

Evangelist Holds Crusade in Once-Communist Nation

Franklin Graham held the largest Christian event in Romania since the country's 1989 revolution.



[] Almost 20 years after Billy Graham traveled to the then-Communist nation of Romania, a visit in which he was allowed to speak only at designated churches, son Franklin Graham made history last week by holding the largest Christian event since the country's 1989 revolution.

On July 4-6 nearly 77,000 people packed Dan Paltinisau Stadium in Timisoara to hear the younger Graham tell of Jesus' love.

The crusade, dubbed the Franklin Graham Festival of Hope, also drew people from neighboring countries such as Serbia and Hungary. By the end of the weekend 3,922 people had responded to the invitation to submit their lives to Christ.

"When I was here with my father I didn't imagine that I would be able to come back and preach with complete freedom to so many people," said Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. "Now my hope is that these people will not only know political freedom, but also have true spiritual freedom that can only come from God."

The festival featured performances by both national and international music artists and also included humanitarian outreach. Samaritan's Purse, a Christian relief group led by Graham, donated wheelchairs, food and helped provide aid to Romanian orphanages and patients with HIV/AIDS.

Graham was invited to meet with some of the nation's political leaders who all thanked him for holding the crusade, saying that it made a positive impact on the people in the nation.