

Laurie Church Founded by Professional Surfer Rides Wave of 2,000 Baptisms

The “Jesus Revolution” movie, released earlier this year about the life of megachurch pastor Greg Laurie, has sparked a wave of salvations and baptisms in California like never seen before.

And that includes Harvest at Kumulani Chapel, located on the Hawaiian island of Maui, which just last month celebrated its 2,000th baptism in seven years.

The church itself is an unusual miracle. Founded by professional surfer Ricky Ryan, it is now mainly a virtual venue from which Laurie and his son, Jonathan, speak to a congregation via video feed from their Harvest Christian Fellowship megachurch in California.

Starting out as a small Bible study group, Ryan founded Harvest at Kumulani Chapel in the early 1980s. He led the church as its senior pastor until 2016, when he decided to retire.

But Ryan wanted the best for his church to continue forward, and he asked the Lauries if they would be willing to bring Kumulani Chapel into the Harvest Church family.

While knowing it would be a huge undertaking, the Lauries decided they would take over leading the flock at the open-air Hawaiian campus virtually, while several times visiting the island campus.

“And we did pray about this!” Laurie tells CBN News. “It wasn’t as easy as you would think and everyone thinks. Oh, Hawaii, of course, you would say yes.

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But you know this was a pre-existing congregation and now they're going to have a video feed, and that's what we give them, we give them a live video feed of what's happening in California and it has worked beautifully," Laurie says. "The church has doubled in size and since we took it over, we've seen some 2,000 people make a profession of faith to follow Christ."

The uniqueness of Kumulani, Greg's wife, Cathe Laurie, says, is that at any given service, the congregation is comprised of 30% visitors. They recently visited Kumulani to celebrate the 2,000-baptism milestone.

It's amazing, every time we come, we meet people from all over the country and, in some cases, all over the world," she tells CBN. "It's a joy to be here with the flock that live here on Maui.

"It's unique. It's a very special place; the people are so friendly, this congregation has open arms for everyone."

Visitors worldwide come to Hawaii for its striking beauty and to enjoy the serenity they glean from it. But Greg Laurie says people also come there searching for something else. He says they don't even know it, but they're looking for Jesus, too.

"I think sometimes people think, 'If I lived in Hawaii, I'd find what I'm looking for,'" he says. "And people come, and there is a lot of things the Island offers but it's not in Hawaii, it's not in the bottom of the ocean, it's not in flying a rocket into space, how many homes you own or all these things, it's in a relationship with God—that's what people are really looking for," Greg tells CBN.

One congregant, Shawn Lewis, tells CBN that he had lost his

faith after losing part of his leg in a tragic motorcycle accident in California five years ago. He says he came to Maui to find himself, and he found Jesus instead.

✖ “This church has helped me out so much, it’s a blessing,” Lewis says. “And then I got into adaptive surfing. These guys surf a lot here, and it’s just really a great fit for me.”

For the Lauries, Hawaii is much more than a tropical paradise. It’s another mission field, just one more place to preach the gospel, baptize new believers and worship the Creator.

“What we want to do is preach the gospel in such a way that they don’t see it as jut this church thing that you do on Sunday and you check the box, but it actually becomes a living, breathing part of your life,” Cathe tells CBN.

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