

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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"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

- Galatians 6:9

An Expedition *On the Zambezi*

A b e h i n d t h e s c e n e s l o o k

Zambia

They are terrified of the idea. A group of grown men, scared of getting in a boat. But you wouldn't know it to look at them.

They move intently as they ready the boat. They are focused on the tasks at hand. Concentrated on the calling they've accepted because they know it is of crucial importance.

They steadfastly don orange life vests and calmly board the 90hp outboard motor boat, moored on the west bank of the Zambezi River, just south of their town, Chavuma, Zambia.

Why are grown men afraid of boating?

If you spend your life in a remote place like Chavuma, Zambia, the only pooling of water large enough to swim in would be the Zambezi River.

The river is the crocs' territory, and they aren't exactly gracious hosts.

Unlike here in the States, swimming isn't a commonly held skill for the residents of Chavuma. The Zambezi is to be avoided, or risk becoming the subject of one of the tragic stories told by the townspeople.

Since they were just tykes, they've heard constant reports and stories of

crocs snatching victims from the river, never to be seen again. They've even known some of the victims personally.

If their canoe tips or the motor boat takes on water, they can't just shake the drops from their hair, laugh it off and swim to safety.

A group of
grown men,
terrified of
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boat.

The Adventure of Bringing the Gospel West of the Zambezi

Ron Luce said, "The Great Commission is the Great Adventure of Christianity." This couldn't be more true west of the Zambezi.

The barrier posed by the river isn't the only obstacle to be overcome on their expedition. The opposite bank is made of deep, deep sand that extends for quite a distance from the edge of the water to the flood plains. Covering this territory is a labor intensive process.

And then there's the bush itself - untamed wilderness, sprinkled with tiny clusters of civilization.

Mosquitos pester incessantly, carrying with them the risk of disease and illness. Wild animals inhabit the land. Services and infrastructure aren't available.

It's impossible to predict how a village will receive visitors from the east side of the river.

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So why do they do it?

They may be fearful of the croc-infested Zambezi River, but these are courageous, selfless men.

They willingly risk their lives on an all-encompassing movement that transcends their own lives and safety. A cosmic crusade of many single rescue missions, pulling bearers of God's image from the quicksand of sin and separation from God.

The other side of the river is filled with villages full of their fellow country-men who need to hear the news they were overjoyed to receive themselves.

Lecture is followed by practicum, where trainees practice teaching what they've learned in their own town before embarking across the river.

Teams also need to be equipped to handle things they may encounter in the field such as opposition from witch-doctors or staunch practitioners of Animism. They must prepare to pray for sick villagers, challenge animistic beliefs Biblically and graciously and answer any questions that may come up.

Last month, after training to present The Heart of Man, a team of 8 deployed 60km downriver, a distance that prior to



News that would change how they live, be the basis for building community, yield the by-product of a higher quality of life and give them ultimate hope.

The message? The Creator of all the wonders they see around them, in all His weighty and powerful importance, pursues a relationship with them, has great affection for them and cares deeply about how they live.

Preparing for the Mission

This is [Johan and Lesley](#)'s ministry. They train and equip believers from Chavuma, Zambia to cross the river and share Jesus with those on the other side.

Often, these are villages that haven't had visitors from the other side of the river in a long time. Some are completely unreached by God's people and His message.

The vision is simple, but a lengthy list of preparation is prerequisite to getting a team from Chavuma to a village west of the Zambezi. A trip's success can pivot upon seemingly mundane tasks of arranging a trip such as checking the boat's viability, repairing equipment and carefully packing necessities.

Acquiring educational materials, recording the Gospel in their language on audio recorders, flip books for on-the-field use, training the teams from Chavuma to use them all requires months of preparation.

Teams learn to tell the story of the Bible, starting with Creation. They are also trained to teach the gospel through a presentation called "the Heart of Man."

the commissioning of the ministry's new motorboat, was unattainable. The motored craft gave the teams from Chavuma access to two new villages.

They shared The Heart of Man and showed the Jesus film in Sambita, a larger village with a population of about 300! After Sambita, the team shared in the village of Luzu and stopped on the way back at a previously visited settlement for follow up discipleship.

When all these preparations, hard work, training and packing culminated with eight trained evangelists reaching a village they haven't been able to get to before, the challenges are eclipsed by faces brightened with hope.

Faces filled with belief and peace. Their empty energy tanks are refilled by a surge that rises from within as the Holy Spirit celebrates new members of His family!

So this is why they do it. The Lord's love calls them to their part in His cosmic mission.

Their great calling to reach the unreached villages of north-western Zambia propels them to rise above fear, logistics and opposition to bring this remarkable news to those languishing for want of it.



-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

Imraz stands 3 feet tall. He is 9 years old.

His legs are stuck in a 90 degree position. Imraz is the only son of Soumya, who rents a hut in the Modi Road area of Bangalore, India.

Modi Road is a slum, a conglomeration of lean-tos, shacks, shelters and huts.

Ninety-five percent of the people living there are Muslim. Many of the men in this area “handle” the oppression they live with by turning to alcohol. This exacerbates their families’ already financially vulnerable position.

Imraz’s mother tried to protect him from the embarrassment and humiliation she thought he would experience because of his unusual stature. She carried him wherever he went.

Although Imraz is a bright boy and able to do schoolwork, he was ignored by local schools because of his physique.

This exclusion from education would have been Imraz’s sentence to a life of begging, dependence and welfare, were it not for ITMI partner, [Taru Kumar](#).

Taru welcomed Imraz into her small primary school, one of the ministries she and her husband, **David**, provide through their outreach to women and children of Modi Road.

Imraz began attending **Deepam School**, and David and Taru also began meeting with the boy and his mother for counseling.

They learned that though Imraz had physical differences, he was just like the others his age emotionally, in spirit, and in mental capacity. While at school, he has shown that he is playful, bright and active.



Imraz’s will to do things on his own has been an inspiration and joy to the Kumars and others at the school.

After just a week of counseling with Imraz and Soumya, Imraz began walking the 500 meters home from school. He’d never done that - or been allowed to do that - before.

“He is a wonderful kid with lots of talents,” Taru says, “All he needs is a little encouragement.”

Deepam school is truly a blessing to the community of Modi Road, especially to marginalized students like Imraz and [Ayan \(ITMI Monthly, May 2018\)](#) who have nowhere else to turn.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

Turned Away from School

How 9-year-old Imraz got the drastic life-change he needed.



Modi Road,
Bangalore

Straight from the Field

The trip began with an airplane fire over the ocean and a vehicle robbery. Not exactly how you'd choose to begin a 4 week trek through South Africa and Zambia.

That was Kent's first taste of Zambia. Kent has already cut his teeth on traveling with Steve when they were [almost arrested](#) in South Sudan earlier this year. After that, what could phase him!?

ITMI's [Kent Reisenauer](#) and [Steve Evers](#) are well into their travels in Zambia. By the time you read this, the two-man team will have spent time at 7 **Rivers** and met with the **Smiths**, including our newest partner, **Fifi Smith**.

From there, it's on to the Northern Cape area for time with the **le Roux family** at **Onseepkans Mission**. Then it's back to Cape Town to see the **van Wyks** and **Mark and Cindy Parris**, including a trip outside the city to **Stone Hill**. The guys will get to visit the new Medical Clinic, Tutoring Center and see the old church building recently acquired by the Stone Hill ministry.

This is all after visiting the new village school being constructed by **Eugene Kalunga** outside Kabwe, Zambia, and meeting with **Ruben**, a village leader working with ITMI's **Timothy Keller**.

It was after parking for their meeting with Ruben in Lusaka that their vehicle was robbed. As they walked away from

the car, in broad daylight, the thieves stayed low on the opposite side of the car and held the handle to keep it from locking. Although valuable electronics and documents were in the vehicle, only a couple tools were taken. A

bystander ran after our guys, who hustled back and were able to get their tools returned!

Next, Kent, Steve and Tim Keller traveled up to Chavuma, where **Johan Leach** took the three of them to visit a village across the Zambezi River.

While the northern hemisphere swelters in the heat of summer, the southern hemisphere is shivering in the cold of winter. When the sun goes down, it gets really cold in the bush!

Steve and Kent took great joy in blessing villagers with knitted winter hats, hand-made by an amazing group of ladies.

Johan reported the visit was a blessing. Which brings me to the main point. The amazing ITMI community has come together to support, supply, send and pray this trip into delivering the maximum blessing for our partners.

Fires, thieves and physical viruses are held at bay for our teams by the Spirit of the Lord through your prayers.

Thanks for "going with them" in prayer. Keep praying!

-Summer Kelley

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For Praise

1. The Kellers - Zambia - Many [recent opportunities to train police](#) precincts in understanding the Biblical worldview.
2. Steve Evers - Zambia - Opportunities to encourage villagers in remote Zambia and bless many with donated knitted hats.
3. Charl van Wyk - South Africa - The opportunity for girls from Stone Hill to attend summer camp.
4. David Kumar - India - Rural believers from Muslim backgrounds excited to use what David taught them to share Jesus with Muslim family and friends.

For Prayer

1. Muhindo Kawede - Uganda - Lillian's health continues to decline, and needed medical services aren't available.
2. Bethesda Home - Romania - Elaine (85), a resident at Bethesda Home, feeling poorly due to issues with her heart.
3. Steve and Kent - Travel safety, health and guidance to ministry opportunities in Zambia and South Africa.
4. Leszek and Anna Wakula - Poland - Ministry and relationship building at family camp during the first week in August.



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