True Rest in Zambia

Christopher Hobson 11 September 2018



Daniel Barnard and I had the honour of joining one of our Four12 Partners, Signs and Wonders Ministries International, at their annual conference in Livingstone, Zambia in the last week of August 2018. Signs and Wonders is a multi-site church with congregations in various areas of Zambia – some in Livingstone, others in the western areas, such as Sichili, and others as far east as Chipata, on the border of Malawi, 800km away.

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Once a year, saints from these various congregations travel ridiculous distances to meet together to be envisioned and encouraged with the love of Jesus and to receive apostolic input. This year, over 200 members were able to join together. It was inspiring to see how deep their devotion towards Jesus is and just how zealous they are as a church to see their local church become all that she is called to be in their local field.

I was both excited and anxious in my preparation for the trip, as I had only 5 days of leave to catch my breath after a hectic season at work as an intern doctor. Physically, I was longing for rest, but as we began to drive across northern South Africa and Botswana, I began to realise that the Lord wanted to do a deep work in me that went far beyond 'time out'. As I stepped out, I discovered that true rest comes from abiding in the Father and being obedient to His will, and that there is a great encouragement that comes from seeing His Kingdom advance across the

world.

I was amazed by some of the stories of people who made the journey to Livingstone. One person had to catch an 8-hour bus ride to get to Livingstone, and for the return trip, had to choose between an 8-hour train ride ending with a 35km walk home or the bus again. Despite this, there he was, excited that he was able to join with the church, ready to be equipped and encouraged.

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The heart of the conference was to see the Lord restore to the church what the enemy had stolen. As a church, they have faced some intense persecution of late, so it was incredible to see their responsiveness to what the Lord was doing and their genuine faith in proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and His church is His vehicle. Each day the saints ate, fellowshipped and worshipped together, with an exuberance that I'm sure made our Father smile. Their hearts were so open towards us – not as guests or guest preachers, but as fellow believers with the same mind of Christ. It was so beautiful to see how every saint took ownership of their role in the church, worshipping with zeal and fervour, every believer doing the work of the ministry they were called to in devotion to Jesus.

The final day ended with Dan ordaining more than 15 new elders into office. In spending time with the elders, I could see that their hearts were reverent towards God and humble towards each other. This is something so refreshing to see, as many churches in Zambia are rooted in a few "Anointed Men of God" who receive glory, instead of humble servants whose hearts are to equip the believers. Peter and Charity Chanda (who planted the church 30 years ago, and still lead it) were so welcoming and open-hearted. They lead with humility and sincere love for people. Even though Dan and myself are young enough to be their kids, they received us with honour and grace. What an example of servant leadership and how exciting is it to see this type of leader in our home, Africa.

What an honour to have been able to witness the Lord lavish His love on His church, even for only a week!