

Florida Pastor Breaks World Record for Doing This

That's a lot of gospel. And epistles, Old Testament law and prophets, and probably a good bit of wisdom literature thrown in too.

A Florida pastor apparently broke the world record for the longest speech marathon last weekend by preaching for more than 53 hours with the help of more than 200 pages of notes and 600 Power Point slides.

Pastor Zach Zehnder of the Cross church of Mount Dora, Florida, was aiming to break the record for the world's longest speech of 48 hours and 31 minutes to raise money for a new nonprofit that offers free alcohol- and drug-addiction treatment services, according to the *Orlando Sentinel*.

"Well, if we're going to do a fundraiser, let's think of something really creative," Zehnder, 31, told the newspaper on Monday. "We don't want to do a car wash or a trivia night. Let's do something really memorable."

The event generated nearly \$90,000 for Eustis-based Powerhouse Recovery, which is operated by Hand in Hand of Lake County, an outgrowth ministry of the 250-member church northwest of Orlando.

He started speaking at 7 a.m. last Friday. By the time he quit at 12:18 Sunday, he had compiled 53 hours, 18 minutes—beating the old record by almost five hours.

As fatigue set in, Zehnder's congregation cheered him on and even squirted him with water guns to help keep him alert.

Zehnder said about 400 to 500 people, including four nurses from the church who took shifts monitoring his health, sat

through his sermons at different times over the weekend.

According to the rules, at least 10 people must be present during the entire attempt along with two witnesses who are not affiliated with the church. Zehnder said he believes they complied and will submit the evidence, including pages of log books and notes, and hopes to hear back from Guinness within a few months.

He was also allotted, according to the rules, five-minute breaks for every hour he spoke. He said he stockpiled those breaks and used them to take three longer rests and walks to re-energize.

Zehnder originally planned to preach the entire Bible, according to , but Guinness rules dictate that he could not have a copy of the Bible with him on the platform. He preached a total of 50 different sermons.

With the help of the funds raised, Hand in Hand can open up its first recovery house, a home built by Habitat for Humanity in Eustis just a few weeks ago. The Powerhouse Recovery home is for men looking for help breaking addiction and for assistance getting their lives back on the right track.

As he inched closer to the world record, he told the Orlando newspaper that more people showed up to cheer him on, including his wife, who stayed most of the time, and their two sons.

"I got to play off their energy and enthusiasm," he said. "I was the one doing the speaking, but this was a record that many, many people were involved in."