

Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

IN TOUCH MISSION

international

Monthly

1 May 2017

Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. - Philippians 4:17

You Win.They Win.

5 things our partners get from seeing you, and what their hosts got, too!

Hosting an overseas worker while they are here in the U.S. may not seem like a big contribution to God's Kingdom.

BUT IT IS!

Here are just five of the many ways our partners have benefitted from their time in the States.

1 - Rest, relaxation and the chance to practice humility.

Most of our partners are constantly bombarded by needs in their roles as spiritual leaders or pastors. In the field, they are surrounded by a high volume of needs, so they are constantly serving.

Being away for a short time gives them a necessary break from that.

Andrew Gorski shared he values the time away from the day to day work because it provides, "time to think things through."

In the field, our partners are used to being valued for meeting needs. But

*It's as beneficial for them
to taste our brand of
Christianity as it is for us
to hear about theirs and
the way those they serve
practice it.*



A group of believers in Arizona enjoying an evening together with ITMI's Piotr Zarenba, Steve Evers and Gary Howell.

everyone needs to practice the humility it takes to be served, too.

Admitting our own need is a primary practice for every Christian. Being here gives them that important opportunity.

While ITMI's Johan Leach was driving from the East Coast to Arizona with Steve Evers last month, countless believers in many states served him, and he is going back to western Zambia recharged and fired up.

2 - A taste of Christianity from a different perspective.

It's as beneficial for them to taste our brand of Christianity as it is for us to

hear about theirs and the way those they serve practice it.

For example, hearing from our Polish workers how baptism into an Evangelical body of believers changes a Polish person's family life forever because of the Polish opinion that evangelicals are a dangerous cult, sheds new light on our own faith.

Listening to stories of the way African believers embrace God's power to battle animistic influences stretches our understanding of who God is.

Discovering the Indian believers' dependence on prayer and their faith that God will act challenges our own self-reliant, western mindset.

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Overseas workers also benefit from experiencing our American brand of Christianity.

For example, it is often inspiring to see firsthand the evidence that God is at work here, too.

Johan shared, “As I trek across the States, meeting families and spending time with them, I stand in awe of the Greatness of our Lord’s Word when it speaks and confirms the teaching of ONE body, many parts co-working in one accord and that is to bring glory to Him and salvation to many through Him.”

3 - The joy of connecting with their partners.

It would be hard to overstate the high value our partners place on knowing they have a network of people behind them. Yes, financial support is part of that. But it’s really more about the sense that we are “with” them.

So getting to greet and fellowship in person with as many of the members of that lifeline as possible means a whole lot.

Daniel Machlowski said he was grateful for many opportunities to be in the Word, share testimonies and discuss the Gospel with American believers.

Piotr Zaremba said it means a lot to interact with people on a personal level and say “Thank you.” He enjoys deepening those friendships while he is here.

Andrew Gorski said, “It’s great to see the wonderful friends who pray for and support us. We feel they really love us.”

4 - Encouragement.

After visiting the States, our partners report they return home with fresh perspective

on the challenges they face. They are rejuvenated by all the encouragement to press on in faithfulness.

“I was very encouraged as usual,” said Daniel of his time in the States, “To me, one month of encouragement in the States is like one year of encouragement in the field.”

After his time with one home fellowship group, Johan wrote that he “felt the love and family/friendship that permeates the Church where ever we go.”

5 - The thrill of encouraging others.

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.” (Jn 4:34)

It’s thrilling and filling to be used by the Spirit to encourage someone else and point them toward Jesus. Our partners are honored and excited to be an encouragement to you, too.

Over the course of getting to know one of his hosts, Johan was able to encourage them from an outside-the-box perspective with regard to a challenge they were facing in their own lives.

Piotr enjoys sharing ideas born on the mission field to encourage others, and Daniel was blessed by the opportunity to build up the kingdom work of those he met with here in the U.S.

How Hosts Benefit, Too!

Our partners are not the only ones who benefit. Those who host report that it is a wonderful experience and they learn a great deal.

Johan’s Pennsylvania hosts said, “Come back anytime!” They were blessed to be part of his U.S. visit.



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From the Director

Dear Team: Greetings from Bangalore, India

This morning I arrived in Bangalore, India after a 29-hour journey. I spent the day with **David and Taru Raj Kumar Bavigadda**. This faithful couple is originally from Andra Pradesh in southern India, but have served all over the Hindu and Muslim country for the past 20 years.

Their ministry has mostly been to Muslims. They moved to Bangalore to work in a slum that is mostly Muslim.

Just today they put on a VBS for young people from this slum area. The community fully accepts the kind and loving couple and their ministry. Mothers of the children are quite grateful that their child will have some positive influence and another necessity...food.



Many slum families are led by fathers that drink most all the family's food money away. Combine that with the propensity to have children totaling in the double-digits in the home who need to be fed, and you see why David and Taru need to "...put some food in their stomachs before we can teach them."

Taru's passion and love for these slum children is unmistakably evident after just a few minutes of chatting with her. David is a bit more quiet and introspective, but Taru is full of energy, probably from the second her feet hit the floor in the morning. She focuses this God-given passion and energy on needy children from Muslim homes that are deeply at risk.

Taru's ministry training has pretty much been on-the-job and in-the-trenches, with the exception of the dreams that God uses to give her great ideas and insight. The story of how she came from a Muslim home and God used a dream to bring her to Him will be told in a later newsletter.

Today's craft for these needy and lost children was just brilliant. She had them take a small red clay pot and paint it as pretty as they could with sparkly, glittery paint.

Taru called one girl up front and asked her if she loved the pot. The girl gushed. "Do you think it is beautiful?" The girl glowed. Then Taru did something unexpected. She handed the girl a hammer, and asked her to smash it and turn what once was beautiful to "trash."

The girl stepped back, clutching the pot protectively. She really didn't want to. With great hesitation, the children finally obey the lady that has proven herself to them so, so many times before.

"Did that make you sad?" she asks them. Their sorrow is evident as they tell her it made them really, deeply sad.

Taru told them that Jesus came to rebuild the damage and destruction they have been inflicted with in their once beautiful, yet short lives. So she helped them glue the sparkly pieces of their pots in the form of the first letter of their names on a piece of cardboard covered by red cloth, showing that Jesus' blood makes all things new and beautiful.

God uses faithful people like David and Taru to reach a people group in the slums of Bangalore, India that most of us couldn't even safely visit.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. S.", written over a white background.

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*I strongly urge fellow believers
to share a meal, offer your
home...and have your friends
hear what they are doing."*

- Jon Dekkers, Host

**Jon and
Jamie
Dekkers**
hosted Johan
while he was
in Arizona.

Jon shared,
"Having a
missionary
stay in your
home is an

incredible experience and both I and my family have grown much through the experience. Johan was a lot of fun and we got to do some interesting things together."

Johan and Jon know they will be life-long friends.

Of his time with Johan, Steve said, "Driving across country with Johan for 3 weeks, seeing him operate with absolute strangers, I feel like I've learned how to better engage. Johan showed me a whole new level of being intentional in engaging people. I learned a lot from him."

Steve also shared he wishes everyone could have the opportunity to spend time in person with our partners.

"It's such a blessing to hear Piotr Zaremba share the rich nuggets of Biblical truth he discovers in his translation work. So many nuances are lost in translation that bring added richness to the Bible," Steve says.

"I would love for everyone to experience Andrew Gorski's energy for reaching Poland for Christ," he continues, "and Daniel's passion to engage with everyone he meets and ask them, 'Do you know Jesus?'"

About his experience hosting, Jon Dekkers reflected,

"I believe it gets you out of the rut thinking that we so easily can fall into.

The people on the front lines of Kingdom work have so much to share and teach us about God's advancing kingdom. We can use that here and maybe even visit them as well and be a blessing to them, too.

I strongly urge fellow believers to share a meal, offer your home to them when they come to visit, and have your friends hear what they are doing. You will be blessed more than they are and help fulfill the call to share in the work to evangelize the world for Jesus."

We're truly grateful for those of you that hosted, met with or encouraged one or more of our partners during the recent wave of visits.

We have partners visiting year-round, so there will be plenty more opportunities to host and fellowship with our overseas workers.

It's our hope that many more will be blessed by this opportunity in the future!

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

*If you think you'd like to host or meet with one of our partners in the future, [contact our office](#)
[and let us know!](#)*

For Praise

1. South Sudan - [Jahim Buli](#) - Teaching Biblical truth in South Sudan regardless of fickle popular opinion.
2. South Africa - [Onseepkans Mission](#) - The addition of a bull to their livestock and provision for its transport.
3. South Africa - [Charl van Wyk](#) - Provision for 4 youth in Zimbabwe to launch a chicken farming business.
4. Poland - Daniel Machlowski - Disciples making disciples and youth making bolder commitments to Christ.
5. U.S. - Many gracious hosts for our partners over the past few months!

For Prayer

1. Poland - Daniel Machlowski-Piotr Zaremba - Provisions and preparation for outreach trip to Bulgaria this summer.
2. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - Many opportunities to bless and encourage US believers in June and July.
3. Romania - [Bethesda Home](#) - Comfort as they grieve the passing of Lia, one of the women they provided care for.
4. Uganda - [Muhindo and Lillian Kawede](#) - Lillian's health continues to worsen due to diabetes.
5. India - Steve Evers - Provision of ministry opportunities during visit with David and Taru in Bangalore.



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