



HOPE FOR GWERU

650 Baptized in Zimbabwe



From left to right, Chris Holland of It Is Written Canada, Gary Kent of It Is Written Oceania, and John Bradshaw celebrate 60 years of ministry.

From March 20 to April 2, the It Is Written team conducted 10 simultaneous series of meetings around the city of Gweru, located in the center of Zimbabwe. In the midst of this evangelistic series, the ministry celebrated its 60th anniversary on March 25, the day of the first-known It Is Written television broadcast.

A COMBINED EFFORT

The team in Zimbabwe consisted of a videographer, volunteer doctors, and a team of speakers. The list of speakers for the ten sites included It Is Written Speaker/Director John Bradshaw and his son Jacob. The remainder of the meetings were covered by Chris Holland of It Is Written Canada; Gary Kent of It Is Written Oceania; It Is Written Evangelism Director Yves Monnier; It Is Written Trust Services Representative Curt Dolinsky; SALT Director Alan Parker; and Pastor of the Chattanooga First Church



Dale Tunnell. In addition to the It Is Written team there were three local pastors covering sites.

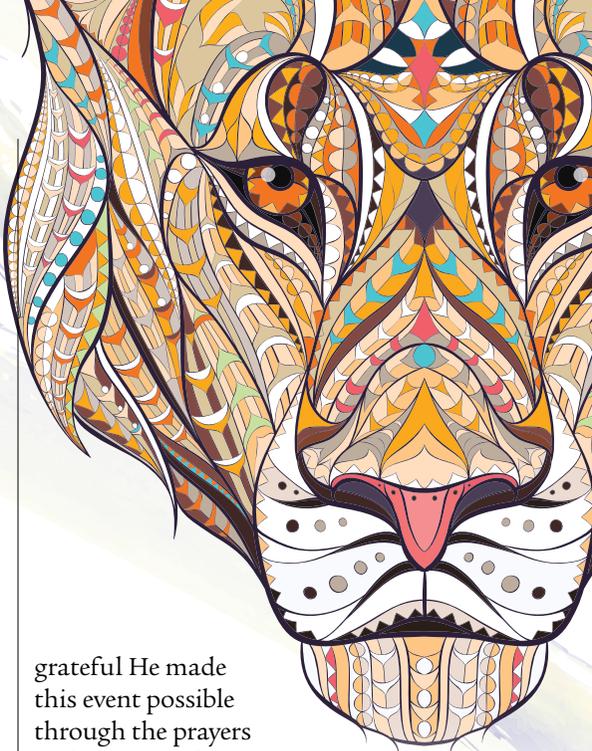
“It was truly a blessing to have so many members of the It Is Written family together in Zimbabwe preaching the Word of God on such a special anniversary,” Yves Monnier said. “The sermon presentations were appreciated, and every evening we had people making decisions to accept Jesus and to be baptized.”

In addition to the evangelistic meetings, health clinics were also conducted. Dr. Gordon Guild of the It Is Written volunteer team gave practical health presentations each night and the reaction was very positive. He told children’s stories for 150 to 200 eager children, and his stories were a highlight.

“...every evening we have people making decisions to accept Jesus and to be baptized.”

It Is Written also collected Beanie Babies to take to the children in Zimbabwe. A total of 4,235 were donated in the weeks before the series. Each site handed out the toys on different nights.

“At each location around the city we saw God do great things, and I’m extremely

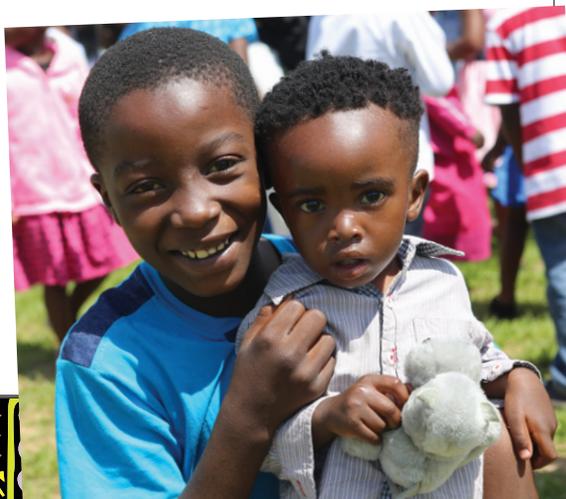


grateful He made this event possible through the prayers and support of those who uphold It Is Written,” John Bradshaw said. “Each person was carefully followed up and nurtured. Each one who made a decision for Christ was enrolled in a small group.”

FILMING NEW PROGRAMS

In addition to the meetings and health clinics, It Is Written also used their time in Zimbabwe to film several new television programs. Over the past 60 years during their time as speaker/director of It Is Written, both Pastor George Vandeman and Pastor Mark Finley were able to film with big cats for the It Is Written TV program—Vandeman with two tigers, and Finley with a lion.

In honor of the 60th anniversary John Bradshaw filmed a television program at a local, private game reserve called Antelope Park. Antelope Park is a conservation park and it has a breeding





program through which lions will be returned to the wild.

“Filming with lions and lion cubs was a special experience, and very much in the tradition of It Is Written, which has featured tigers and lions in broadcasts in years gone by,” John Bradshaw said. “Walking with two-year-old lions, petting them, and even holding them by the tail was almost surreal, and it will make for compelling television to share Jesus.”

The team also filmed another program, one at Great Zimbabwe—the old ruins of a kingdom from the 12th to the 15th centuries. The team spent the mornings filming then headed back to Gweru in the evening to host the meetings.

FISHERS OF MEN

At the conclusion of the series on the final Sabbath afternoon, 650 people were baptized in a local swimming pool. Many pastors baptized people simultaneously, and afterwards the team was able to distribute Bibles to each of those people who were baptized.

“One of the new disciples of Jesus caught my eye: a striking-looking man, with a chiseled, well-defined face, perhaps about



In spite of torrential rain at the start of the series, thousands regularly attended meetings at ten locations throughout Gweru, Zimbabwe.





50 years old, dressed in a white shirt with a look that suggested joy and earnestness," Pastor Bradshaw said.

John shook the man's hand and wished him well.

The man exclaimed to Bradshaw, "Now we will be fishers of men!"

"That statement affected me," John said. "He had only recently come to faith in Christ, and the intention of his life was now well-defined for him. Now he is

a fisher of men, now a soul-winner. His mission now is to share with others what he has learned about His Savior."

Please continue to pray for all the people touched during the Hope for Gweru series. Another baptism is already scheduled in the area as a result of the meetings. ✍

Watch for updates about the new It Is Written television programs filmed in Zimbabwe!



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Faithful SERVICE

“Evangelism is hard in North America and easy in Africa,” is a statement I’ve often heard. Or, “All you need to do is fill a baptistry over there and people will just run to it and be baptized.”

The 650 baptisms that the It Is Written team recently enjoyed in Gweru, Zimbabwe, might seem to prove those declarations to be accurate. However, nothing could be further from the truth. My two weeks working alongside the faithful pastors in Gweru gave me a behind-the-scenes glimpse of evangelism in that part of the world.

What I discovered was nothing less than amazing. First of all, a pastor in Zimbabwe pastors at least 20 to 40 churches and another 30 or 50

companies (about 4,000 church members altogether or more). In other words, it is not uncommon for a pastor to be the shepherd of 60 congregations that he will be able to visit on average about three times a year at the

How do churches grow in the absence of a pastor?

most. So who runs the churches? How do churches grow in the absence of a pastor? And, what does the pastor do besides preach in a different place every week as a “guest” speaker?

The answers to these questions reveal the secret to the extraordinary work of evangelism taking place in Africa. Churches are run by church members. These church members are carefully mentored by the pastor. So, whenever the pastor visits a church, he spends several days in the area visiting and training the leaders of the church in how to properly run a church. In turn these church leaders then visit and train the church members. A significant portion of this training, of course, involves evangelism and the best training is the kind that is done hands-on.

Pastor Tunhira, the pastor of the churches where I conducted my evangelistic series, invited me to go on a visit with him to the home of a man

who was attending our nightly meetings. He also invited one of the church members he was training to come along. That visit was eye-opening in many ways. The man we visited had many questions—the very same questions I’ve faced as a pastor in the United States. This notion that people in other parts of the world accept everything one preaches without asking questions is untrue. Using the Bible, Pastor Tunhira deftly answered all questions while at the same time training his church member how to handle questions and objections.

In like manner, Pastor Tunhira has trained hundreds of church members on how to conduct Bible studies, how to preach evangelistic sermons, how to follow-up contacts, and how to lead out in baptismal classes. By the way, these baptismal classes are hard core. The baptismal candidates are thoroughly trained in the basics of

the Christian faith, which includes an emphasis on everyone’s responsibility to be involved in outreach. Anyone baptized knows that he or she is not just getting wet but making a lifelong commitment to serve God.

Church members in Zimbabwe take the service part

of their commitment very seriously. Their involvement in outreach is not just an after-thought or something they do if they’re not too busy. No, their participation in evangelism is a priority. Trained and equipped by the pastors, members eagerly share Jesus with anyone they meet.

At one of our other evangelistic sites in Gweru, 35 young and old church members decided to camp near the place where the meetings were being held. They could have stayed home and commuted back and forth but instead decided to camp so that they could focus solely on evangelism in that area. Every day they walked up and down the roads, an average of 10 miles each day, inviting people to attend the nightly Bible presentations, distributing Christian literature, and, whenever possible, appealing for people to accept Jesus as their Savior.

Among them was a 90-year-old man. He could not walk far but he could certainly pray powerfully, and that’s what he did while others were out and about. In the evening he would lead out in classes to prepare people for baptism. What was the pastor doing during this time? Checking in to make sure that his members were doing what they had been trained to do—and they were.

Baptisms in Africa are the result of faithful service just like they are in the United States. The difference, though, is that there are a lot more people involved in faithful service and, thus, there are a lot more baptisms in Africa.

Imagine for a moment the number of baptisms possible here if more people were involved in sharing Jesus. Imagine. I went to Zimbabwe to teach—however, as it turned out, I was the one who was taught the secret to successful evangelism. 



YVES MONNIER is the Director of Evangelism for It Is Written. He schedules and oversees all of the ministry’s evangelism projects around the world.