

VILLAGE OF HOPE, ZIMBABWE

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATIONS

March 15, 2008

Our day started early, with volunteers setting up equipment, and ladies cooking, preparing to feed over 500 expected guests. Just inside the gates, a tent was waiting to welcome all!



The visiting dignitaries gathered for tea as they arrived and at 9:30 a.m., and made their way to the tent for the worship service to begin.



V.I.P.'s included Bishop T. Manhanga, leader of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe; his associate Bishops and the National Executive Council of the PAOZ; Rev. Murray Cornelius (our keynote speaker and founder of the Village of Hope); Rev. Steve Chaloner (African Regional Director, PAOC missions); Mr. Sergio Bersaglio (Director, Villages of Hope Africa Society); Marg Foreman (Administrative Assistant to Rev. Chaloner and former Zimbabwe missionary); and other Canadian missionaries on the ground – the Chiriseri and Schell families.

The children from Cornelius Hope Academy Primary School filed in, as did our resident children of the Village of Hope, Village workers, Hope Community Church congregants and volunteers, and the many parents that make up our local support, that sit on committees and have been a part of the Village of Hope through it's growth. About 700 people in all!



The children from CHAPS presented songs and poems that brought tears to many eyes, and everyone took part in dancing before God in celebration of what He has done!





- Bishop T. Manhanga (pictured below) welcomed all and spoke of the history and vision that started the Village of Hope so many years ago.
- Mr. Musasa (Head Master, CHAPS) addressed the crowd and spoke of the vision and purpose of the Primary School.
- Mr. Cooledge spoke of the fulfillment of a dream and brought the little life of Derrik as an example of the healing the Village of Hope provides. The fact that just one life is saved and changed, makes it all worth it!
- Mrs. Cooledge shared the book 'You are Special' by Max Lucado as an example of the mission of the Village of Hope – to provide a place of healing in the presence of Jesus Christ.
- Rev. Cornelius (pictured below) spoke to the crowd of a 'Shalom' community where all live in peace under one goal and purpose, reading from John 20.
- our resident children presented a drama on recognizing the presence of God.
- Rev. M. Zowa (senior Pastor, Hope Community Church) preached of 'new things', of the faithfulness of God, of promises kept. (Isaiah 43:19)
- there was great joy as people crowded the aisles and front of the tent, in a dance of celebration, in true African worship & style.

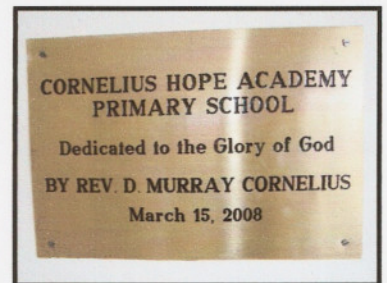




After all the celebrating and speeches, we gathered at the entrance to the Village to unveil a plaque celebrating the moment and marking it in history for years to come – officially opened to the Glory of God by Bishop T. Manhanga on March 15, 2008. The ribbon was cut, and the Village of Hope was officially open!

Rev. Murray Cornelius than officially opened Cornelius Hope Academy Primary School, praying a prayer of dedication over the grounds and children.

The day ended with a great feast, as dignitaries gathered in the beautifully decorated church, and all others ate ‘picnic’ style, the traditional African food lovingly prepared by so many dedicated volunteers.



Wish you were here ☺!