

Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

IN TOUCH MISSION

i n t e r n a t i o n a l

Monthly

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"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:10

The Story of Stone Hill's Soldiers for Christ

Several years ago, Stone Hill was a forgotten squatters' camp outside Durbanville, South Africa. But now...

SOUTH AFRICA

Several years ago, Stone Hill was a forgotten squatters' camp outside Durbanville, South Africa.

Pushed out of society and marginalized, social issues multiplied. Violence seemed as unquestionably part of life as breathing. There was no reason to work, respect others or avoid drugs and alcohol. Life was cheap, and there was no reason to think otherwise.

Imagine a society without the common grace that still influences how our culture makes decisions. Common wisdoms like "save money" or "treat people with kindness," - even though these are not always followed and seem to be disappearing in our own culture - are still considered and influential in our decisions.

In Stone Hill, those common grace wisdoms were once considered insane. Restrain myself? Why? Deny myself something now so I can have something later? That doesn't make sense. People are valued so I should treat them with basic courtesy? No they're not. Why would they be? No one values me. Work hard? I've never heard of that. No one does that. It's not

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what we do.

These common grace concepts were completely foreign.

And life in Stone Hill was a hopeless web of broken relationships, poverty and [violence](#).

A few years ago, a movement was started among believers in Durbanville, including ITMI's [Charl van Wyk](#) and believers from his church, pastored by ITMI's [Mark Parris](#). It began by some believers going to [Stone Hill](#) once a week and doing activities with the youth. They offered crafts for the girls and wrestling for the boys.

Refreshing dilapidated shacks and providing mattresses for those who slept on the ground was another way the hands and feet of Jesus built relationships with the locals.

This is how Charl described this dedicated team: "It's a team that will go where angels fear to tread – all for the sake of making the wonderful Name of Jesus Christ known to the entire world."

ITMI and Charl helped raise funds to erect a ministry base in Stone Hill, where outreaches could be held year-round. The facility consists of three storage containers in a U-shape with a covered "courtyard" in the middle.

One container is a "gym" where youth come to lift weights. The Christian team builds relationships with those who come, and it provides a positive activity away from gangs, violence and drugs.

Another is a kitchen, where the hungry can be fed and outreaches are conducted.

After years of faithfully visiting this settlement and investing in the lives of the youth, we're thrilled to report that Stone Hill is a different place than it once was.



Years ago, one of Charl's colleagues discovered a 12-year-old head of household, and built a relationship with the boy. Because of being "raised" by this Christian man and taught about Jesus, the young man and his family came to faith.

He underwent massive family pressure for rejecting ancestral worship. But he would not back down. Today, he is a ministry and community leader in Stone Hill. (A community leader is a person who serves the community by interacting with political structures on behalf of the town.)

Where violence once terrorized all, self-control and self-defense are demonstrated alternatives.

Where hate once characterized the eyes of young men, hope and love can be found.

Where laziness was the only conceivable way to live, the value of work is being realized.

Where gangsters once fought and stabbed one another over trivial matters, youth go on hikes and lift weights together.

Where sobriety was never considered, it is now practiced.

Where Biblical morality was outlandish, it is now permeating lives.

Where the benefits of discipline were never reaped, disciplined lives are emerging.

Where most were once barely capable of receiving and understanding the "foolishness"

of the Gospel, they are now taking it to others!

A place that was once known for violence and lawlessness was recently referred to by an outsider as a "Christian Township."

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From the Archives

Adventures in Africa: Learning in the Lion's Den - 2003

To commemorate your 35-year ministry as partners with us, we're publishing stories from our ITMI Monthly newsletter archives. We're praying with each article, you'll be reminded of all God has done and moved to give Him glory and praise.



Charl preaching Gospel reconciliation to ex-terrorists - 2003.

SOUTH AFRICA

Some background: on July 25, 1993, twenty minutes after the Sunday evening service had begun at St. James Church in Cape Town, three terrorists burst into the sanctuary and opened fire. One sprayed the audience with deadly rounds from an assault rifle, while the others lobbed hand grenades into the tightly packed congregation of 1,500.

ITMI's **Charl van Wyk** was seated near the back. Instinctively, he dived behind a pew for cover and at the same time, grabbed his snub-nosed .38 special revolver, that he always carried with him for self-defense. He squeezed off two shots at them inside the sanctuary and then pursued the suspects on foot, firing another three rounds, hitting the car as the 'brave' *freedom fighters* fled.

When the dust had settled, 11 worshipers were dead and 53 wounded. It could have been far worse. The Western Cape Regional Police Commissioner officially commended Charl for his quick action, saying, "Without his immediate response there could have been a minimum of 250 killed and hundreds wounded." This estimate was based on a sack full of hand grenades and the number of machine gun clips abandoned at the scene when the terrorists disappeared.

That was then. Last month Charl was invited to speak at a "Unity and Reconciliation" meeting organized by APLA (Azania People's Liberation Army). Azania is the new name they want to give South Africa. APLA is the armed wing or military branch of PAC, the Pan African Congress. The invitation came from Letlappa Mphahlele, who had been the Director of Operations for APLA in July '93. This was the man who had organized and ordered the St. James Massacre!

Venue for the meeting was a school (now in recess) in Khayelitsha, a black Township near Cape Town.

Was this a trap? Was Charl being set up for an ambush?

Would these ex-terrorists seek an opportunity for revenge on the man who 'shot back'? One thing was sure: it was a lion's den.

Maureen, who helped Charl with his book, "Shooting Back" and Erick, a Frontline Fellowship colleague planned to attend. ITMI's **Bill and Harriet Bathman** joined the team to help provide some on-the-spot prayer cover.

There were about ten speakers. Some were bitter that their plans had not materialized. Others parroted the old Party line with its outworn clichés. Charl, the main speaker, preached the Gospel emphasizing the possibility for 'reconciliation' to God through the cross of Jesus Christ. It was powerful. He told Bill later, "I'm confident that the Lord is doing a work amongst these ex-terrorists." Your prayers will help confirm it.

At the meeting Charl sat next to Basi, one of the terrorists who attacked the church in 1993. Please pray for him, his heart is desperately searching for the Lord. He gave Charl his phone number and said a few times, "We need to talk."

We took several boxes of Bibles to distribute. This almost caused a riot. One lady from the Eastern Cape was in tears after being pushed out of the way and unable to get one. So many were upset because they didn't get a Bible that alternative arrangements had to be made to help these people.

Charl says, "Thank you very much for your prayer support, please don't stop. We will seize every opportunity to make disciples of the nations, teaching obedience to the Word of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Be sure - the Lord is working in the Lions' Den."

-Bill Bathman

From the Director

Dear Team,

The Unimog-style truck was a necessity. ITMI partner, [Johan Leach's](#) four wheel drive Toyota just couldn't handle the task of taking us deep into the bush west of the town of Chavuma, Zambia. Between the roads and our unique cargo - multiple weighty bales of used clothing, 120 pound bags of maize, all our camping equipment, water tools for clearing the "road" and handmade linens for the usually forgotten villagers - Johan and I needed something heavy-duty for this trip.

The rains had started in western Zambia. Heavy rain mixed with deep sand made crossing this terrain more miracle than possibility. The oxen-cart tracks in deep, soft sand on the west side of the Zambezi River were now degraded to 12-18 inch ruts. Add to that the intersecting mud pits with varying levels of murky and stagnant water, and you have a recipe for ministry travel disaster. But nonetheless, Johan Leach and I set out to visit and dedicate the five new water wells just completed last month in the remotest of remote villages in far western Zambia.

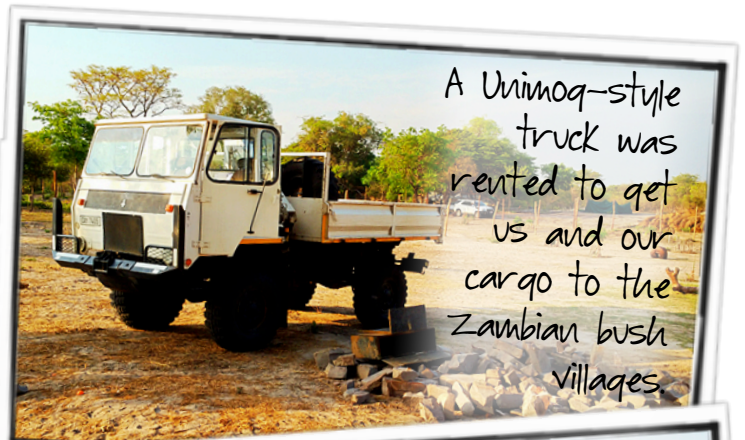
The villagers didn't believe they would get a water well. They wouldn't allow themselves to. Their hopes had been dashed by broken promise after broken promise in the past. For generations they've been promised infrastructure, roads and wells. But politician after politician has "forgotten" their promises and these villages were still without clean, safe water.

The abusive trails have about destroyed Johan's four-wheel drive Toyota. On the outside, it still looks nice. But Johan opened the hood and showed me where the uni-body frame is cracking and splitting from the suspension shock towers down toward the wheels. A mechanic made Johan use a tow strap to ratchet his battery into place. He thought it likely that the battery would drop from the engine compartment. It would fall in front of the front left wheel and surely cause a disastrous loss of control putting lives in danger. Yet Johan continues to zip-tie and wire his vehicle together so he can continue to evangelize and disciple these forgotten Zambian villagers.

Johan nursed the rapidly disintegrating field vehicle back and forth between these five privileged villages during the weeks before the drill rig arrived, working logistics, and communicating with villagers.

Seeing small village children, barely big enough to reach the water well's pump handle, raise and lower the handle to bring clean, clear and refreshing water to the surface was a joy that has to be seen to be comprehended. They joyfully grab the "village" cup from its place on the flat top

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A Unimog-style truck was rented to get us and our cargo to the Zambian bush villages.



Johan shows me under the hood of his field vehicle.



Villagers rejoice over their new well!



Johan shares the Gospel with villagers.

Why should I consider a year-end gift to ITMI?

Your gift empowers believers all over the world to reach their people for Christ.

Maximize your impact. Our partners' ministries can make your dollars go a long way and reach many.

Your gift is tax-deductible.

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of the pump and fill it with fresh cool water. They gulp it down - something most had probably never done before because water was so limited.

The water was so clean, I was able to drink all I wanted straight from the well myself. It's cool, fresh, sweet tasting refreshment was worth all the challenges and difficulties we have had finding a quality partner and driller in this remote part of Zambia.

We dedicated these wells in each village by sharing how much God loves them. They matter to God so much, He spoke to His children all the way across the ocean and led them to provide funds for a village of people that they may never meet face to face. These villagers learned through your help and obedience that there is a good God that hears and sees their cries. He is powerful enough to orchestrate all the logistics and unsurmountable costs to give them water.

We have now earned a place around their campfires and been invited to tell them about this God we love and serve. Please pray for Johan, **Pastor Davy** and **Pastor Colin** as they continue to teach and disciple in this area. Pray for God's guidance as they seek which villages will receive clean, safe water and the Gospel next.

We are not ready just yet, but I would really like to help Johan get a vehicle that won't leave him stranded in a place where he might be forced to hike for days to get home.

We are so grateful for all our ITMI partners who help us empower the national leaders to reach their people for Christ.

We wish you could see firsthand what your sacrificial giving does to the lives and ministries of these worthy servants of God. We know many of you faithfully give each month to whatever project God leads you to partner with. If, by some chance, as the year comes to a close, you might have a bit over and above your normal giving to help ITMI and our projects, we would be most grateful. We commit to being faithful stewards of God's gracious provision of funds and help. **Your prayers are always the very most important gift you can give, and we know they are with us as we press on to the front line of the battle for the hearts and souls of those that don't know God's redemption and love.**

In His Service,



Villagers listen to Johan share the Gospel.

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One direct cause of all this was [getting the facility that allowed the ministry team to conduct Sunday evening services.](#)

A few months ago during one Sunday evening service, thirteen young men indicated they want to get very serious with the Lord and apply His Word in their lives and community.

Charl says of the boys, "They want to live out the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their personal lives, in their homes, schools and work places."

The boys call themselves "Soldiers for Christ."

People are noticing a big difference! Parents have asked the Soldiers for Christ Chairman what they are doing that has brought about such change in these boys' lives.

Charl's recent report told their incredible story:

So where does one start with a bunch of rough kids, whose third language is English, who live in shacks, with dirt roads, little drainage, no electricity, surrounded daily by crime, and too often have little food on the table?

We start with God's Word of course!

The African traditional religion these young men have been born into, and brought up to know, teaches that you need to slaughter a goat when you have sinned, as if you don't "always" sin – the goat's blood will apparently cleanse you of unrighteousness. Sprinkling holy water in your hut keeps the evil spirits away and a piece of plastic on a limb can bring healing.

Some of these young men are just a few weeks old as Christians. So, they are sent out immediately to start Gospel conversations to tell others about the Gospel of the Kingdom. Yes, they will make mistakes. Yes, they will mess up and yes, it is difficult!

We've taken part in a shopping mall outreach where some of our group got to interact with shoppers and hand out tracts and balloons with Bible verses for children.

*We have also undergone training by self-defense guru **Gerald Bailey of Suarez International**, who kindly gave freely of his time to help our young men.*

Soldiers for Christ members are on duty at our Gospel outreach services each Sunday evening. The ill-discipline, obviously tolerated in state schools, is a nuisance of the past. Jabbering, laughing and jesting during the preaching of God's Word has come to an end. Drunkards, and those wishing to interrupt the sermon, are kindly walked away so that listeners may hear the Word.

Because of your faithful support, God's Word "went out." It has watered the earth and yielded fruit. And, as promised, it did not return empty!

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

Hear from Charl in person!

Charl is in the US sharing what God is doing in Africa.

Contact our office for more details.



For Praise

1. Romania - [the Bans](#) - building families by contributing to a book recently launched helping Romanian Christian parents.
2. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - the Good News taking root in and changing the lives of the Soldiers for Christ.
3. Poland - [Jim La Rose](#) - continued influence in the lives of young men from incredibly difficult circumstances.
4. Zambia - Johan Leach - Gospel seeds sown at the dedication of the 5 wells in western Zambia.
5. South Sudan - [Jahim Buli](#) - the continued outreach and dedication to prayer of Jahim's church.

For Prayer

1. Uganda - [Muhindo Kawede](#) - provision for the needs of the family and ministry.
2. Poland - [Polish Bible Translation Project](#) - an event in Poland this month celebrating the completion of the whole Bible!
3. South Africa - Stone Hill - that many would come to faith through an upcoming outreach event.
4. USA- [Steve Evers](#) - finishing visits in Poland and returning to the US early this month.
5. USA - generous sacrificial year-end giving from across the US.



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