

Farmer Sees 'Revival' In South Africa

Farmer-turned-evangelist Angus Buchan says he is seeing revival in South Africa, which has one of the highest HIV infection rates in the world.



[] Farmer-turned-evangelist Angus Buchan believes South Africa is experiencing a revival as people fill stadiums to hear his message of hope, faith and reconciliation.

In July, Buchan drew a crowd of 70,000 in the capital city, Pretoria, the largest gathering ever at the famous Loftus Versfeld Stadium. The event was broadcast live to about 500 million people around the world on GOD TV, one of the world's largest Christian television networks.

Earlier in the year, Buchan hosted 60,000 men on his 1,200-acre farm, Shalom, creating a 20-mile traffic jam as men arrived from all parts of the country.

"God called us to make Shalom a place for the Holy Spirit to move," Buchan said.

"The name of our chapel is Bethel, which means 'God is here.'"

Started five years ago in the small town of Greytown in South Africa's

KwaZulu-Natal province, located 100 miles from Durban, the annual Mighty Men's

Conference grew from 240 men to 7,400 in 2007. The national *Sunday*

Tribune noted that to draw more than 60,000 men to a non-sporting, Christian

event “is not just an achievement, it could be deemed a miracle.”

The event required the biggest tent in the world, the size of four football fields, with a canvas weighing 200 tons. Buchan even slaughtered 25 oxen to feed the hungry multitudes.

A Zambian farmer of Scottish descent, Buchan, 60, left his farm due to political unrest to start a better life in South Africa in 1977. After becoming Christians in 1979, he and his wife, Jill, established Shalom Ministries, based on the farm, in 1980. Their vision is to help fulfill the Great Commission, take care of widows and orphans and train Christians to reach the world around them.

At stadium events and in his best-selling autobiography, *Faith Like Potatoes*, Buchan talks of his own brokenness and restoration. He speaks openly of how God helped him cope with the death of his 4-year-old nephew, Alistair, who died in his arms after he fell from the tractor Buchan was driving and was crushed.

His book takes its name from an incident when, despite forecasts of drought, Buchan planted potatoes, which require significant amounts of water, because he believed God told him to do so. At harvest time, he yielded a bumper crop, and the potatoes became a symbol of God's faithfulness. In 2006, *Faith Like*

Potatoes was adapted into a movie by filmmaker Frans Cronje and one of South Africa's leading directors, Regardt van den Bergh.

In a nation scarred by racial division, Buchan preaches a message of reconciliation. "The perception is that Angus Buchan is speaking to white farmers, but that's not what I'm doing," he told *Charisma*.

"I'm preaching to South African people. I don't care if I preach to 100,000 white people or 100,000 black people. I don't care if there are 60,000 Indians in Durban or 60,000 brown people in Cape Town. I'm happy to preach to whomsoever will come."

Despite the end of apartheid, South Africa still faces many political, racial and economic challenges. "I preach Jesus, not politics," Buchan said. "I speak for Jesus, not for or against the government. Change will come through the Lord. If people turn to Jesus, that will change our nation."

Buchan notes that "there is a lot of unforgiveness that needs to be dealt with" in South Africa. In Pretoria he asked people to forgive one another, especially requesting that older people leave the past behind, and called on the crowd "to believe, confess their sins, stop sinning and to forgive one another."

Buchan has criticized "xenophobia" against illegal immigrants from neighboring Zimbabwe, which is facing severe economic and

political upheaval.

Many of the refugees have come under physical attack recently, which Buchan says is "unacceptable" and "ungodly."

He says Christians should pray for Zimbabwe. "We quote 2 Chronicles 7:14 a lot- 'If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land,'" he said.

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa, which has one of the highest HIV infection rates in the world, the Buchans established Beth-Hatlam as a permanent house for children who have been abandoned or orphaned. "We provide care for children who have been infected or affected by HIV/AIDS," Buchan said.

"The AIDS epidemic has drastically increased the number of orphaned children in our province," he said, noting that the ministry plans to build 30 cottages to accommodate 180 children. "We will build one cottage at a time as finance is made available," he said.

For the last 20 years the Buchans have also managed a rural primary school with more than 180 students. "This school serves not only our younger children, but also the children in our surrounding community," he said.

With more than 18,000 friends on Facebook and events planned in stadiums across South Africa, Buchan expects the revival to continue. "Without faith we won't make it," he told South African media last summer. "Through Christ, everything is possible. The future of South Africa is in the hands of believers." **-Wesley Richard**