Unleashed Hope".

Q. How has God been redeeming your life story?

A. 'Redeeming' is the right word. God hasn't removed our problem, or fixed it. He's redeeming it in service to others. That's been the surprising lesson for us. I hear from readers of Resurrection Year every week who say our story has helped them heal from their own broken dream.

One woman wrote, "My son has Asburgers and my marriage is in tatters. All my dreams are gone. But I've just read Resurrection Year and now feel I can start again - and start finding God again." That's

about recovering from broken dreams, whether that is the girl who longs to be married but is single, the guy whose career dreams haven't worked out, or the friend who's lost a loved one. The details are always different but the emotional and spiritual journey is often remarkably the same for each of us.

Q. What have you learnt about broken dreams through all of this?

A. Firstly, I've learnt that while not every story ends with a miracle, quite a few end with a surprise. God has a way of redeeming our

God will redeem your life story. He will heal you when your dreams fail to come true. Sheridan's testimony will encourage you to surrender to the Lord and find hope in Him.

a typical response. And it's amazing for Merryn and me to see. Resurrection Year isn't a book about infertility - it's a book

suffering in ways we wouldn't imagine. Second, I've learnt that while God is sometimes silent, He is never absent.

He chose to remain silent over our prayers for a child, but He was always present with us - even when we couldn't feel it. And thirdly, I've learnt that a greater tragedy than a broken dream is a life forever defined by one. We've all met people who are stuck in a dream that was never to be. It doesn't have to be that way. ■



SHERIDAN VOYSEY is a writer, speaker and broadcaster on faith and spirituality. He will be speaking at this year's Beauty for Ashes Women's Conference on 22-23 May 2015 in JHB. See: www.beautyforashes.com or call 083 500 2608.