

Shakira's Story: From Torment to Triumph



Shakira, a 15-year-old girl from Uganda, has a powerful yet harrowing testimony of resilience in the face of unimaginable adversity. Shakira grew up in a devout Muslim family in Pallisa. For years, she suffered from demon possession, often acting disturbed and out of control. Her family, desperate for her healing, sought help from countless witchdoctors and Imams, but to no avail. Shakira was tormented, treated as if she were mad, and shunned by many.

Until one day, a friend told her about Jesus, who heals. Desperate for hope, Shakira attended church and made the life-changing decision to follow Christ. As her new Christian family prayed for her, she experienced a miraculous healing, and for the first time in years, she felt free. Overjoyed, she hurried home to share the news with her family, but their response was shocking.

Outraged by her conversion, her family and others in the community brutally caned her over 100 times, laughing and demanding she abandon her faith. Incredibly, Shakira, who had only been a Christian for one day, refused to renounce Jesus. Her belief remained unshaken.

In Pallisa, and many parts of Uganda, the Christian community is shrinking under intense persecution. Churches are being destroyed, and believers like Shakira are being attacked. But Shakira is fortunate – she found a church family to provide comfort, protection and discipleship in her darkest hour.

Local churches are crucial, especially in regions where Christianity is under threat. Without a church presence, people like Shakira might never find the salvation, healing and peace they desperately need. Her story highlights why the mission to plant churches, share the Gospel and disciple new believers is more imperative than ever. As we pray for her, let us also remember those still awaiting the hope and love that only Christ can bring. 🙏



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Establishing Streams of Hope

Mobilizing Zimbabwe's Pastors for Church Planting

In Zimbabwe, a landlocked country in southern Africa, the Gospel is bearing fruit, transforming lives and revitalizing communities. Recently, Harvesters launched two new church planting movements, known as Streams, in the cities of Harare and Bulawayo. These Streams are part of the larger mission to bring the Gospel to unreached areas and disciple new believers, expanding the work that Harvesters is doing in over 90 countries.

A FRESH AWAKENING: PASTORS MOBILIZED AND TRANSFORMED

Pastors in Zimbabwe are feeling an undeniable call to action. The training and support provided by Harvesters have reignited a passion in many pastors to reach beyond their previous boundaries.

As Pastor Cleopas Ncube from Bulawayo remarked, "I believe this is a spiritual nudge for a necessary shift that God is bringing to this church. If the church can make soul-winning its number one priority, that will be an unstoppable church. Thank you for mobilizing us."

Another participant echoed this transformation, saying, "I am no longer the same when it comes to people's souls. I have become different, and I am grateful for that. And I am going to empower others as well, as they expand in the work of Christ." The vision of multiplication – planting churches that will plant other churches – has taken root in the hearts of these leaders.

Pastor Margareth Chirwa added, "We are empowered because, as well as many other churches, we were looking at buildings and decorating, not looking at [winning] souls. We are going to go out there and make a difference. We are no longer staying in the cocoons; we are going to fly!" This collective sense of awakening is driving a new season of evangelism in Zimbabwe, both in the cities and in the remote areas.

THE LESSONS LEARNED

Several of the pastors reflected on crucial learnings from the training sessions. A significant focus was on the need for discipleship. As Pastor Mthembisi Moyo from Bulawayo recognized, "We don't nurture [people] so that they can grow and help us. We keep them in the church... doing nothing. They're not proactive for the Kingdom."

Pastor Silent Gwashvanhu from Harare agreed, adding, "I think even our pastors have been neglecting discipleship. They bring people into the church, but those people don't go out and they aren't taught what to do. So, I'm very grateful to this program that Harvesters has brought to Zimbabwe. It will help us disciple our people so that they can also evangelize in their communities."



Silent



Maphosa



Abel Majarira



Simon Makaza



Angel Netha



Cleopas Ncube



Margareth Chirwa

Pastor Maphosa shared his struggles with creating church growth because of the unsustainable burden it placed on himself. Reflecting on these challenges, he humbly acknowledged, "In my short life, I have planted four assemblies, and three of them are nowhere to be accounted for today. Every time I get angry when I think of them because I always blame other people for causing them to be dysfunctional. But after this training, I reflected and said, 'No, I should blame myself.' I became that pastor who was running all over, planting and never discipling people."

Maphosa praised the solution Harvesters provides, stating: "I find [Harvesters' Hub Model] an exciting model because... it creates disciples who then become responsible also for church planting." Now, refired and equipped with our model for sustainable growth, he is preparing to plant two more churches soon.

CHALLENGES: POVERTY, DISTANCE, AND DROUGHT

Zimbabwe, like many parts of Africa, presents its own set of challenges to the spread of the Gospel. Many pastors, especially those in rural areas, are grappling with extreme poverty, hard-to-reach places, and the devastating effects of drought.

Pastor Abel Majorira described the harsh conditions after severe drought: "In most rural areas, people couldn't harvest anything. The situation has been dire. Some families are living by [eating] roots from trees."

Furthermore, pastors are eager to evangelize further afield but it can be difficult. Sadly, some preachers neglect the rural areas because of the distances. But as Pastor Simon Makaza says: "There are people there who need the Gospel."

These challenges underscore why Harvesters focuses on regions with no existing Christian presence. By equipping local pastors with tools, training and support, we strive to reach every remote and overlooked place with the Gospel, planting churches that will serve communities.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: HOPE AND EXPANSION

As we look ahead, the optimism and commitment of the pastors are evident. Pastor Angel Netha's outlook sums it up perfectly: "I'm going to plan what to do straight after [this training]. By the time you return, I'll have a testimony!"

To receive news that just two weeks after Harvesters delivered the Kick Offs, a new church had been established filled us with joy. The seeds planted during these training sessions are already beginning to bear fruit, and with your prayers and support the impact will continue to grow.

With new Streams in Harare and Bulawayo, pastors are more equipped and passionate than ever to reach the unreached and disciple new believers. Despite the challenges of poverty and drought, the mission continues – and with God's help, the church in Zimbabwe will not just multiply, but thrive. ✉



Mthembisi Moyo



nt Gwashavanhu



Thousands of Rwandan Disciples Receive Bibles!

Harvesters recently delivered 3,000 Kinyarwanda Bibles to over 130 of our churches across Rwanda – from Kigali to the northern and southern borders. The impact was immediate and heartfelt, with grateful pastors repeating “Nezerewe,” meaning “I am joyful!”

Pastor Alice in Southern Rwanda, upon receiving Bibles for her congregation, called them “more precious than gold.” These treasured gifts of Scripture will enable church leaders and believers to disciple others, fulfilling the Great Commission.

The Bible Placement Team also took advantage of unique opportunities to evangelize and share the Word of God. They reached out to motorbike riders, distributing tracts and spreading hope on the streets.

Additionally, upon meeting a believer who did not have his own Bible, they were able to gift him one. He shared how it would empower him to teach others about God’s Word.

May the seed of His Word bring forth many disciples. Himbaza Umwami! Praise the Lord. 🙏



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Disciple Makers

We launched a new version of our successful Disciple Makers Course, designed to support churches with discipleship and growth. We praise God for this success. Drawing on twenty-five years of experience and success with our evangelism, church planting, pastoral training, and discipleship strategies in over 97 countries, this course gets back to the biblical basics. The focus is on the message and methodology of Jesus for reaching the world with the gospel.

If you want to learn more about the Disciple Makers Course or invite us to come and present it at your church, get in touch today!



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