

# (Documentary) Revival Fire South Africa

by Erlo Stegen

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*Erlo Stegen shares the transformative journey of missionary work among the Zulu people, highlighting the power of faith and revival in overcoming darkness and superstition.*

**Duration:** 43:57

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:3-139, Mark 9:24, John 14:12, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 19:18, Ephesians 6:12

**Topics:** "Revival Movement", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon shares the journey of Pastor Erlo Stegen and the mission work at Kwasizabantu, highlighting the darkness of witchcraft, superstition, and tribal wars among the Zulu people. It explores the transformation brought by the Gospel, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, miraculous healings, and the establishment of a hospital without doctors. Testimonies of former witches, communists, and individuals touched by God's power are shared, emphasizing repentance, restitution, and the victory of Christ over darkness.

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## Transcript

When we see the mission here, such a big work, did you ever think of such a thing 20 years ago when you started? When we came we thought we'd just build a few rooms for 20 or 30 people, but now we've got sleeping accommodation for about 4,000. When you came here among the Zulu people, what was it like? Can you tell a bit about the people and their beliefs and their lifestyle? Well, actually, it's very dark amongst people that don't have living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, because their life is just superstition, witchcraft and powers of evil. They are bound, they are unhappy.

Actually, witchcraft and superstition is part and parcel of their very life. If somebody gets sick, becomes ill, they believe it's because of somebody else who has cast that spell. So he's got to go to the witch, find out who killed him, or who brought that sickness upon him, and then they have their revenge, they've got to send that sickness back.

Like, for instance, this is all a sign of it, a token of it, and whatever they do, they do with witchcraft. They don't use cow dung or fertilizer in the soil when they plough, they go to the witch doctor, get a little bottle of witchcraft medicine, put that in the ground. And then, for instance, as you see here, this is of the most fertile land in South Africa, but you don't see a fruit tree, you don't see anything, because they believe if they plant fruit trees, the children will get sick, they'll die.

Things are not allowed to grow too well, that brings death. So people don't realize what a power it is upon these people. I also read about tribal wars that were raging for many years.

Was it still the case when you came? Oh yes, it's still going on now. Just here, since September to now, between 80 and 100 men have been brutally killed. And they are people of one tribe, brother against brother.

Right here where we are standing, at that house, a woman was killed. She went with her three sons, and they killed a man. After we had buried him, the men said, now let's go and pay back.

So young girls came with men, and they brutally killed that woman. And that's how things go if they don't have a living faith in Christ. When you came as a missionary, did you immediately see success, conversions of hundreds of these people, or what was the beginning? Well, for 12 years it was very difficult.

I made altar calls, asked people to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. They did that, sometimes in the hundreds, but the life wasn't changed. And the way of life wasn't changed till God came down in 1966, and that revolutionized everything.

Was it a disappointment for you to see that the darkness was stronger than your message? Yes. Well, actually I lost my faith, so to say. When I started, I thought the Bible is true.

But after 12 years on the mission field, I said, no, it's not for us today, for the first century, but not for us. Can you give an example of that? For instance, once I preached to the people, the blacks say Christianity is the white man's religion. Jesus is the God of the whites.

So I prepared a sermon, and I prayed earnestly and said, Oh God, assist me to convince these people that Jesus is not just the white man's God, but that he is the Son of God, and the Savior of all mankind. So I said to them, don't go to the witch doctors or to the witches. Come to Jesus with all your problems.

He can do anything. So after the service, an elderly woman came to me and said, Is it true what you've said, that Jesus, the God of the whites, is a living God? I said, yes. She says, can you speak to him? I said, do you as well.

That's what we call pray. She says, oh, I'm so glad that I've found a person who serves a living God. Would you please ask your God to heal my daughter? She's mentally deranged.

Well, I didn't know what to say. I said, well, in theory, yes, but in practice, such a thing doesn't happen. You went to see her? Then I went to see her.

I found that girl bound with wire, chained to the center pole of the hut, speaking in a strange language. And she had been bound for three weeks, not eating. And if she gets off that wire, she'd run into the mountains and not come back.

And so she asked me to pray. I prayed with some colleagues. We prayed for three weeks.

After three weeks, she wasn't healed. I was just about a nervous wreck. I said, Lord, but we have your promises.

If we abide in you, your word in us, we'll pray whatever we are alike, and we'll receive it. Why not? And that shook me to the core. And I couldn't believe anymore that the promises of God are for us today.

Well, to me, it seemed as if I was the most miserable man in this world. I was busy with something that didn't work. In theory, yes, but in practice, it didn't.

For instance, I would say God is alive. He answers prayer. God's word is true.

But it didn't work out. In John 14, 12, Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say to you, He that believes in me, the works I do, he will do also. And greater than these, because I go to the Father.

Well, that was on paper. But 12 years on the mission field proved that that didn't work. And so I got to the place where I couldn't carry on.

I said, other people seem to be enjoying their lives, but I'm busy with something that doesn't work. And then I got to the place where I asked this congregation, just a small congregation, whether we couldn't make a study of the Bible. We wouldn't excuse ourselves or defend ourselves or justify ourselves.

I said, let's just for a moment accept the Bible as God's word. Let's just see whether our Christianity and our life is in accordance with the scripture, with what the Bible says. Well, as we studied God's word and God's standard for us, it touched our hearts, it broke our hearts, and we cried in desperation to God that he should be merciful and work as in the days of old.

And as God was working in our midst through his word, the Spirit of God suddenly started working. He came over this place, over us, like the rushing of a mighty wind. Exactly as written in the Bible.

Yes, and then he literally went into the houses and brought the people. No church bells ringing, no invitations, they just came. And he started with a very stronghold of evil.

The first person that came was a witch who had a training center for witches who walked for seven kilometers. And she says, I'm bound with chains of hell. Can Jesus set me free? After her, the next one.

Day and night they came to this very day. It's now 21 years, and more are coming than ever before. And was she set free? And she was set free completely.

She surrendered her life to Christ. She was prayed for, and she was set free. And you know what the expression of a face of an old witch is like.

But when Christ came into her life, it changed, and she looked like a saint who had lived in the presence of the Lord for years. She says, oh, it's so wonderful, Lord Jesus, that you've set me free. So what you couldn't do to the girl for three weeks, praying and talking with her, it was done immediately after.

Within two, three days, more happened than the previous 12 years of hard labor on the mission field. You spoke about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, like experiencing a rushing wind. What do you mean by that? What did you really experience? Well, actually, we didn't pray for the rushing of the wind.

We just prayed that God would come down. And you were all inside? We were all inside. We were busy with the Word of God, and were convicted by the Word of God and the Spirit of God of our shortcoming, of our failure.

And the Holy Spirit convicted us to such an extent that we started confessing. People were convicted, and they made restitution. And that was the preparation.

And strangely, as God was working in our midst, He was working outside as well, bringing in the people. They couldn't sleep at night. They'd come in the morning.

They couldn't go to work. They say, we've got no rest, no peace. Can we get right with God? We have stolen.

We have sinned. We have murdered. We've committed such and such things.

Can God forgive us? We could tell them, yes, that's why Jesus died. The blood can forgive us our sins. And they'd come, and their lives would be transformed.

They'd go home. New people, like being in Christ, everything is new. The old has passed away.

And more people would come. God would save their souls and even touch them physically. The blind would come.

The lame would come. What happened to them? And God would touch them while the Word would be preached. Many would be healed before they were even prayed for, specifically for their sickness.

While making their life right with God, repenting, confessing their sin, putting things right that are wrong, God's power was let loose and is let loose. And then He works in a way that passes our understanding. You mean, did you organize a kind of a healing service? We've never held a healing service to this very day.

We just preach the Word, and then God works. You said blind people came, and what happened to them? Well, in one instance, there were 10 in a certain meeting, and all received their sight. And the wonderful thing is there was a woman about 45 kilometers away who wanted to have been there, but didn't have the possibility to come.

And the time when these 10 were healed, God touched her 45 kilometers away the same time, and she received her sight. I also read in a book about your work that a girl that died was brought back to life again. Yes, that was Lydia.

When did it happen? In 1973. She died in the afternoon. Late in the evening, the Lord brought her back to life again.

And did you pray for her resurrection? No, we just cried to the Lord. And committed everything into His hands, and asked Him that His will should be done, and that He should work according to what He thought right. And then it happened.

And after my death, when my soul left my body, I came to heaven, and there I met with a great light that I didn't know before. And Jesus Himself was the light of this place. And the light lights up everything.

There's nothing hidden in this light. In heaven, there's no Indian, there's no black, there's no white. Everybody is changed and becomes a new person.

And then Jesus called me, and He said, I would like you, my child, to return to earth. Look at the people, they are crying. And they are crying because they have lost somebody who was working together with them.

When my soul returned to my body, the person who was guarding over me said, I breathed a deep breath, and then I sat up in bed, and I asked them for some water. They brought me two jugs of water, which I finished there and then. I was very thirsty.

And they were amazed because I hadn't been able to eat or drink for a few days before my death. And those that had been praying in the rooms, they were amazed when they came and found me alive. And I got up there and then, and I walked to the kitchen.

And they were amazed. They followed behind me and didn't know what this strange thing was. There is such a thing that one can ask something of God, but it isn't pleasing to God.

Because while I was still ill, they were praying for me constantly that the Lord would heal me. And here Jesus answered in a different way, and that is why it is good if we can pray and say, Lord, may your will be done. Jesus, I want your will in my life.

I can just say, life and death is in God's hands and according to the will of the Lord Jesus. So it is good if we leave it in his will. Amen.

And my desire for us all in this hall today is that now before the service starts and as we come together to share in God's word, that each one of us here might have a prayer in his heart that Lord, as I listen to your word, help me to hear it. That I might hear it properly. That I might see well.

That when I leave again, my life will be different. Just as the Bible says, blessed is the one who hears and then does it. May we be like that as well.

May we listen and then leave doing God's word. Jesus says of such people, blessed are they who do that. Often superstition, fear and violence fully dominate the life of the Zulus.

Medicine men and witches have an iron grip on the people. Tribal warfare and feuding among each other still claim their victims daily. All the many attempts of the government to end this fighting between the tribes have failed.

Much blood has been shed. They've got big families here. One man can have many wives.

There's a family, for instance, that had 93 men. Of those 93, only 3 are still alive. 90 have been murdered.

But since the outbreak of the revival, fighting has stopped completely in this peace in this area. And that lasts already a pretty long time. Since 1973.

Do they have their own services on the spot? Their own church services also? Yes, they have services in their homes and then the Christians come together every week as well. Follow us on [educationstream.org](http://educationstream.org) I've been a witch for six full years. I admitted that because I was quite ill and I was scared of death.

I knew that, I didn't know that, well, it would be such a trouble and I would be a sinner when I've been a witch. When I got to the training school of the witches, it was such a hell in my life. I could feel difficult

things.

I met that I couldn't eat food because of the ancestral spirits, because everyone who was there was supposed to go according to the ancestral spirits' advice. So I had to eat ash and soil without knowing anything, but I thought that maybe I would become alive, I'd be well, because I didn't want to die. Then the Lord helped me so much.

When I met Reverend Elus Degen in Johannesburg, Auschwitz-Berlin, where he held the meeting in a certain church, I could hear the message, it struck my heart and it broke my heart. I could feel that I was a sinner, I was supposed to repent and meet the Lord. So I stayed behind after the service, I asked him to help me.

He had read the word in Matthew chapter 3, I heard the words that repent, yea, because the kingdom of God is coming, make thy ways right. So I knew that I wasn't right with God, I was a sinner. So I made my confessions, I allowed him to counsel me and help me to pray together with me so that I would be saved and meet the Lord.

And in that it was a miracle, because I even had four more children, I had only one child before I was saved, and then the Lord provided me with four more children. The enormous growth of the mission work of Pastor Erlos Degen led to the building of a large settlement called Kwasizabatu, which is translated, the place at which people are helped. It has its own airplane, a landing strip, and large farming and gardening projects.

Approximately 800 people live and work at Kwasizabatu. Patients of a modest hospital, a hospital without doctors, are included in this number. What is the idea behind the hospital that you started, a hospital without doctors? In 1966, when the great revival started and broke out in these areas, many people came to hear the word of God.

But then strangely, the sick were touched during the proclamation of the word. You didn't expect that? No, and we didn't reckon with that either. But while the word was preached, God even touched them physically.

And then the word spread. So they came from all over surrounding areas, some 20 kilometers away, some hundreds of kilometers away. And miraculous healings took place? Yes.

For instance, in this area, a woman that had a stroke and had been lamed on the one side was pushed on a wheelbarrow for about 25 kilometers. When she got to Mapumulu, where it started, her skin had been rubbed through at places. But she repented, turned to God, was prayed for, and instantly was healed.

She got up and walked. And the news spread to near and far, and so the people came. So we were faced with the problem, where should we put these people? We'd have 100, 200 sick people.

We couldn't just send them home again. So we prayed for a place where these people could stay. Then after four years, we got Kwasi Zabantu, and that's where we started building a hospital.

We didn't have the means, finances. I just said, Lord, even if it's just a hut built with mud and wood, as long as God is present, then we are satisfied. And God graciously undertook that we could start building, and that's how the hospital came into being.

And people come there because they expect to be healed physically? Yes. Strangely, it's like this, that many that come, even the sick, and the physical healing isn't the predominant thing. They want to have peace with God.

They want salvation. But then God touches them in their body as well. There are a few exceptions, but then they are told that first things must come first, and the soul has got to be saved first.

And when people don't heal, is that a disappointment for them? Not if they are helped spiritually. Then they can even thank God for the sickness. As many have said, we praise God for the sickness.

If it wouldn't be for the sickness, we wouldn't have come to know the Lord Jesus. Is that what you expect in reality, that one heals and the other doesn't heal? Well, we never know. One never can say.

But God works in mysterious ways and in marvelous ways above what we can think or pray for. And you don't guarantee people that they will be healed? No. As long as they are healed spiritually, receive forgiveness of their sins and set free from bondage.

A hospital without a doctor, without nurses, without medicines, is a bit strange in our thinking. Are you against doctors? No, not at all. We can thank God for them.

But you don't make use of them in the hospital? Not at the hospital, it's just a place of prayer. The mission station, Kراسي Zabantu, provides 800 people with food daily. The co-workers of the mission, the patients in the hospital, and the many visitors who come to receive spiritual help.

For that reason, the mission has established its own farm and its own gardening project, which has since become a large enterprise. Besides the cultivation of potatoes and vegetables, they have started growing fruits such as kiwis, which they grow on their own kiwi plantation. What is not needed for their own use is sold at the market.

The projects also have as their aim and goal the instruction and training of young people so that they can use the acquired techniques in their home villages and corrals. The mission's own cattle, among them genuine Frisian pedigree cattle, produce approximately 2,000 liters of milk a day. The mission station, Kراسي Zabantu, also has its own school with about 300 boarding school children.

What is the idea behind this school? Well, there's a great necessity of education in the world today. You don't get anywhere without education in the world. And we'd like to give them the best opportunity.

And we trust and hope with it we'll be able to produce good, fine Christian leaders for the future. You are building not only the spiritual side, but also the social side of society. Yes, that goes hand in hand.

As the Bible speaks of people that sat in darkness, but that have seen a great light, I come from such a background of great darkness, witchcraft, spiritism, suspicion, fears. But one day the light of the Lord Jesus came through to my family. We believe in ancestor worship.

That's not play, that's believing in the spirits of the dead people. You pray to them, you worship them, and they are your God. But one day the Lord Jesus came to my family through somebody from the Revival of Guasisabantu.

He brought us the good news. My father was the first one to come to the Lord Jesus. Then there was a whole change in the family.

Everything changed. It was the end of witchcraft, it was the end of worshipping of ancestors. And I was the second one in the family to come to the light of the Gospel.

I was very young then, but the message of the Gospel came through to me so clearly. I knew exactly what I had to do. I came to the Lord Jesus, and I could find peace within me.

And after that, God called me to the ministry. I can only say that's God's grace, which I cannot understand even now, how the Lord could have called me to His ministry. That I, that was once a worshipper of ancestors, that today I worship the Lord Jesus.

And not only that, but that I can work for Him as well. I was involved in communism in organizations like UDF, COSAS, and SASO. Who brought you there? It was the white Russians, because they promised us many a thing, like going to study in the Moscow-invited universities and other lands which are governed by the communists.

What did they tell you? They told us that the white South Africans oppressed us, we blacks of South Africa. Have you been yourself in political activities, in violence? Yes, I was. Because the most important thing which they told us, it was that the white people took the land from us, and they will give the land back to us blacks.

And the land South Africa won't be called South Africa anymore, but it will be called Azania. So we used to go and fight for Azania. You are a Christian now? Yes, now I am happy that I am a Christian.

Because I met the Lord in the way which I didn't expect. I can say I didn't want to be a Christian, but the Lord worked in another way. Because I just came to Kwasi Zabantu, I just came to visit, but it was there that I met the Lord.

Because I can say, when I first came here at the reception, I met there a white gentleman. The way he welcomed us together with my friend, and he talked to us, it was the way he talked to us that warned me, if I can say that way. And the way they live here, the life of the people of Kwasi Zabantu warned me.

Warned you for the Lord? Yes, warned me for the Lord. And when I heard the first sermon, it touched me so much that it was for the first time that I realized how bad I was, what a sinner I was. Can you tell me what the Lord Jesus means for you now? I can say the Lord Jesus means everything to me.

And I don't even think of going back. I just want my life to be to the Lord Jesus every day. What is your age? I am 27 years old.

When I see you building all these buildings, and this huge building especially, you've got a vision for the future. Yes, well, in actual fact, we are behind time. I just hope that it won't be too small by the time we start.

In the past, we had a room for 200, 500, 1,000, and then tens. And always, we haven't got enough space. But we are so thankful that the Gospel and the Word of God is spreading.

How big will this hall be, by the way? This auditorium will take 10,000 people. I feel that we Christians have failed in the past. Christ meant the Gospel to be taken to all the nations and to the whole world.

And for centuries, we've kept it to ourselves. And that's a crime. People have got to know about Christ.

And we trust that every Christian will be on fire for the Lord and a witness, so that in turn, it will be like a chain reaction and go through the whole of South Africa, the different nations, and then Africa and to the rest of the world. What's going on here today? Well, in Acts chapter 19, verse 18, we read that many of those who are now believers came and made an open confession, exposing their works and deeds. All these things that you see here are things which have been brought by those that have repented and turned to God.

They are witches, witch doctors, mediums, Satanists, those that project magical arts, fortune tellers that have got converted, and now they expose their deeds, their works, and it's burnt openly. And it just shows how the word of God has conquered in their lives. Then there are other things as well, things that have been stolen.

When they make restitution, they go back to the persons from whom they have stolen those things and ask for forgiveness, returning those things. But then there are things they have bought from people and they don't know who they are. Those people have stolen it, and so they've bought them from these people.

Maybe they saw them for the first time and the last time. Now, they don't know where to take it, so they bring it, and it's burnt publicly. Who is convincing these people doing this? Well, that's the Spirit of God through the word of God.

They are not told to do this. The word is just preached, and then they are convicted, and the Spirit works in their hearts, and they can't live with it any longer. So they bring fruit of repentance.

According to the Zulu custom, such a thing is not done. They firmly believe that if you burn witch doctor's medicine, a terrible storm will come, lightning will strike them. But it shows the power of the Lord's victory.

These things are burnt, and nothing happens. And that speaks more to them than many a message. The Bible teaches us that we don't wrestle with flesh and blood, but with powers, principalities, and world rulers in the air.

Sometimes it seems as if the devil, the god of this world, is trying to take over the world. But the Bible teaches us that we don't wrestle with flesh and blood, the god of darkness is in charge of this world. But we praise God that the Lord Jesus stripped the devil of his power, disarmed him at Calvary on the cross.

There these two big forces met, and Jesus disarmed the devil. The devil has got his arms. As we see today, fortune-telling, witchcraft, conversing with the dead, and sin, are weapons of the evil one.

And Jesus came to take these weapons from the evil one, because every man in this world today is a slave to the devil. But Jesus came to set us free. We couldn't free ourselves, because we were bound with chains of evil.

But we praise God that he sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to set us free. A Christian is one who is one in God. God is in him, and he is in God.

A Christian isn't a person who stands on the side and then... I was born and bred in Soweto. That is another suburb of Johannesburg. That is where I grew up.

And I grew up in a family that didn't know God. My mother and father were people who didn't serve God. My mother was a witch, and my father was an alcoholic.

Now, living in those circumstances made and developed a strange character in me, and I started developing hatred. And I hated anything. I hated to see the dogs, I hated the cats, I hated... And I just wished to see the blood flowing.

If I saw blood flowing, I had a nice feeling in my heart. And as I grew up, this hatred was focused now on the people themselves. And I hated now the white people in this country.

And I also hated the other ethnic groups, the blacks. Black as I am. But I hated the other ethnic groups that didn't belong to my own ethnic group.

But when I met with the Lord Jesus Christ, something happened. He changed everything in my heart. And I thank him for what he did, because he gave me the peace that passes all understanding.

He gave me the love for the other people. He gave me the joy. And I am very thankful for that.

It's all by the message of the Bible, huh? Yes. You have the Bible with you. Yes.

Can you read some verses for me? Oh, yes. The Bible is a wonderful book, and it is something that I like, and it is something that I treasure. I will read from Psalm 34, from verse 3. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man they cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them. All taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

The Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

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