

Charismatic Evangelist Hosts Festival to 'Bless' Haiti

✖ A North Carolina-based evangelist hopes to help lift a spirit of heaviness that has fallen over Haiti since a massive earthquake rocked the island nation in January, killing more than 200,000 people.

Ben Cerullo, 33, wants to bless and encourage the Haitian people through Hope Alive, a large-scale event in Port-au-Prince Friday that will include music from Christian rap and reggae artists The Ambassador, J.R., and Prodigal Son, as well as praise and worship.

"With the cancellation of carnival this year by the president of Haiti and the ongoing spirit of heaviness, we felt it was important to provide encouragement and bring a message of hope to the people," said Cerullo, grandson of TV evangelist Morris Cerullo and son of Inspiration Network CEO David Cerullo.

"We believe that Hope Alive will be a time to celebrate in an exciting atmosphere of entertainment, praise and worship," he added. "We're inviting people of all ages to gather, relax and simply enjoy the day with some great music. They haven't had that in a long time."

Cerullo, who launched into full-time evangelistic ministry in 2007 and has preached in 26 nations, also plans to present a message of salvation during Friday's event and to pray for healings and miraculous

signs and wonders. He said Haiti is at a precipice where the destiny of the nation and its people is being reformed.

"I'm praying for God to do unusual miracles—for Him to really release an awakening to shift a nation that was so demonically controlled back into the hands of God's people and His kingdom and establish His church there," Cerullo said.

The free festival, to be held across from the ruins of the National Palace, is being hosted in partnership with a youth-focused event planned by the alliance of pastors who led the three days of prayer and fasting Haitian President René Préval called last February. The prayer call was unprecedented in a country whose former president proclaimed Voodoo the national religion.

Observers say the days of prayer and fasting released an outpouring of God's power that has resulted in 3,000 people giving their lives to Christ, including former Voodoo practitioners. (Watch a Florida pastor's account of the three days of prayer and fasting below.)

On Friday morning, the 300-plus pastors in the alliance hope to gather as many as a million youth to march into Port-au-Prince from four points of the city and plant trees to represent a new Haiti.

"Through the prayers and the cries of God's people over the years, through this earthquake, God's bringing people to a place where, I believe, spiritual awakening can take place," Cerullo said. "We don't care to

just go do meetings. Our desire is to shift destinies of nations and release the kingdom of God. We believe it can be more than just an event."

Cerullo said since the magnitude-7 earthquake struck Haiti Jan. 12, his ministry has supported Convoy of Hope's work to provide medical assistance, food and shelter to the millions left homeless and living in tent cities across Port-au-Prince. Though some may accuse him of taking advantage of the desperation of the Haitian people, Cerullo says emergency spiritual assistance is also in order.

"It's an unfortunate circumstance that the people have gone through, but it's a perfect time to come and tell people about that hope,"

Cerullo said. "It's a perfect situation to come and show them love. I don't see it as any different than why we want to go in and feed them and appeal to their natural needs. As Christians we've got to do both. ... We're not coming to take advantage of people. We're just obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit."

Cerullo is asking Christians to pray five minutes on Friday for the outreach.

"God's just waiting to show His glory," Cerullo said. "He's just looking for somebody to use, so to be in the right place at the right time when God breathes is amazing."

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