

# How ITMI Supporters are Changing Lives in Poland

# ITMI

*Monthly*

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*"...others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else." 2 Corinthians 2: 12 - 13*

## POLAND

"You're not good enough." This message echoes constantly throughout Polish society. They've been told it's what their heavenly Father, the highest and most revered authority, thinks about them.

Staggering beneath the crushing weight of constant reminders of their sin and how they aren't measuring up, many are swallowed into the numbness of depression. There's no way out. You're condemned, they hear. You deserve death...unless you follow this endless list of rules and rites.

The escape offered by alcohol and other substances snares many. To the most desperate, suicide can seem like the only path to freedom. Families are destroyed, careers lost and marriages broken. This nation desperately needs to hear the second half of the Gospel message. The part that is Good News. They need to know: *there is another way out!*

But they can't hear that message from the less than 1% of their population who *have* truly discovered the love relationship Jesus died to offer them. Their ears are hopelessly plugged by fear of this minority. However, the common Polish citizen *does* think the Bible is a trustworthy source, something they should read and figure out.

Until recently, the Bible translations available in Polish have been so difficult to read that even scholars struggled to understand the message. The vocabulary was ancient. Certain words that meant

one thing generations ago have come to mean something entirely different today. The Polish people needed a new, readily understandable Bible.

One young Polish pastor saw this deep need. The Lord called him to "translate the Bible for revival." But as a young pastor in a post-communist economy, he simply didn't have the resources to do what needed to be done. There were no organizations of Bible scholars who could tackle this task. Anyone with the qualifications was buried by trying to make ends meet as teachers or pastors.


And that might have been the end of the story if not for a group of believers - rallied by ITMI's **Bill Bathman** - who passionately believed that everyone should know Jesus came to save them.

They wanted Polish speakers to be able to read God's Word and discover a saving relationship with Jesus. These everyday heroes didn't just affirm their belief. They acted. They prayed. They sacrificed and gave.

They told their friends about the exciting opportunity they had found to make a lasting impact by helping ITMI's [Dr. Piotr Zaremba](#) translate the Bible from its original languages to modern, understandable Polish.

These remarkable people are probably similar to yourself. You may even be one of them. They are moms, dads, college students, small

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business owners and middle managers. They are coaches, teachers, engineers, contractors and tradesmen, used by God to faithfully support His work.

With supporters at his back and by his side, Piotr assembled a team that would together birth a translation of God's Word unlike anything ever before seen in the Polish-speaking world.

It was a long, rigorous road. Each supporter faced their own challenges. Each month, they were faced with choices. When it hurts, when the sacrifice costs me deeply, when I must deny myself something I want or need, do I still believe everyone should have a chance to hear that Jesus came to save them? Each month, they courageously made the choice to remain behind Piotr financially. Piotr's team, too, faced challenges. The work was demanding. It was a gargantuan task they'd taken on. Eventually, by God's grace, the Polish Bible Translation team was victorious! They presented the Polish people with a Bible that reads clearly, in simple syntax and vocabulary that modern Polish speakers can really understand.

Since the first publication, a literary version (analogous to our English New International Version), was published in print in 2016, Polish speakers have been gushing their appreciation for the investment made by this incredible group of people. One reader called the translation, "...an invaluable tool for every Christian who studies Scripture daily," another said, "...when I got it, I went to bed with it because it was hard to let it go," and "the best Polish translation ever," just to share a few.

The electronic version's popularity earned it the "default" spot for Polish versions of the Bible on the widely circulated YouVersion Bible app because it "offered the best user experience" for Polish readers.

Just weeks ago, Piotr humbly and excitedly held printed copies of the second translation, a literal version (think analogous to the English Standard Version) in his hands!

As more and more leaders, pastors and teachers get their hands on this new translation with its 78,500 cross references and 19,994 footnotes waiting in the margins to illuminate Biblical truths, the gifts laid on the altar by this group of donors just keeps on giving.

Piotr's supporters provided him the freedom to work with feverish dedication and focus - for years - to present this gift of accessing the truth about who Jesus is and what He's done, to his people. "This is what support means," Piotr said, "[I had] the means to focus and get it

done. This translation happened because you supported us through prayer and giving."

We'll never really know how many lives this group was used to save or how many families this group rescued from being torn apart by divorce or addictions. We'll never know the exact number of people this group diverted from losing jobs or homes, but evidence suggests it would be a number not to be brushed aside. The impact this group has made through their support of this pastor and translator with a dream for revival is deep, wide and growing all the time.

### Speaking of a memorable impact...

As Piotr toiled to bring the saving message of God's Word to Polish speakers everywhere, there were still people wrestling with their need for a Savior. For a portion of the population, it became a deadly battle. Dads faced dead-end jobs each day in the post-communist, Eastern Bloc country with the knowledge that their labor wasn't meeting their deepest need.

The meaninglessness and hopelessness continued driving thousands to find an escape. What they found, instead, were addictions. Addictions that broke their hearts, shattered their families and crushed their children. These heartaches were passed on for generations. Children were put in state custody as impoverished parents couldn't hold jobs or shake addictions. When they graduated from the care of the state, many became the next generation to live on the streets.

Thankfully, there was another body of ITMI supporters that stepped up to say with their actions and their funds, "Everyone should know that Jesus came to offer them a place in His family." They supported ITMI's [Brooke and Richard Nungesser](#), who worked tirelessly to start the [Bread of Life](#) Foundation to offer the help people needed in Jesus' name. Those of you who belong to this group funded food that was delivered to impoverished villages, the elderly and the homeless. You sponsored the renovation and opening of [a transition home for men](#). You backed the outreaches of Richard and Brooke's Bread of Life Foundation with your support and prayers. You sent teams and funds making it possible for at-risk children from impoverished villages and neighborhoods to come to [week-long summer camps](#) and hear that Jesus loves them and provides the answer their hearts long for.

Through these outreaches, life after life was offered hope and redirected. Often, that would begin a chain of events whereby many others would be reached, like the story of

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# From the Director



## Dear Team: Visiting a Slum in Uganda with Kawede



I got ready to crawl in bed in our small simple African guest house, at about 11:30pm after a long day of meetings, including a visit to a Congolese refugee slum where one of Kawede's former students planted a church.

I was a little tired from an evening-long meeting with a South Sudanese potential partner and his Ugandan ministry "father." I pulled the lightweight covers back before I went through my normal Kampala evening routine. First, dressing in long sleeve and long pants nightwear in attempt to give the potentially malaria-carrying mosquitos, or *mozzies*, a challenge in their quest for exposed flesh. Then flipping the room fan on, and spreading a mosquito net over each corner of the bed.

Surprise, surprise, when I pulled the covers back there were ants. Everywhere. From foot to head. Beneath my pillow was

what looked like the maternity ward of the St. Ant Hospital of Uganda. This was a first for me, seeing baby ants that had just been born, guarded by a full staff of adult ant crusaders. My first thought was to find a couch to crash on until the morning rooster's crow or amplified Muslim chants interrupted our slumber. No couch. I'd have to go to battle. I'm glad no one was around to watch me attempt to clear the ants. It involved swatting, pinching and swiping with both hands, so that anyone watching would have thought I was doing my best Karate Kid impression. Finally, they all quit moving. Shortly after, I was fast asleep.

Before I drifted off, the events of the day flashed through my mind's eye. We accompanied ITMI's [Muhindo Kawede](#) as he visited the church planted in the Congolese refugee area of Kampala called **Nsambya Kirombe**, by one of his former students. The church is very basic. The pastor, very warm and hospitable. The young people hanging around the church were eager to be accepted and valued by the foreign visitors. Kent and I gladly engaged each of them. We took a moment to playfully chase the small children that can't get enough of someone "high up" caring enough to engage and value them.

What struck me in this particular slum - where at least 30% of the residents are refugees from Kawede's homeland - was that the people live in such filthy conditions, it's hard to describe. There were huge piles of garbage overflowing into an open trench, about 10-12 feet deep, that flows constantly with sewage. On a wall about 6 feet away from the muddy trench, Kawede and the pastor showed us a wet line about 4-5 feet up from the broken, muddy ground. The Pastor explained that when the rains come and the trench fills up with runoff from the surrounding communities and hills, or when debris clogs the trench, the sewage overflows up to that chest-high water line. What makes this so sad is that on the other side of this trench, there is no wall. There's nothing to stop the flooding sewage from taking out thousands of slum homes and all that can't be carried away as the waters encroach. These people have no government assistance. No insurance. After running from their broken country and finding a place where they could feel somewhat safe, they lose everything again. The longer I walked this community, the more somber I became, even in spite of the joy shown by the barefoot and threadbare children.

As we walked the slum, an interesting thing happened. We were in an area where Kawede had not had previous ministry outreaches. With each new level of human waste we encountered, Kawede became more and more emboldened to tell the people - strangers - that this mess was not the government's responsibility. It was *their* responsibility to do something about. You could see that he has compassion for his people. He had compassion for their circumstances, but more so for their spiritual condition, which was in part a reason for this mess having been created, continued and ignored. Kawede was almost getting too vocal for my comfort. Yet, not one of the many people that Kawede addressed got angry or confrontational. In fact, they did the opposite. They knew he was right in his assessment of their physical living conditions and the associated spiritual condition that went before the physical.

As Jesus walked the earth years ago, He displayed the compassion that God the Father has for all of us, who do desperately need His intervention to keep us out of the slums of life. Kawede's compassion was on full display as his heart ached for the people that suffer daily in this environment. May we be obedient, even as the little black ants are, in doing what God has designed and instructed us to do, at all costs. May we be willing to unite together. To work tirelessly and faithfully to help the Kawedes of the world reach into the slums around them and touch for eternity the souls living in situations colored with darkness, sewage and trash.

In His Service,



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a young man who attended one of Bread of Life's summer camps in the summer of 2016.

The young man's entire body was tense. He restrained every muscle that eagerly propelled him forward in anticipation. He forced himself to make his way through the crowd politely, stepping aside to allow others to pass, though anyone looking closely could tell he was carefully restraining his eagerness to reach his destination.

The youth wove through the people milling about the shore line as he moved toward the water's edge. His bright, dancing eyes were focused on Richard Nungesser, who was standing waist deep in the cold water of the Polish lake. Richard had just finished baptizing several who wanted to declare their relationship with Jesus publicly. He had almost made it back to the water's edge when the young man reached him. Dripping wet, Richard returned the young man's greeting, and listened to the news he had been so eager to share.

The young man had attended Bread of Life's summer camp, called Tydzien USA, or "USA Week" during the summer of 2016. During that week, campers came to the [New Life Center](#) daily. They learned Bible stories, built relationships with volunteers who had come all the way from America to meet and serve them, enjoyed nourishing meals and made friends. Many of the campers were from Poland's impoverished rural villages and towns. A number of them had parents struggling with alcohol and other addictions. Others were from healthy families, eager to spend a week with American guests. At the end of the week, each camper was given their own Bible and encouraged to take it home and read it with their parents.

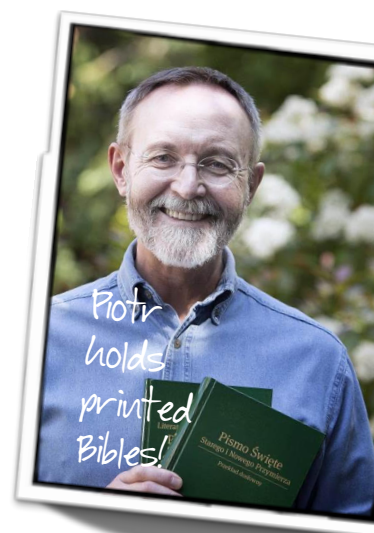
The words were tumbling from the boy's lips almost faster than he could pronounce them as he excitedly told Richard that after the week of camp, he had done what he was encouraged to do. He took his Bible back to his village and read it with his parents and friends. That small, informal Bible study had grown into three groups meeting weekly to read God's Word, pray and grow!

Last month, Bread of Life had one of these summer camps, and this month, they will reach even more with another camp in the city of Kalisz!

We try to make sure that ITMI supporters get to hear about the impact their gifts make. But many times, we don't even know about the work the Spirit is doing with the seeds you are planting! Sometimes, we get the joy of hearing the stories right away, other times, the stories surface years later. And sometimes, the Lord asks us to trust that our efforts and sacrifice are being used and multiplied in His capable hands.

If you aren't partnering with one of our nationals right now, we know you want to make a difference. To leave a legacy. And we're here to help. To provide a way for you to partner with someone in a faraway place to make an unforgettable impact.

If you *are* partnering with one of our nationals - like [Adi Ban](#) of Romania who recently returned from [sharing Jesus and meeting needs in war-torn Ukraine](#), or [Lazarus Yezinai](#) of embattled South Sudan who [shares the hope of Christ with refugees and villagers](#), or [Mark and Cindy Parris](#) who are reaching impoverished, informal townships in South Africa with [tutoring centers and youth programs](#), or Muhindo Kawede who is teaching Bible courses for prisoners in Uganda, or Piotr Zaremba, the Nungessers, Bread of Life or any of our other faithful, godly nationals - keep on keeping on. *It's working.*



-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

## For Praise

1. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - Arrival of printed copies of the literal Polish Bible translation!
2. South Sudan - Lazarus Yezinai - Opportunity to equip 115 leaders of impoverished and displaced people in the last 2 months.
3. India - Paul and Molly - Underground water found in the "Untouchables" village!
4. South Africa - Mark and Cindy Parris - Volunteers now making tutoring available 5 days a week in Stone Hill settlement.
5. Ukraine/Romania - Adi Ban - Opportunities early this month to minister alongside the local church in war-torn Ukraine.
6. Uganda - Steve Evers and Kent Reisenauer - Fruitful time ministering, encouraging and delivering Bibles in Uganda!

## For Prayer

1. South Sudan - Steve Evers and Kent Reisenauer - Safe and productive ministry and travels in South Sudan.
2. India - David and Taru Kumar - Provision of funds to seize an opportunity to expand their facility by leasing space next door.



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