

Zambia Rejoices in the Gospel of Christ

On the heels of praying for a peaceful presidential election in September and a smooth administration changeover, the people of Zambia united in prayer once more—this time to cry out before God for *My Hope* Zambia, a nationwide evangelistic outreach coordinated by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in cooperation with nearly 6,000 churches.

From Thursday-Saturday, some 60,000 believers in nine districts invited family and friends to watch a 30-minute program that featured music, testimonies and a powerful gospel message by either Billy Graham or Franklin Graham.

The response was nothing less than an answer to prayer.

Now, just as they rejoiced during the transition of presidential power, Christians across Zambia are voicing their praise to God for the thousands of people who gave their hearts to Jesus Christ during *My Hope* and converted from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light.

“The church in Zambia is a praying church,” said *My Hope* national coordinator Mpundu Mutala. “Zambian churches take prayer seriously, as they do fasting. Concerted nationwide prayer was a key component behind this *My Hope* outreach, and we give God the glory for all that He has done.”

Mutala certainly remembers as a student at Fuller Theological Seminary from 1988 to 1991 meeting with a small group of friends to pray that Billy Graham would be able to return to Zambia and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ as he did at a crusade in 1960.

Though Graham has not been able to revisit Zambia and preach the gospel in person, he has been able to hold “living room

crusades" throughout the country via *My Hope*.

"I thank God that we've been able to partner with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and that God is allowing us to reap such a great spiritual harvest," Mutala said.

Bishop Stanley Simunyola, who is the presiding bishop of Grace Ministries International in Zambia, expresses his thanks for the training BGEA provided in equipping Christian lay men and women to share their faith with family, friends and neighbors.

"Jesus, who is the Bread of Life, is not like a loaf of bread I buy at the shop," Simunyola explained. "He is not to be enjoyed by me alone, but this Bread of Life is for sharing."

Simunyola, who served as chairman of the *My Hope* Zambia national committee, said he believes there are two reasons that Christians do not reach out to proclaim the Gospel with other people: 1) fear; and 2) lack of knowledge.

"The *My Hope* training took care of both because as people were given easy-to-use tools and shown practical ways to witness, they learned how to confidently and boldly share the Bread of Life with somebody else," he explained.

Results are just now beginning to be counted, but preliminary figures indicate that thousands of Zambians have made decisions to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Here is but a sampling of changed lives:

- In a densely populated, poorer neighborhood in Lusaka, the country's capital, more than 70 new Christians attended the Harvest Sunday service at St. Stephen Anglican Church. About 20 church members who had been trained as Matthews brought to church on Sunday many of the people who received Christ in their homes during the three days of *My Hope*. "We get excited when one person or two people come join our church," said Father Frank

Hakoola, pastor at the 500-member church. "We get so excited and clap and welcome them. So can you imagine how joyful we were when we had 70 new people show up. That's like a whole new church walking into our congregation. We thank God!"

- In response to an advertisement promoting *My Hope*, a 25-year-old man in the Western Province called a telephone number provided in the ad. The call was received Friday night by one of the national *My Hope* staff manning the phones. The young man had not been able to see the telecast but was curious about what *My Hope* was all about. After hearing the Gospel presented by the staff member, the young man accepted Christ over the phone.
- On Friday, 11 people, including five neighbors and six family members, gathered in the living room of Mercy Chate in Luanshya, a town about four hours north of Lusaka. Mercy's 17-year-old adopted son accepted Christ and her 16-year-old daughter rededicated her life to Jesus, as did 34-year-old neighbor, Jeffery. He recently moved to Luanshya from Lusaka, and while listening to Franklin Graham preach on the Prodigal Son, Jeffery recognized he had been living in sin and wanted to return to the Lord. He had first given his life to Christ in 2005.
- Children were not forgotten. In Kitwe, one of the largest cities in Zambia, 32 children gathered at the home of Gladys Chishimba, a widow who was trained as a Matthew. After a special DVD geared for kids was shown, 13-year-old Joshua Banda shared his testimony. He told the group that he was the son of a pastor but grew tired of church. He rebelled and frequently got into fights at school. About three years ago, he heard the Gospel at a Crusade in Kitwe and became convicted of his sins and surrendered his life to Christ. Banda invited the children to pray to receive Christ, and 22 responded,

including five of his cousins.

- Pastor Eldrid Phiri, who served as the Monze district coordinator in the Southern Province, held a projector showing in a church in Chipembele village. Special projectors are used to show the program with DVDs in areas where accessibility to television is limited or even non-existent. About 10 Matthews invited guests to the projector showing, and approximately 110 people showed up, with even more arriving later. They watched the *My Hope* Zambia program in the language of Tonga. When an invitation was extended, 45 came forward and prayed to receive Christ.
- A projector showing was held in Mululu Village, a small village near Chibombo, two hours north of Lusaka. The Chibombo district coordinator trained a pastor who was starting a church in that village. The pastor equipped his Matthews, and that village church has already grown significantly. Some 200 people watched the *My Hope* program, and 60 came forward to pray to receive Christ.

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