

Easter Crusade Aims to Help Resurrect Haiti

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Updated: Roughly 550 pastors in Haiti participated in a two-day event aimed at teaching church leaders to pray for physical and emotional healing in nation still reeling from a January earthquake that killed more than 200,000 people.

Led by evangelist Joan Hunter, daughter of healing ministers Charles and Frances Hunter, the training event began Wednesday in Port-au-Prince and led up to a three-day Healing 4 Haiti crusade Easter weekend thatÂ drew roughly 200,000 people in the nation's capital.

Photo: Healing 4 Haiti will be held outside the government's National Palace, which was devastated by the earthquake.

"We're training them and starting off on Good Friday talking about the resurrection power of Jesus those three days and the resurrection of Haiti also," said Hunter, who used a French translation of her parents' classic series, *How to Heal the Sick*, as part of the training. Hunter's ministry also helped pay for the pastors' food, lodging and transportation.

The crusade was to be held near the National Palace, which was ruined in the quake. Organizers hoped the president and prime minister would attend the Easter service, which was a corporate gathering of dozens of area churches.

Though humanitarian needs remains, Hunter said government leaders have been asking for psychologists to help survivors cope with the trauma of the earthquake and the guilt of having lived when their loved ones died.

"The psychiatrists and psychologists, though they do have their place, they will teach people how to cope with their grief, I go in and tell them how to get rid of their grief," Hunter said, noting that she prayed to be free of grief that nearly crippled her after her mother, Frances Hunter, died last July.

"I miss my mom, but that's totally different in comparison to the heaviness of the grief," she explained.

Haitian pastors are used to addressing demonic oppression, said Eric Cummings of Joan Hunter Ministries, who worked with Haitian pastors to coordinate the conference. But they haven't received much training in holistic ministry, he said.

"They know how to speak to the Voodoo doctors and the black magic," he said. "But once you have somebody converted and you have the demons cast out of them, then you're dealing with the healing process of the rest of the person, the whole body. They're excited and hungry to learn this themselves for their own personal use."

Rene Joseph, pastor of Loving Hands Ministry in Port-au-Prince, said there has been a spirit of revival since he and several other Haitian ministers organized three days of prayer and fasting last February that reportedly drew a million people.

"All over the churches in Haiti now, and under the tent, people are getting saved, and people are spending hours in prayer and fasting," Joseph said. "They go straight for two months nonstop, services every night and people getting saved and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. I mean, it is a new thing for Haiti."

He believes God is using the earthquake for Haiti's good. In 2008, Joseph said a woman in his church prophesied that an earthquake would devastate the nation unless the people humbled themselves before God in repentance. He said she wrote

letters to government leaders, telling them of her vision, but they did not respond.

After the earthquake, when he and other pastors asked the president to call three days of prayer and fasting, Joseph said government officials remembered the woman and agreed to cancel carnival to allow the prayer services.

In the weeks since, he said more than 123 Voodoo priests have accepted Christ, and people have been turning from witchcraft. "That bad thing is turning Haiti right now closer to God," he said. "Our goal right now is to go out to every village every month ... and let the people know it is God's will for them to live, it is God's will to have a change in Haiti."

Joseph said pastors are praying that a Christian government will be established in the island nation. He believes Haiti had been under a curse invoked in 1804 when early leaders allegedly made a pact with the devil. But he said the curse was broken in July 7, 2007, when pastors nationwide gathered to dedicate Haiti back to the Lord.

Joseph says God has shown Haitian pastors a plan to bring abundance in the nation. He said it includes a process of reforestation and agricultural development that will allow Haiti to export organic produce and have enough food to give to other nations in need.

"This will be the year when Haiti will produce a lot of organic corn, and wherever we plant, food will grow," he said, noting that yams are growing on land he owns though they typically need deeper, moister soil to produce.

"We see God moving in a mighty way," Joseph said, "and we see God putting a Christian government in power. We are not going to give it up. We are going to push all the way until we turn this country completely as a Christian nation."