

# THIRTY THREE HOPE, THE VISION

In 2008 Kirk Berendes, the Managing Partner of **33 Hope, LLC, a multimedia production company**, told his friend Eddie Flom a family story. Kirk had taken two of his young sons to see Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, the vivid cinematic portrayal of the last twelve hours of Jesus of Nazareth's life before his death by crucifixion. Both of the children were enthralled by the movie and one of them turned to Kirk on the walk back to their car and asked, Daddy, what happened next? The answer, Christianity, was the genesis of the **33 Hope franchise consisting of three books and three feature films designed to tell the story of the early Christian movement. In 2010 the book *Thirty Three, The Story of Hope* was published** by Jim Caveziel's company Sound Enterprises, Inc. to serve as the central content for the multidimensional 33 Hope brand, and to tell the story of *what happened next?*



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**Holy Land Location Stills from Production Scout Trip**



**A feature film, the first of three in a trilogy, *Thirty Three, The Story of Hope* has been scripted, budgeted, packaged, and is pending production financing** to be shot at Cinecitta Studios in Rome with establishing shots in the Holy Land. **The 33 Hope franchise will then carry the story to a second book and film, *Sixty Four, The Story of Faith* and conclude with *Ninety Five, The Story of Love*.** The second book is underway and will continue the 33 Hope journey on "The Road to Rome."

## THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE STORY

### **Thirty Three, The Story of Hope**

The first book and film open with the introduction of Shaul of Tarsus in 33 AD at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Shaul is a fiercely dedicated opponent of Jesus and His followers and is officially empowered to crush them. While Shaul is consolidating his power in opposition the disciples meet the risen Christ and are overwhelmed with joy and fervor to spread His message and teachings. The first book and film end with Shaul on the road to Damascus, his subsequent conversion, his transformation as Paul, carrying Jesus' teachings to the world, and the commencement of his missionary journeys that would ultimately lead him to Rome.

### **Sixty Four, The Story of Faith**

The second book and film find Paul in Rome where Caesar's successors have maintained absolute rule, and the Emperor is Nero. Paul and Peter maintain their faith and struggle to empower the emerging Christian community but Christians are blamed for the great fire that destroys much of the City and Nero orders the death of Paul and Peter along with thousands of other Christians. By the time of their deaths Paul has written a significant portion of the New Testament and the faith of Peter, the rock upon whom Jesus at Caesarea Philippi years earlier vowed that He would build His church upon, cements the faith of the growing Christian Church.

### **Ninety Five, The Story of Love**

60 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, John, the last of the New Testament prophets and gospel writers, who failed to die at the hands of the Romans, has been sent as a prisoner to die on the island of Patmos where the film depicts John writing the Book of Revelation. The deaths of Paul, Peter, and John by Roman hands were truly the beginning of their journeys of faith. It is only a matter of time before the Roman Empire, which invented crucifixion as a cruel punishment and the manner of Jesus' death, converts to Christianity by order of Emperor Constantine. Less than 3 centuries after Jesus' crucifixion, Roman shields are ordered to bear the Christian cross, converting the Roman Legions to Christian Soldiers. The Roman coins which bore the image of Caesar, of which Jesus spoke in the Jerusalem market, now also bear the Christian cross, proclaiming that He lives.

Though the 33 Hope books and films do tell a literal story of the growth of Christianity, and the lives of three of the principal followers of Jesus who lived in Jesus's time, the real story, and the real conflict, is not in the flesh, but in the spirit as Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is repeatedly challenged by Satan, the Prince of Darkness. This is the story that needs to be told for we are facing many of the same challenges in a deteriorating modern world that is hungry for the meaning and love that Jesus brings to all.