

14,000 Kenyans Brave Rain to Hear Gospel

The rains kept coming. Will Graham kept preaching.

And God kept moving in Kenya.

By the time Sunday night's final invitation was over, giant puddles were about the only thing remaining at the Mama Scrape Grounds where the Will Graham Celebration of Peace Nakuru had taken place for three straight nights.

But on that soggy field, hundreds upon hundreds had made life-changing decisions to accept Christ as their personal Savior in this city of Nakuru, a two-hour drive from Nairobi, and a place where over a quarter million people call home.

More than 14,000 braved the sketchy weather conditions to hear what the grandson of Billy Graham had to say.

"What now are you going to do with Jesus?" asked Will, who is the oldest son of Franklin Graham. "What I'm going to ask you to do is the most important decision you'll ever make in life."

Here's a recap of the weekend events:

Sunday

A 30-minute downpour brought Sunday's closing meeting to a standstill.

Understandably, nobody wanted to stay out on the field and get soaked. As many that could crammed into two open-sided tents beside the platform, but because of the severity of the rain, the protection to those on the perimeter was minimal.

Workers hastily covered the loud speakers. Many who lived nearby scurried back to their homes. Everyone else waited.

And as the rain started to let up, little by little, people returned to the stadium. The worship team took the platform and began singing.

Will started preaching in light rain, a good portion of his message being delivered under the protection of an umbrella. After a message on Christ's return, he asked the crowd to be sure they were ready to stand before God. Several hundred responded.

"I'm so grateful to God for the great decisions people have made," said Rev. Paul Mwakio, chairman of the Celebration's executive committee. "I know the bigger job we are left with is the preservation of the harvest.

"And we plan that we will get back together with the pastors and try to follow up, because we have the contact information from the people."

Saturday

The finale of a two-week, 18-team youth soccer event, called The Will Graham Peace Tournament concluded on Saturday.

After the Mwenge Futbol Club defeated the Nakuru All-Stars 2-0, Will, who personally signed certificates for all 400 participants, gave a Gospel message, with an effective illustration:

"What is the purpose of a pen?" he asked. "To write," someone shouted.

"The purpose of a pen is to write," he continued. "But it can only fulfill its purpose when it's in its master's hand. And the same is true in life. You can only fulfill your purpose when you surrender to God. Because it is God who gives you purpose and meaning in life."

Will and his wife, Kendra, also gave out trophies and certificates, as well as a soccer ball for each club.

That evening at Mama Scrape Grounds, Will preached on the death of Christ, explaining that Jesus bore our sins on the cross. Hundreds responded to the invitation to receive Christ.

Friday

The day started out with Kendra speaking at a women's rally at Life Celebration Centre. Mixing humorous stories about her children with teaching from the Bible, Kendra reminded the estimated 500 Kenyan women in attendance of God's love and personal care.

"God has decided not to forget you. Others may forget you," she said. "A spouse may forget you. A child may forget you. A church may forget you. But God will never forget you."

It was Kendra's first trip to Kenya.

"I don't know what they are going through," she said after her talk, "but God laid it on my heart to tell the women that He is very aware and cares deeply about it."

That evening, during the Celebration of Peace, it started to sprinkle just after Will began to preach. After a couple of minutes, the rain started to come down a little harder.

While some moved from the open field to the nearby tents, others ignored the rain and stayed in their seats. Umbrellas were held over Will and his interpreter as Will preached about Pontius Pilate, a man who couldn't bring himself to make a decision about Jesus.

"If you want to take a stand for Jesus, I want you to come," Will said. "I'm asking you to make a decision that even a Roman governor didn't have the courage to do. Will you come right now?"

"If you're tired of carrying all your burdens in life, my friends, give them over to Christ tonight."

Despite the bad weather, there was a great sense of unity that

developed through the Celebration within the pastoral community in Nakuru.

“I want to say that I am grateful to the [Billy Graham Evangelistic Association], because there has been more cohesion among the ministers in working together in bringing this meeting,” the Rev. Mwakio said. “And I trust this will be a new beginning for the working-together of pastors. And I look forward to seeing pastors working together the way they have done in this event.”

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