

Darlene Zschech: 'Hope Is a Person'

Hope is not an empty word for Darlene Zschech, an Australian worship leader who wrote a song for Billy Graham's latest gospel-spreading effort called *My Hope America*.

"Everything about my family's life message is based around hope," she said.

The congregation she co-pastors with her husband, Mark, is called Hope Unlimited Church, based in New South Wales, Australia. The missions arm of the church is "HOPE: Global." Even their closest friends' last name is Hope.

"But actually for us," the singer-songwriter said, "Hope is a person, and His name is Jesus. It's all about the cross, all about the finished work of Christ."

My Hope America is a national effort that points people to just that—the cross. The movement has mobilized hundreds of thousands of Christians nationwide to pray for and build relationships with their non-Christian friends. Next month, they will invite their friends over to share a meal and, most importantly, share their faith through an inspiring half-hour film that presents the Gospel.

To go along with this effort, 11 Christian artists such as Michael W. Smith, Kari Jobe and TobyMac, have contributed to a *My Hope* CD. Zschech (pronounced "Check") has written more than 80 songs, including the popular "Shout to the Lord," and now she has one more to add to the list: "The Cross of Christ (My Hope)," featured on the CD.

"Songs of hope and faith are like anchors," she said. "They tie our confession to the Word of God. This album is, at its core, an offering of worship and thanksgiving."

Zschech became a Christian at 15 after a family tragedy.

“My heart was lost and very broken,” she said. “I was living outside our family home, and when my dad became a Christian, he came and picked me up on a Friday night and took me to church. I was one of two people at the altar call. My life has never been the same. It’s been a journey, entirely wrapped in grace and the heart-changing love of Jesus Christ. I remain overwhelmed and grateful.”

The worship leader wants to share that message of Christ’s “heart-changing love” through music. She is a former worship pastor at Hillsong Church in Sydney, Australia, and said music plays a big part in sharing the gospel—the main goal of My Hope.

James 4:8 “says to draw near to God and He will draw near to you,” she said. “Worship is a faith step of drawing near, and as God comes close, your heart will be softened and prepared to really hear what is being said. Hearing God speak is the greatest privilege we have on this earth.”

Zschech said **Billy Graham** has inspired her “heart for evangelism” since she was young.

“I had watched documentaries on his life and read many books he had written,” she said. “I think the most inspiring factor for me is his relentless pursuit of souls. Everything about his life [points] to that.”

Zschech led worship at a Franklin Graham Festival in Melbourne, Australia, in 2005. She has taught at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, N.C., and it’s there that she spent time with Billy Graham. Although she lives in Australia, she said she would love to see her country embrace the My Hope movement.

“Australia needs it, too!” she said.

This article originally appeared on .