

Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

# IN TOUCH MISSION

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

Monthly

1 December 2016

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Isaiah 9:6*

## Six Stories from Around the World that you won't want to miss!

During this season of giving, we asked ITMI partners to give you their heartfelt answers to several questions. May their answers bless and encourage you!



### Muhindo and Lillian Kawede

Kampala, Uganda

#### **What would you like ITMI supporters to know?**

I want ITMI's supporters to know that we could not equip pastors through the [International School of Missions](#) without their financial support.

I am deeply humbled that the supporters are transforming African pastors to be part of God's plan of reconciliation.

I want supporters to know that God is using their prayers and financial support to heal wounds in Africa, equipping generations of leaders holistically transformed to impact Africa and the whole world.

ISM is addressing spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social needs. Our students, who were divided by their cultural heritage, now see each other as people with the same ancestor

(Adam and Eve). They are using their differences to build each other up.

Ralston and Provia eloped 3 years ago before knowing Christ. They were saved through the outreach of ISM students and joined Bible Mission Church on ISM's campus.

They matured spiritually and decided they want to be married in our church.

We sent them to inform their parents, but the parents of Ralston said they cannot accept their son to marry a lady from Rwandese ancestors because of the genocide of 1996.

Ralston and Provia refused to follow the ways of past conflicts. They convinced their parent that they are "new creation in Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) Their wedding will take place on 3 December in our local church.

I want the supporters to know that their support is reconciling Africans to Christ and healing wounds of division among community through the ISM.



#### **What has God taught you this year?**

God has taught me to trust Him despite what I don't understand.

First, we completed the four classrooms of ISM. We started this project in 2011, but God had a reason to delay the building - to teach me to trust Him, not people. Secondly, my wife, Lillian, struggled with diabetes and became 100% blind. I could not understand how God allowed her to not be able to see the building we prayed for together for years.

After reading Philippians 4:6-7, God gave me His peace to know that ISM belongs to Him and not to me, ITMI or Lillian and the Lord will take ISM where He wants, to be glorified.



## Piotr and Krystyna Zaremba

Poznan, Poland

### ***What has God done in your ministry this year?***

God has been

very busy in our corner of the world!

First, the summer of 2016 saw the publication of the entire Bible in the new translation. 'Nuff said! [We'd been working on this project for the past 16 years](#). When the time came to send the files to the publisher, we were both incredibly excited and unbelievably nervous. This was the moment of truth! After all these years we had to release our precious "child" into the world and simply let God work through it. It was a joyous but absolutely nerve-racking experience.

The Bibles were printed in Belarus, so we had to wait for them to come into the country. The boxes arrived in Poznan July 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Saturday.

Hard as it was, we didn't rip them open!

We wanted to share this moment with the church and all our faithful supporters.

And so, the next day (Sunday) we opened the boxes publicly, during the service, and the first Bible we took out was used right away as text for the Last Supper.

The first edition sold out in three months, and right away we started planning for the second edition (due in November). In the meantime, we published the pdf version of the Bible, as well as an ebook and Android (MySword) version. (Every day we also get requests for more electronic versions, including E-sword, Logos Bible Software, and YouVersion).

To our amazement (and relief!), the feedback was

overwhelmingly positive:

"I recommend this translation as a theologian and an experienced pastor. I'm simply delighted with the quality. ...an invaluable tool for every Christian who studies Scripture daily."



"I bought two copies, one for me, the other for my 87-year old Mom. I was thoroughly amazed at your work! When after a few days I visited my Mom and asked about her health, I heard, 'Son, these are all earthly things! My mind is filled with things eternal!'. Her mind was completely filled with heavenly thoughts, thanks to your translation. She said it feels like it speaks directly to her, in her everyday language! She thanks you from the bottom of her heart for this wonderful work."

"I was waiting for this for a long time. Now it's finally here! I was so happy when I got it I went to bed with it because it was hard to let go!"

"The best Polish translation ever."

"I have a passion for the Word of God. I've been studying it for the last 22 years. ...What I see in your translation is a job well done. The text flows freely, the descriptions ring true to reality. I get a feeling I'm right there, hearing and absorbing what happened in the biblical times. This is a huge advantage when you compare it to the archaic language found in other translations. This truly is a translation for everyone."

### ***What would you like ITMI supporters to know?***

First and most important, we really missed you guys at the celebratory meeting we had in Poland in September! Hopefully, by looking at the pics, you can get a feel for what it was like. (And

(continued on p.3)







## Mark and Cindi Parris

Durbanville, South Africa

### ***What has God done in your ministry this year?***

Made us a Visible Presence - After many years of meeting in a

school, the Lord has made it possible for us to build our own church building. Our heart's desire is to see our community reached with the gospel. The neighbors have been curious about this new structure going up, especially seeing the pizza oven. We are known as the "Pizza Church."

We want to show unbelievers who are skeptical about church and Christianity that Jesus has come to give life abundantly. We want them to experience the love of God as they are invited to eat with us.

Some of our best gospel conversations take place over meals. It seemed to work for Jesus. Our prayer is that this new building will be filled up with people who don't yet know Jesus.

We can now be a visible presence in the community as we seek to break the stereotypes of empty religion and rather show the power of God. Our official opening is December 4th. What a thrill!

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by the way, you're always welcome to drop in on us, season or no season).

We are so incredibly grateful for our Christian family, and we thank each and every one of you for partnering with us and making it happen.

***Thanks to you, Poland is awakening to the truth of God's Word.***

Sixteen years ago, when we started our translation work, we thought it would be over within a few years. We also thought that after the Bible publication we would move on to other projects. But as the time went by, this picture started changing. The hunger and the need we see in our readers made us realize we should press on with more in-depth work. There can be nothing more important than

Leading by Example Despite Rejection- Mabuti and Sipho are two men that I work with who live and minister in townships. They have both told me that unless God changes the hearts of the people, they will still live in fear of the ancestors.

Unfortunately, many Africans who have professed faith in Christ, still practice ancestor worship.

We are working hard to proclaim the clear gospel of Jesus Christ that sets people free and gives them true inner peace.

The young boys and girls struggle to give up their pagan religious practices because they feel they are dishonoring their parents. Only the Spirit of God can give them faith and boldness to turn away from their false gods. Mabuti is leading by example. Most of his village has rejected him because he has refused to participate in the pagan rituals. "Jesus is my Lord," he says, "not the ancestors."



### ***What would you like ITMI supporters to know?***

We are called by God to serve in our context. It is a privilege to do this full time.

Thank you for being generous towards the kingdom of God and making this possible.

Thank you for serving with us and enabling us to focus on ministry. May you know the deep joy of the Lord as you celebrate the birth of our Lord!

answering that hunger and need with real meat of God's Word.

Not a week passes by that we are not asked about a literal translation of the Bible. What we published this year was a literary version (NIV style, if you will). Such a version has never been done in Poland.

We have also made it our goal not to let finances hinder the spread of God's Word. It's been our great privilege to partner with Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse to create a colorful New Testament that is distributed to children free of charge as part of 'Christmas in the Shoebox' action and joined hands with a number of smaller local initiatives.

In other words, there is plenty of ways for you to get involved, stay in touch—and see the world change.



## Adi and Ema Ban

Oradea, Romania

### ***What has God done in your ministry this year?***

Our young couples' fellowship group, and the Sunday School teachers' group decided

to raise funds for the needy of Ukraine.

Though we had less than a month, we gathered the funds needed for our trip and ITMI graciously partnered with us, and we were grateful to the Lord for His provision.

Then a swine flu broke out in Ukraine, and we were strongly advised not to go by the Ministry of Health.

Everything was prepared for our departure, including a love offering from our church and the children in the Sunday school classes. I told everybody about the outbreak, but nobody from the group changed their mind – we all trusted the Lord and went!

Our team of fourteen went and served families in the church by distributing food packages to the needy and the local state-owned orphanage, praying for them, giving them New Testaments and sharing in churches around Chernivtsi.

The night we arrived our host told us that all the schools and public institutions are closed down due to the outbreak. Nonetheless, we visited over 200 families and yet nobody from our team got sick!

We went inside their modest homes, prayed with them, offered them a New Testament in their language, and brought food packages. The Lord was a shield for us and protected us from the sickness!

### ***What is it about the people you serve that God has laid on your heart?***

This year the Lord laid on our heart the ministry in the northwest part of Ukraine, led by John and Gabriela (Gabi) Patras. To see their love for the Lord, their love for the poor, and their dedication to share the Good News was an encouragement for us.

When we visited them with Steve Evers in May, we were blessed beyond words to serve them in church on Sunday. It reminded us of the “fire” in the lives of Romanian believers 30 years ago!

We felt so privileged to serve them. ITMI and our Young Couples Fellowship Group raised the funds for 51 children whose parents are members of the church pastored by John, for each to have a school uniform, sports attire and a pair of shoes, as well as a fully equipped school backpack as the new school year commenced in September.

### ***What would you like ITMI supporters to know?***

Thank you, ITMI and partners, for your faithful obedience to lift

us in prayer! Day after day, month after month, we see God answering the prayers of His people and His provision, and it's such an encouragement to us.



## From the Archives

*A Christmas Devotional by Bill Bathman - 1999*

*In response to Gabriel's announcement, "You have found favor with God," Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoiced in God my Savior." (Luke 1:30, 46, 47) Consider the faces around the cradle in Bethlehem: Mary and Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the Judean shepherds, and later on the Magi. They came to Jesus from various backgrounds and from all walks of life. In that sense they were just like us today. God still shows His favor to those who seek Him. All of us at ITMI want to wish each of you God's richest blessing and favor during this wonderful season when we remember that...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*





## Gerhard and Elmane le Roux

*Onseepkans, South Africa*

### ***What has God done in your ministry this year?***

As like most of the people in Onseepkans, Ouma Kroon did not have an easy life when

she was young. Our relationship with Ouma started in July 2013, when Ouma's sisters, daughter and nieces expressed their need for spiritual guidance.

As our relationship with this family grew, we assisted in the funeral of one of Ouma's nephews, helped care for their goats and drank tea on the veranda with them, listening to their challenges. From time to time we would reach out to them as the Lord led. We conducted Sunday morning services the past three years, mainly for this family.

Ouma was in her sixties and bedridden the past few years due to a stroke. She had lost her ability to verbally communicate. We assisted Ouma where we could, helping with a wheel chair, adult diapers and medication.

A few months ago we started conducting the Sunday services next to Ouma's sick bed. Although she could not communicate, we sometimes saw the smile and joy on her face when we arrived. From time to time we had spiritual conversations with her. The expression on her face indicated that she understood.

October 2016 was a special month for Ouma. **Pastor Mark Parris** and two elders from **Durbanville Community Church** visited Onseepkans and spent a special moment with her before the service, encouraging her and sharing with her from God's Word.

Imagine an elderly lady who grew up in disadvantaged circumstances in the rural areas of the Northern Cape, with a testimony of unhappy early adult years, now bedridden, receiving a visit from a pastor of a church 800km away, sharing with her and encouraging her!

About a week or two after Mark's visit, ITMI Director **Steve Evers** visited Onseepkans all the way from America and at the Sunday morning service, could give special attention to her and encourage her! For us, it was as if God wanted to give special attention to Ouma.

One Saturday evening, not long after Steve left, Ouma passed away. We immediately went over to assist the family. It was sad for the family, but there was a peace and

a sense of surety that her sickness was now over and that she was now in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

In the communities of the Northern Cape there is a custom that after a death there is usually a week of funeral services at the home of the deceased. The last night before the funeral, the family spends the night with the corpse. The next morning people have opportunity to show last respects towards the deceased at the home, then there is a public service, followed by a procession to the graveyard.

Usually during the week of funeral services there is very little mention to where the deceased now finds him or herself. Even those conducting the funeral services are usually unsure about what happens to the deceased after death. Most are unaware to the fact that it is only the body of the deceased that is left and that the soul is already in eternity with or without God. Sometimes at these services there will be terrible crying, especially when paying last respects to the deceased at the open coffin.

Ouma's funeral was completely different!

I could confirm again and again during the funeral week that she is saved and with God in heaven. I could encourage them that their loved one is not experiencing sadness and sickness anymore, but freedom and no more tears.

It was a message of joy, not a message of hopelessness amidst hopeless circumstances. It was also a message that encouraged those attending the funeral that they can have assurance of salvation.

### ***What would you like ITMI supporters to know?***

If we take everything else away, [the mission projects](#), [activities towards the community](#), all other activities that missionaries generally share with their supporters, the question remains: What is the most important in all of this? Even more important: *What is the most important to God in all of this?*

I believe the story of Ouma Kroon answers this question: a soul that will spend an eternity with God in heaven. Even if we did not come to Onseepkans for anything else, even if we had to endure 5 years of difficult circumstances, even if you as our faithful supporters faithfully supported us during these 5 years.

It makes it all worthwhile if we can praise God that Ouma Kroon is with Him in heaven. Thank you for what you have done for her, without even knowing she exists.

Thank you for helping us to help her and that we can rejoice with the angels in heaven that this Christmas there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repented!



## Kelly and Cherise Smith

Zulu Natal, South Africa

***What is it about the people you serve that God has laid on your heart?***

There is definite evidence of previous missionary influence in the beautiful songs that the Zulu people sing at their different functions. Some are sung in Zulu, and then a chorus or two repeated in English.

It is easy to close my eyes and enjoy the precious words being sung; but then I am abruptly reminded of the fact that they have no idea about what they are singing.

*"The blood of (God) Jesus, rolling like a river, washing my heart, wonderful God, Jesus is the King ..."* Their beautiful melodious voices echo the grace and beauty of the words.

Their eyes, however, are not smiling with the knowledge of this Jesus, who can wash their sins away, and I wonder: do they ever ask themselves, who is this Jesus?



Please pray with [us](#) that their eyes and ears would be open to know their creator, their God and Father, who they sing all these beautiful songs about.

***What has God done in your ministry this year?***

This year marks the ninth year of hosting Project Christmas Blessing (PCB). Over the years we have been so amazed at how God has provided through all of your partnership to bring a solid Gospel message to the children of this

community and their caregivers, with the joy of a Christmas gift, and some delicious food. On top of this we throw in lots of love and fun, and are rewarded with glorious smiles.

We hosted our Olwasini Junior Primary PCB last Thursday, and we are bubbling over with joy. A young man, who we have watched grow up in this community, from the age of 9, who has shown a remarkable commitment to the Lord Jesus, and has been discipled over the last 2 years; was the one who shared the

Gospel with the children and their caregivers!! We are so excited to see this story come full circle, and Mthoko be able to share his faith in Christ with his fellow community members. All glory be to God on High!!!

***Thank you so much for your partnership.***

*Check our Website for more stories and Christmas greetings from our partners!*  
[www.intouchmission.org](http://www.intouchmission.org)

### For Praise

1. Uganda - ISM - four classrooms completed and many reached near ISM's campus.
2. Poland- Piotr Zaremba - many blessed with and excited about the publication of his new Bible translation.
3. Romania - the Bans - God's leading and provision for ministry in Ukraine.
4. South Africa - Mark Parris - the gospel taking root in hearts and communities.

### For Prayer

1. Zambia - [Johan Leach](#)- continued favor in discipling the people of the Barotse Plains.
2. South Africa - Smiths - for "eyes and ears would be open to know their creator..." in their community.
3. India - [Paul and Molly](#) - the 120 who came to a recent HVCC outreach would return and grow in knowing truth.
4. USA - generous sacrificial year-end giving from across the US.



itmi@intouchmission.org fb.com/intouchmission @intouchmission instagram.com/sre77733  
 PO Box 7575 - Tempe, AZ 85281 (480)-968-4100 (888)-918-4100 F(480)-968-5462

[www.intouchmission.org](http://www.intouchmission.org)

