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Peter Hammond has returned from leading a Frontline evangelistic crusade in Zambia. The last time he entered Zambia's capital, Lusaka, it was as a prisoner, blindfolded, barefoot and in chains, singing Gospel hymns at bayonet point. This time he was received with V.I.P. honours, interviewed on Zambia's National Television and was the main speaker for the Crusade '91 evangelistic rallies. This is what he reports:

Ever since I and three other Fellowship missionaries were arrested and detained in Zambia, I had been convinced that the Lord would again open the doors to Zambia and lead us back to minister in this needy country. The recent Frontline outreach in Zambia's Crusade '91 was the fulfilment of a vision.

During our enforced prison ministry in 1987: we sang the hymns of the faith in our dark, damp, filthy cells in Livingstone; we shared the Gospel challenge with the soldiers, police and security officials who interrogated us; we sang hymns as we were led through the streets of Lusaka in chains; and we proclaimed the Gospel to the thousand prisoners incarcerated with us in Lusaka Central Prison. Our days were filled with counselling the many desperate inmates in the crowded courtyard, or in a battle of wills with the interrogators. The nights were filled with evangelistic discussions with Muslims, and Bible study and prayer meetings with other Christians in our "detainees" cell.

After worldwide prayer, publicity and pressure had secured our release, we continued to maintain contact with some of the many friends we had made. We organised prayer campaigns for the prisoners, published their plight and mailed letters of encouragement and care packages. We also developed a network of couriers to deliver and distribute Bibles, Gospel booklets, tracts and Christian books to 30 prisons throughout Zambia. Regularly we received letters from grateful prisoners who had received the blessings of the Word of God in their own language.

Then, as we announced in our July Intercessors letter, in answer to prayer and in response to our international campaign, Christian prisoner, Isaiah Moyo was released. In addition, Frontline Fellowship was officially invited to take part in the "Crusade '91" evangelistic campaign in Zambia. In response, I requested that the campaign include ministry to the prisons where we had been detained in 1987. When this was confirmed, Frontline Fellowship sent two teams to

Lusaka. The teams were made up of Frontline missionaries from the Transvaal, the Cape, Namibia and America. Aside from my own experiences in jail in Zambia and Mozambique, our team had further prison experience. George had also been captured and imprisoned in Mozambique, and Martha had been imprisoned in the USA for her pro-life activities in protesting the murder of the unborn through abortion.

Equipped with over 30 000 Gospel booklets, tracts and Bibles in 11 languages, the “JESUS” film and our 16mm projector, our team drove to Lusaka. Instead of the abuse and harrassment which we had previously received, all of our team members reported being well treated and politely received by the customs officials and soldiers at the roadblocks. To emphasize the marked change in attitude, I was officially received at customs and escorted past the immigration procedures to the VIP lounge. Our host was equipped with a letter from the Zambian Foreign Affairs, certifying our VIP status and requiring that we be allowed to travel without hindrance. Never before had I passed through customs and roadblocks in Central Africa with such ease.

The spiritual battle we were soon engaged in was illustrated by the (government-controlled) ZNBC (Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation) TV programme our team participated in. Before we were interviewed, an atheist from the (KGB-controlled) Novosti Press in Moscow presented a communist view on recent events in the Soviet Union, stating that Socialism hadn't failed, that the USSR wasn't in economic chaos, and Gorbachev wasn't begging for money from the Western nations — he was only requesting assistance!

“The fool says in his heart, ‘there is no God.’ They are corrupt Psalm 14:1

Then a witchdoctor defended their practise of “smelling out” and identifying individuals deemed responsible for someone's illness or tragedy. While acknowledging that those people who were identified by witchdoctors were invariably stoned or beaten to death, he defended this, saying that it was unfair to blame the “traditional healers” for the actions and customs of the people. The witchdoctor even claimed that he was also a “traditional Christian”. Next the outgoing Indian Ambassador presented his Hindu views.

“Let no-one be found among you who practices divin or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or is a medium or a spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord.” Deuteronomy 18:10-12

Nevertheless, despite the apparent spiritual confusion, Martha and I were able to present an uncompromising message of repentance and faith in Christ to an estimated 1,5 million viewers. The interviewers seemed most positive towards us and the mission of Frontline Fellowship, and gave us time to clearly proclaim our “Back to the Bible” message.

During the 10-day Crusade '91, we addressed 41 meetings, including: 7 prison outreaches, 12 church services, 9 lunch- hour meetings with the staff at the Post Office and ZNBC, and 12 open-air evangelistic rallies.

The 2-hour “JESUS” film attracted so many people that we had to move the 16mm projector outside of the church and screen the film against a church wall so that the whole community could view it. The pastors of one area informed us that the last time a Christian film had been seen in their township was in 1975!

Everywhere we received warm welcomes and enthusiastic responses to our Bible teaching and preaching, especially from the prisoners. It was a great privilege to personally give each prisoner we ministered to Gospel booklets and a bar of soap. After we had delivered Bibles to one prison, we were shown the worn out remains of the only two Bibles that had been available before. Day after day, prisoners sat for hours paging through their newly-acquired copies of God’s Word during our Bible teaching sessions.

The officer commanding one prison told us: “Since you began to preach here there has been no fighting amongst the prisoners They have changed. They are so much at peace.”

Yet even while we rejoiced at the wonderful opportunities for ministry and enjoyed warm fellowship with some dedicated believers, we became increasingly burdened over the spiritual situation in Lusaka. Every night our times of prayer as a team became more serious and intense as we interceded for the Church in Lusaka, sometimes with tears.

Lusaka, a city of over a million inhabitants, must be the most crime-afflicted city I had yet seen. Even the poorest families had high walls, often with broken glass cemented into the top, protecting their properties. Almost every home seemed to have wrought iron burglar bars, heavy

security gates and many locks. Local residents were afraid to go out at night, and urged us to go through red traffic lights rather than risk being attacked while stationary. Everyone seemed to have been affected by the crime wave, and theft seemed to be the main growth industry. The amount of cars with broken windows was staggering.

The abject poverty was also heart-rending. Officially the average income per individual is \$240 per year. In the suburb of Lusaka where we stayed, none of the homes had any plumbing or electricity. Even basic foods like mealie meal (corn meal) were in short supply and many children were malnourished.

The prisoners reported that they never received fruit, vegetables or meat — only beans and maize-meal porridge. Many prisoners have died of malnutrition, or minor illnesses complicated by malnutrition. Several had died because of lack of hygiene. The prison authorities seldom provided soap. If it were not for groups like ours or relatives providing some soap and additional food, more would have died.

The abuse of alcohol was another major social evil, with bars far outnumbering churches. It was not unusual to see drunken men languishing by the taverns, even in the mornings.

“Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.” Isaiah 5:11

Accordingly, the overwhelming number of wrecked vehicles littering the streets of Lusaka stood as an eloquent testimony to the danger of drunkenness. In the ZNBC parking lot alone we saw 12 mangled vehicles.

However, it wasn't the prevalence of sin in society that shocked us, but the tolerance of evil in the Church.

Martha was amazed to see a group of thirty women repairing the road with pick axes and shovels. Many of the women were breaking rocks and shovelling stones with their babies strapped to their backs. Martha walked over to a group of men laughing and drinking beer

outside a nearby bar. “Why are you drinking while your wives work?” she asked. In response they laughed and mocked her. When challenged about being enslaved to alcohol, they responded: “The Christians drink. Even the elders and bishops drink — just like we do. And the Archbishop owns the bottle store!”

“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbours, pouring it from the wineskin until they are drunk.” Habakkuk 2:15

We were distressed to find the average congregations crippled by compromise, greed, envy, jealousy and pride. As in most churches in the West, we found that prayer and Bible study were severely neglected.

The superficiality of most church-goers in Lusaka was staggering. I have read glowing reports of “Revival fires sweeping Zambia” in various Christian publications, but I have seldom seen such spiritually dead and decadent churches as are in Lusaka. And the children were rebellious and uncontrollable, even during church services and times of prayer.

Many pastors, “bishops” and “archbishops” were involved in questionable business activities, immorality, dishonesty and even running bottle stores. Very few church leaders would qualify for Christian service by any Biblical standards (1 Timothy 3:1-13 & Titus 1:5-16)—both in Zambia and South Africa, for that matter. But there was almost no difference in morals and social standards evident between the Christians and the pagans.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21 One did not have to look far for the reasons for the abject poverty, drunkenness and lawlessness. The names of the streets: “Saddam Hussein Boulevard”, “Ben Bella Way”, and others, often honoured vicious dictators and mass-murderers. The “Freedom Fighter” monument reminded us that Lusaka has hosted revolutionary groups like the MPLA, Frelimo, ZANU, ZAPU, SWAPO and the ANC, all of whom have used Zambia as a launching pad for terrorist attacks against Mozambique, Angola, South West Africa, Rhodesia and South Africa. Tens of thousands of people have been crippled or killed by Soviet and Red Chinese armaments and bombs channelled through Zambia. Indeed, SWAPO and the ANC have run concentration camps in Zambia for their own dissidents. Some victims of the ANC, like abducted witness from the Winnie Mandela trial — Katiza Cebekhulu, were still jailed in Lusaka Central Prison.

The official policy of President Kaunda, the second longest ruling leader in the world after Fidel Castro, has been Socialist Humanism. Now, after the economic failure of socialism and much protest, Zambia is heading back towards multi-party democracy (the first elections are promised in October) and some kind of mixed economy.

That is good news because one-party rule and humanist socialism has turned this mineral-rich nation into one of the most destitute and most debtor nations dependent on international handouts.

Nevertheless, evidence of the old order remains. I saw 10 Soviet MI-8 helicopters and 3 MIG-21 jet fighters at Lusaka airport, and most of the soldiers carried Soviet weapons. Those I spoke to informed me that most of the military are still atheists and communists, and that Soviet, North Korean and Cuban military advisors are still training elements of their armed forces.

At the "Freedom Fighter" monument I asked some Zambians if they were free. One said "No". Another said "Soon we will be... After the elections in October". When asked if they were better off now than before independence, they refused to answer: 'It would be treason to answer that!'

The Scripture teaches us, in Jeremiah 18:7-10, that if any nation turns away from God and turns to do evil, then God will uproot, break down and destroy that nation. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 graphically describe the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience that God visits upon nations.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm 9:17

The Scripture teaches us that the crime and chaos in our society is a natural consequence of our national sin and degeneration.

Which brings us back to the point I mentioned earlier. What shocked us and burdened our hearts and prayers was the

spiritual lethargy and compromise within the churches.

Most congregations understood almost nothing of the teachings of the Bible and few had a personal experience of repentance and conversion to Christ. The average Gospel preaching was weak in content and watered down to a cheap “easy-believism” that tended to produce lukewarm, half hearted churchgoers. Immorality was prevalent. Backsliding was normal and compromise was all too common.

The reason for that spiritual catastrophe was also not hard to find. Many of the religious books, tapes and speakers available from the West have presented the most superficial and frivolous of messages. With a few exceptions, much of the contact with Western churches has been counter-productive. Everywhere we came across church leaders caught up in materialism, greed and pride. Some preached the “prosperity gospel” and gimmicks they had imbibed from the West. Many were addicted to the trappings of success and status, revelling in grandiose titles like “Executive President” and “Reverend Archbishop”.

“But you are not to be like that. Instead the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.” Luke 22:26

During our prayer times we could often sense how much this wickedness in the church must grieve the Holy Spirit. We prayed for a spirit of brokenness and a true revival of repentance.

“Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God...” Joel 2:12,13

For this reason we concentrated on leadership training and Bible teaching. In the churches we taught on the nature and character of God, including His Holiness and wrath against sin, revival and reformation, prayer and evangelism. At the Crusades we preached on eternal judgement, heaven and hell, sin and salvation, repentance and faith, discipleship and holiness.

Some pastors and believers expressed their surprise that we didn’t call people to come forward

and make a public commitment at our open-air Crusades. “Every evangelist always calls people to the front,” declared one. Instead, because we knew how easily and casually people in Africa will come to the front of a meeting, we sought to impress the seriousness of the message upon our audiences by telling them not to come forward before men, but to, in the quietness of their own heart, come before God.

We urged them to obtain literature from us and go home, read the Scriptures, confess all known sin before God and come back again the next day. This tactic was so unusual to them that each day the crowds gathered and increased to hear more. At the end we were counselling many individuals who were serious about repentance and discipleship. Many came to experience the peace and joy that only comes from the new birth, true repentance, and total commitment to the Lordship of Christ.

Pray for the Church in Zambia — for a growth in their knowledge of God and His Word, for judgement and removal of unrepentant church leaders who are engaged in blatant sin, for a cleansing and purifying of the believers, and for the Christians to wake up to their missionary calling to **“make disciples of all nations...”** Matthew 28:19

Please pray also for the ongoing work of our missionary teams as we train leaders to **“discern the signs of the times”**

Matt 16:3, and to

“be diligent, ... rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15.