

Billy Graham's Grandson Shares Christ With Over 20,000 Kenyans

During business hours, the dusty roads of Kisumu, Kenya, become a jumble of cars, buses, buggies and bikes. While people dart in and out of traffic, it's as if no one wants to follow directions or the rules of the road.

And that parallels Will Graham's message at the Celebration for Peace June 7-9 in Kisumu—driving in this African city is similar to how we are when it comes to sin and living without God's direction in our lives.

"There are some of you here today that Jesus is not the ruler of your life," he said. "Jesus is the only one able to save you from your situations."

More than 20,000 people gathered at and around the Jomo Kenyatta Sports Ground for three days to see local choirs and artists like Everlyne Muthoka and Rosemary Ogonya perform, then hear the gospel preached by Billy Graham's grandson.

Each night before Will took the stage, soloist Mark Christian prepared their hearts with songs like "It is Well with My Soul."

Every church and every bishop in town participated in the Celebration, which says a lot about the excitement to bring an evangelistic event of this size to the sports arena for the first time.

"You could tell there was an expectation that God was going to do something great," Will said.

And each night He did.

Street boys who often get high on glue and beg for money on the grounds found themselves in the middle of praise and worship. On the first night, two came to Christ, including a young boy named Huntington.

Smart and articulate, he said he quit school because of problems at home, including an alcoholic father.

A child relocation program that works with Samaritan's Purse has started the process to help him get back in school and reconnect with his family.

"Those are the people you want to see make it," Will said. "One day you may look at Huntington, and he may become a great evangelist or a church planter because of what God did this week."

Overcoming the Odds

Much of Kisumu lives in poverty, "Which leads to immorality," explained Celebration counselor Christopher Mesa. He added that Kisumu is viewed in Kenya as "one of the most evil" cities.

Benjamin, 31, told Christopher he was involved in raping and stealing, and was a terrorist in the city, threatening many people. But Sunday marked a new beginning after Benjamin came forward on the final day of the Celebration.

Christopher has a story of his own. He was born out of polygamy and became a street boy after his father died and his mother turned to alcohol.

"But when I came to Christ, I prayed with my mom, and she is now born again," he said. "It is my joy to even tell other people that Jesus can save the rejected and the least fortunate in the community."

The weekend of festivities included two separate events—one for women, one for youth. Evangelist Robert Cunville delivered

a message to the women, while Will presented trophies and a short sermon following the local youth soccer tournament.

Social Media in Kenya

Kenya is the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's most engaged audience on Facebook, and Will's visit to Kisumu was no exception.

"Of all the places I've been anywhere in the world, Kenya is the most active social place I've been," he said, noting the increase in interaction on Facebook and Twitter since he arrived.

"My prayer is that the people who gave their life to Christ, that they get followed up by the local churches," Will said.

The BGEA has developed the webpage to help with that connection process. Whether they attended the Celebration or not, Kenyans are encouraged to visit the page, submit their info, and begin the process of connecting with a counselor from BGEA's Internet evangelism ministry, Search for Jesus.

"Be praying that the seed that fell in the dirt [in Kisumu] would not be robbed by Satan or squelched by the other weeds that grow back—that it takes root and bears fruit," Will Graham said.

"The best things are yet to come," he continued. "To see what God does in 20 years to the people that gave their life to Christ."

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