

Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

IN TOUCH MISSION

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

Monthly

1 September 2018

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." -Col. 3:23-24

What Everyone Ought to Know About *Fifi Smith*

South Africa

Sunlight falling from the wide, blue sky above the hills of Zulu Natal, South Africa glinted from the water as it tumbled from the small spigot into the black plastic 5-gallon bucket.

The community water source is atop one of the many steep hills that envelope this Zulu settlement. From the high vantage point, the surrounding bubbly terrain stretches to the horizon. Traversing the hills is tough, even for the young.

But for the elderly to do it while carrying full buckets of water is nearly impossible.

Water for daily use is a big challenge faced by residents of Zulu Natal, South Africa.

Most families haul any water they need for household consumption from the community spigots to the round homes where they reside, called *rondavels*.

Bracing her small frame, 24-year-old [Fifi Smith](#) raised the bucket into the air and rested it on her head. For a Zulu woman, Fifi is petite. Petite, but mighty...in more ways than one.

Stepping carefully along a path that is at some points barely wide enough for one foot to pass by the other, she carefully descended and climbed until she neared a rondavel.



When she reached the rondavel, the elderly resident eagerly greeted her. She was overjoyed! Her excitement overflowed in laughter. She was so grateful to have water.

(continued on p. 4)



Zambia 2018



We wanted to share a few snapshots of our time in Zambia. Thanks for praying us there and back! -Steve and Kent

Village children don't have sufficient clothing for winter but they loved the Knit hats we gave them.



This proud mama now has clean, safe water near the village where she is raising her little ones.



ITMI's Johan Leach loves the village children as much as they love him!



Chavuma ladies so, so happy with the results of a food sale to benefit two pastors' families in need.



We presented Tim Keller with a plaque from his church, recognizing his 20+ years as a missionary in the field.



Thriving students from ITMI's Excellence Christian Academy in Kabwe, Zambia, who are learning truth everyday.

From the Director

Dear Team: What I'm Hearing Over and Over from our Partners

The Cold War was at its strongest.

Bill and Harriett Bathman, ITMI's founders, spent many years and a lot of kilometers behind the communist iron curtain in Eastern Europe. Bill realized that our "family" of believers in those communist countries were being persecuted, imprisoned and oppressed for their stand and service to Jesus Christ. Many of these brothers and sisters were told they couldn't go to school or work because of their insistence on standing faithful to their Lord and Savior.

Bill wanted to address their multiple layers of poverty. So, Bill would come to the U.S., stand in pulpits and share,

"...I visit and encourage [our brothers and sisters in Christ] behind the iron curtain, I cannot tell you what country [they are in], what city, what [exact] ministry or even their [real] name...but...if you want to help me help them minister in places, I will make sure what you give will get to them."

Bill was able to help handfuls of pastors and their families with many gifts and items that they would never have been able to purchase or acquire on their own. Much ministry was completed in those oppressive times because of the generosity and understanding of the American Body of Christ, even though most will never know the name or county where their funds actually went. This understanding and trust that God was in control allowed many persecuted believers to be cared for and blessed immensely.

On my last two trips to South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and South Africa, and in my discussions with our Indian partners, I was told numerous times that persecution and opposition is growing. What is impacting our partners in the field are antagonists who are disgruntled and even angry who want to throw their weight around and attack those that are doing good work and serving the needy in the local communities. Many times they just want someone to berate, but have little interest in offering help or solutions themselves. How are these antagonists getting their information about what our ministries are doing and who is involved?

In this information age, it's all at their fingertips. From social media accounts to our own website, even truthful portrayals of real needs - being communicated to you so that you have the opportunity to get involved - are being used, twisted and construed into baseless and sometimes hateful accusations. Sincere godly missionaries who are going without, giving of their time, energy and resources to help those in need are being falsely accused of profiting from the suffering around them.

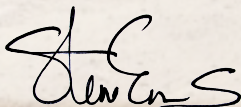
The enemy always comes to "kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10), but the Lord came that we "might have life and have it more abundantly...."

Our partners want to share the abundant life they've found in Christ. Anyone that is following the true gospel wants to give life. Those that accuse, stir up trouble and hinder God's people are not committed to giving life. Many of our partners are in such sensitive areas that sometimes they ask us to not share this story or that story, or feature it in a medium that will be put on the internet. That means that you don't always hear all that is going on because if we gave you the real story and included specific details, it would surely be twisted and used against the missionary.

This is one reason why many supporters so enjoy getting to spend in-person time with our partners when they are on this side of the ocean. They get a much fuller picture of what is happening.

Steve Evers and all of ITMI are committed to continuing to help our projects. The ones that are in the sensitive and difficult areas are often the ones that need the most help. We will still stand with them and do our best to not compromise what it is that God has called them to do. When we have to limit some of what we say or even generalize some of our details in future publications, we hope you will understand, read between the lines and contact us with questions. Rest assured, we will still be going and seeing first-hand what the needs are and we will share these needs as best we can so you can catch a vision of what God is doing, yet still protect our people and their ministries. Please pray that we can communicate what God is doing with sufficient details to encourage the saints like you, while protecting our brothers and sisters who willingly follow Jesus into the face of opposition.

In His Service,



(continued from p. 1)

Fifi set the bucket down inside the home, calling happily back and forth with the recipient in Zulu. Without hesitation, Fifi began filling tubs with water for washing dishes.

There were no chairs in the one circular room this family lives in. The “gogo” or grandmother, situated herself on the floor in front of two bins of dirty dishes. The volume of dishes revealed that she had been without water, unable to haul it herself.

This is what we want you to know about Fifi. She works hard. Period. She is a true servant, pouring out her strength and energy for her people.

All week long, she visits the “Gogos” who live in the area. The elderly ladies struggle to perform the tasks required by life in this area. They are the ones others have forgotten about.

She returns week after week, to chat, to bend her back and to serve. She hauls water for them. She cleans their homes. She does their laundry.

Week after week, she returns to visit even those who verbally berate her out of their own past hurt and trauma. Even if she leaves in tears.

Why would she return, over and over again, to love and serve those who dish out verbal lashings?

When asked, she said simply, “I want them to know Jesus.”



Fifi has a unique opening with this Zulu community.

She was born there. She was raised there. She is one of them. She speaks their language. And she can do and say things that outsiders cannot.

She is a living and breathing demonstration of how a person - a Zulu person who faces the challenges they face - lives differently when they aren't enslaved by terror of their ancestors, but instead is a willing follower of Jesus.

Fifi is a stark contrast to the fear many live with. She brings a tantalizing ray of sunshine and hope.

People are open to the love and freedom she offers them in Christ. But the tenets and beliefs they've steeped in for years are not easily revoked.

This isn't unique to the Zulu. We all - around the world - are often

unaware of the influence of our cultures, and find ourselves struggling to let go of the beliefs held dear to our culture.

Although Jesus is faithful and good and wonderful to His own, He demands to be our only Lord. One cannot have the freedom and life Jesus offers while clinging to or harboring a greater fear of anything else.

May we all be reminded that He is more than worth it, and may all peoples, from every beautiful nation on earth discover and proclaim the goodness that is found in following and serving Christ alone.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

For Praise

1. Gerhard le Roux - South Africa - New opportunities to provide spiritual counsel for young men in trouble with the law.
2. Excellence Christian Academy - Zambia - Teachers blessed with reconditioned laptops for faithful extended service.
3. Richard and Brooke Nungesser - Poland - a full summer of ministry, including 3 outreach camps in 3 cities.
4. Timothy and Ashley Keller - Zambia - Ministry opportunities for Ashley teaching skills through the local police precinct.
5. Timothy and Ashley Keller - Zambia - Timothy's 20 years of ministering in Africa!
6. Steve Evers, Kent Reisenauer - US - safe and fruitful four weeks in South Africa and Zambia.

For Prayer

1. ITMI partners - Grace and favor among the people they serve, allowing the spread of God's Kingdom to every nation.
2. Leach and Parris Family, Charl van Wyk - Opportunities to bless and encourage many while in the US this fall.
3. Eugene Kalunga - Zambia - Construction of Kabowa village school would be completed for opening in January 2019.
4. Daria and Viorel Pop - Romania - Elaine, one of the ladies in the care of Bethesda Home passed away in July.
5. Muhindo Kawede - Uganda - Continued growth of International School of Missions students as new trimester begins.

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