

# The 'Billy Graham of Africa' Dies of COVID Complications

Stephen Lungu, a well-known evangelist and retired CEO of African Enterprise, died Jan. 18 in Malawi in southeastern Africa from COVID-19 complications. He was 78.

The announcement of Lungu's death appeared on the AE website. The statement noted that the evangelist had diabetes for several years and was not able to fight off the virus.

"We all prayed. However, it has pleased the Lord to rest him," Stephen Mbogo, who succeeded Lungu as AE's international CEO in 2014, said in a tribute. Mbogo also cited Psalm 116:15 (NIV): "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants."

Known as "the Billy Graham of Africa," Lungu grew up in a dysfunctional family in Zimbabwe, living on the streets and becoming involved in street gangs. In his testimony given several years later, Lungu recalled as a teenager leading his gang to throw "petrol bombs" into an evangelistic tent meeting in the city of Harare. Instead of initiating the attack, he said he ended up going forward to give his life to Christ as the words of the preacher touched his heart.

He was uneducated and illiterate, but Patrick Johnstone, a British missionary and author of the prayer guide, *Operation World*, became his mentor.

According to AE, over the years Lungu became a powerful evangelist, first working with the Dorothea Mission and then with African Enterprise.

"Few people had a greater passion for Christ or shared the Gospel more powerfully than Stephen Lungu," the AE website noted.

“To be sure, there will be thousands and thousands of people in heaven because of Stephen Lungu,” said Michael Cassidy, honorary chairman of the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization, who founded AE in 1961 while a student at Fuller Seminary.

“I have known many preachers over the years in African Enterprise, and beyond it, but I don’t think I have ever known a more passionate and endlessly energetic preacher of the Gospel than Stephen,” the South African evangelist told AE. “None of us could ever match his energy or his day and night sharing of the Gospel, whether from public platforms or in shops and restaurants.” {eoa}

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