

# Billy Graham's Evangelism Campaign Surfs to Hawaii

Very few things represent the Hawaii culture more succinctly than the Shaka sign—the hand gesture that best conveys the “Aloha” vibe and “surf’s up,” spirit.

But when it comes to sharing the gospel message of Jesus in the “Islands,” a similar attitude is adopted.

“Hang loose ...”

“A lot of the mentality is don’t push me with the gospel,” said Michael “Bong” Abagon, director of prayer, evangelism and worship of the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention. “If I want to listen to it, I’ll listen to it. But I don’t want this hell, fire and brimstone preaching.”

However ...

“Hawaii is a very relational community.”

When *My Hope America with Billy Graham* was introduced to Hawaii as a relationship evangelism tool that focuses on inviting people into your home for a video presentation of the gospel, Abagon was completely on board.

Food. Conversation. Hospitality.

“Hawaii is very big on food,” Abagon said. “Many of the followers of Christ have a very comfortable, very laid back way of sharing your faith with others.

“*My Hope* gives it a lot of that [Hawaiian] flavor. Inviting your neighbor into your house, being able to talk stories and watch a video. It’s very non-threatening, which is good.”

Several months ago, Abagon invited the Baptist churches to a

1-hour webinar describing the *My Hope America* project. Fifteen churches signed up and are currently being trained.

He invited 30 churches of other denominations to join in with another webinar on Tuesday and 25 of those tuned in. The webinar explained the *My Hope America* project and showed part of the “Defining Moments” program, one of three evangelistic programs, intertwining several life-changing testimonies with a gospel message from Billy Graham. There’s also a 21-day prayer guide you can download.

“It’s just a very, very powerful video,” Abagon said of “Defining Moments.”

Thus far, more than 60 churches have registered to take part in *My Hope America*, representing the islands of Maui, Molokai, O’ahu, Kauai and the Big Island. The U.S. territory of Guam is also taking part in this nationwide event that culminates on Nov. 7, Mr. Graham’s 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

At the end of the *My Hope America* program, which will be available via DVD, online streaming or on cable TV, the host will share a brief personal testimony and ask guests to make a decision to follow Christ, which was clearly outlined at the end of the program.

“We prayed for revival for a long, long time,” Abagon said. “We are seeing a revival in the body of Christ just being able to work together. *My Hope America with Billy Graham* is an answer to that.

“Billy Graham’s ministry has influenced almost all denominations.”

Although it’s been nearly a half a century since Mr. Graham held a Crusade in Hawaii—he preached on four of the islands (Maui, O’ahu, Kauai, Big Island) in 1965—there are many Hawaiians whose lives have been impacted by his ministry.

“The last time Billy Graham was here, scores of individuals got saved and got channeled to different congregations,” Abagon said. “I’m working with some of these individuals [with My Hope].”

Abagon thinks *My Hope America* is coming just in time as many of the people of Hawaii continue to search for significance and contentment, despite the beautiful surroundings and constant 70- and 80-degree low-humidity temperatures.

“Many people continue to cry out, asking for help, asking for hope,” he said. “I think in due time we will see a change of culture here in Hawaii.”

**Get involved now:** More than 19,000 churches across the U.S. have signed up for *My Hope America with Billy Graham*. Click [here](#) to be apart of this nationwide outreach as a church or individual.

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