

HOW SUPPORT OPENS DOORS IN POLAND

ITMI

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POLAND

When **Jim LaRose** returned home after serving at a weeklong summer camp for youth, an email was waiting for him, and it meant big changes.

An American by birth and a school teacher by trade, Jim's role at camp was to provide English lessons as part of the daily camp activities. He's been serving in this capacity for years.

Jim's English lessons are heavy with hands-on activities and manipulatives, for which he provides all of his own supplies and transportation. He is able to do this because he has faithful supporters standing behind him each month.

Summer camps are an important part of Jim's ministry. His service as an English teacher is powerful motivation for Polish parents to allow their kids to come to camp. These are parents that would otherwise not allow their children to participate in any program done by Polish people who don't attend the state church.

His service teaching English at summer camp has also led to year-round opportunities for impact. As an extension of a relationship Jim built at last year's camp with a camper named Jakub*, he teaches a weekly English lesson at a center for at-risk children that Jakub attends. He also developed a mentoring relationship with a young man named Filip*, which he has been able to extend past the week of camp by providing English lessons to a small group of boys in Filip's town.

Over the years Jim has held many roles using his ability to connect with children and teach effectively. **Jim's engaging teaching style and knowledge of the**

English language is instrumental in opening doors to redemptive relationships that are typically closed to Polish believers outside the state church.

This is the challenge our partners have always faced in Poland. Doors are closed to those outside the state church, where the message of the saving work of Jesus is often left out.

Through his English lessons, he develops relationships with kids and their families. Sometimes that leads to them attending a camp he's involved with, and that has led to the Polish speaking believers Jim works with getting the opportunity to share Biblical truth with the parents.

When Jim returned home from camp last August, he had an email from his landlord, requesting a meeting to terminate his lease. Although this was a little out of the blue, Jim wasn't surprised. He'd felt the Lord preparing him for this for awhile.

Leading up to the email, Jim had even wondered if it was time to leave Poland, but the Lord had confirmed for Jim previously that he should stay.

Jim had gone to the immigration office two months early to apply for his permit to stay in Poland. As a result of the attacks on Ukraine, there are 2 million Ukrainian workers applying for residency in Poland. The backlog was overwhelming, and he needed to be there two months early, so he was only just on time. There was a waiting list just to get inside the door.

To make a long story short, Jim's paperwork was fast-tracked and his application was processed and sent to



Warsaw on the spot, which is simply a miracle of epic proportions in the red-tape-loving EU.

Why did the Lord intervene on Jim's behalf? Perhaps Antoni* was one of those reasons, along with many other children and young adults who are regularly blessed by Jim's presence in Poland.

For many years, Jim volunteered weekly at a state-run children's home. He was a ray of sunshine and normalcy invading the dark and painful pasts of many children that passed through the home.

That is where Jim met Antoni. The pair developed a special father-and-son connection. Although Jim never legally adopted Antoni, today Jim is honorary "Grandpa" to Antoni's children, Jacek* and Maja*.

Now an adult, Antoni still struggles to overcome the demons of his past intense childhood trauma and deep emotional scars. Though he does his best to hold down a job and provide for his family, his family struggles to make ends meet. Jim still has frequent opportunities to be an instrument of God's provision and grace in their lives. Antoni and his wife, Amelia* regularly seek Jim's

(continued on p.4)

TROUBLE AT THE BORDER

AND HOW GOD INTERVENED

Hannah and Peter are optometrists in Poznan, Poland. But for the last 10 years, they've done more than serve their patients well through ordinary careers.

Ten years ago, ITMI's **Richard and Brooke Nungesser** helped Peter and Hannah go from "ordinary to extraordinary" through the ministry of the **Bread of Life** Foundation. The couple wanted to use their knowledge and resources to demonstrate the Lord's heart for the impoverished, suffering and hurting.

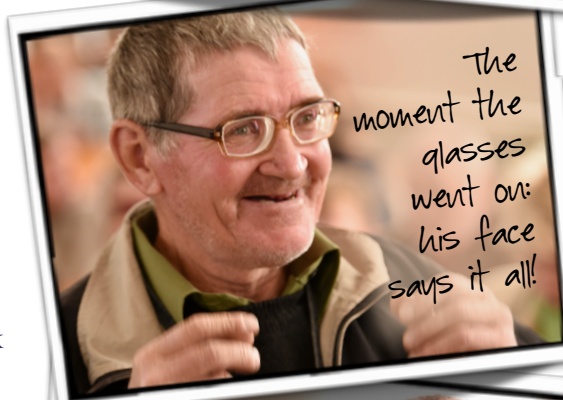
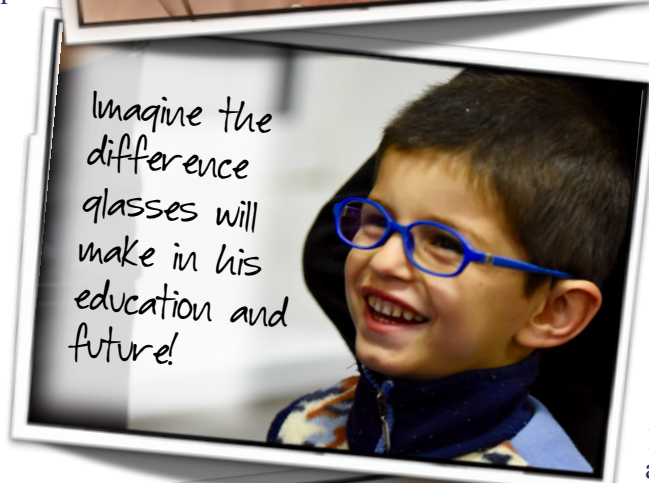
Together they formed the "Bartimaeus Project". Fast forward to 2019, Project Bartimaeus has blessed thousands of people in four different countries who couldn't afford an exam or glasses, with eye exams, prescription lenses, and clear vision.

Last year, Hannah and Peter, led a team of Polish optometrists to Moldova, where many are subsistence farmers and suffer extreme poverty, to bolster the ministry of Bread of Life Moldova and a local church by offering diagnostic exams and prescription lenses to those who can't afford them.

They were met with great gratitude - some were too overwhelmed to express it in words, but their wide smiles and tears of joy said enough.

The team took the prescriptions back to Poland, where an optometry lab filled them free of charge. A smaller team of six returned to distribute the glasses. Peter, Hannah and Richard were joined by three others. **Reinier van den Berg**, who is Bread of Life's National Director, Radek, who is also an optometrist and Peter and Hannah's pastor, Pastor Wiselka.

The 500 pairs of glasses were divided between the team members for the flight to Moldova. As the team was processing through



customs, an official searched their baggage.

On finding the 500 pairs of prescription glasses, he had some bad news. They could each take four pairs of glasses, and the rest would be confiscated. They would be able to get the rest back in 8 months after paying taxes and a fine.

The team tried to explain that impoverished Moldavians in four villages were waiting to be able to see clearly with the help of the lenses that were being confiscated. The problem went up the chain of command, but nothing changed.

The team left the airport without the glasses and was promised a visit from the highest Moldovan customs official the following day.

During his visit, it was determined that Bread of Life would have to pay taxes on the value of the glasses, plus a fine and Peter and Richard would have to sign statements of guilt.

Peter and Richard began to panic a little. The value of the 500 glasses was about \$65,000.

But what happened next was an epic intervention.

To their surprise, the top customs official said, "You'll pay \$215.00." A wave of relief washed over them as they collected the remaining glasses and were on their way praising God.

The team had to work doubly hard to distribute all 500 of the glasses before their return flights, but they did it.

We wish those of you who regularly and sacrificially support the Nungessers as they work tirelessly building His kingdom could have witnessed the smiles and tears of gratitude on the faces of those who can now see clearly - maybe for the first time, ever. Because the gratitude they offered, it truly belongs to you, too.



From the Director



Dear Team: The Legacy of Margaret Williams

"It shouldn't hurt this bad," read the text message from India. The text came almost three weeks after [Mark Burrift](#) and I accompanied ITMI's [David and Taru Kumar](#) to the funeral of Taru's "mother." Taru shared that she is deeply hurting and struggling to sleep. Not that she is distraught as the world knows distraught, but the deep pain of losing the only mother she really ever knew, has moved her, unexpectedly into the grieving process. Taru's "mom" came to rural India as a 30+ year old Australian missionary. She spent the last 60+ years loving on and raising up homeless, orphaned Indian girls. Margaret Williams was 94 years old when she was called to her real home. Margaret was called back to Australia many years ago because she was considered too old and "she needed to be home with her people, her family and her culture." Little did the Australians know, this deeply committed, loving single lady was not finished pouring her life into the precious, the ornery, the down right incorrigible orphan girls that needed love and discipleship so desperately.



Taru's family didn't want her. She was left at the Mukti Mission for no apparent reason. Taru shared that years later, she found out that she had biological siblings, but they had no desire to connect with her, so Margaret (Moushi) was exceptionally dear and close to Taru's wanting heart.

When we arrived at the funeral, we watched as Taru and her "sisters" greeted each other with crushing hugs, full-faced broad smiles, and childlike Indian jabber. It was touching to be present as those many other, now adult, orphans all came back to Moushi to pay their last respects to someone that was sacrificially there for them and who brought some peace and hope into their lives when they needed it most.

Most of Taru's "sisters" described her as "very naughty." This "naughty girl," by Taru's own words, happened to also be Moushi's favorite, even some 30+ years after Taru moved out of the girls' home. Losing the one that cared for you, that loved you when others didn't, that into your fifties, still treated you like one of her dear children, is why Taru is feeling this hole in her heart so acutely.

India is full of people that need help. It is good that Taru has a tenderness and is able to feel normal pain when faced with loss. Most of the millions in India have known only poverty and trauma from a society that is full of dysfunction and noise. Noise externally and internally is the norm in most of India. There are rare opportunities to get alone and hear God's calling. David and Taru want to change that for their community and the people they minister to.

David and Taru have stepped out in faith, at the Lord's leading and started building a "room of peace" on their roof. Actually their home is quite small and the room of peace or prayer room will cover what was once their roof. Even though the construction has ground to a halt due to limited resources, the Muslim and Hindu neighbors have voiced great pleasure and excitement in the possibility of a place they can find refuge from their scattered, mixed-up, hopeless, overly loud and caustic lives. They want a place to be quiet and to find what they know little of: peace. This place of peace will also be offered to the women that Taru ministers to (we have to be careful how much we disclose here due to the ever present internet and the hostile religious environment in some parts of the world).

David also needs a place that he can get alone with God and prepare for the inevitable spiritual warfare he regularly deals with as he minister in the rural villages that have been Satan's stronghold for generations.

As Moushi was there for the hundreds of orphan girls, sacrificing her life and personal resources, we are now presented with the opportunity to be here for David and Taru as they wait for God to fund what He called them to step out in faith to build. Do you want to partner with us as we build a place for people to experience the peace of God in quiet? If so, David needs \$20,000 USD to complete this place of peace. Any help will be greatly appreciated and will move us closer to opening this oasis in a dark and blind culture and community.

In His Service,

P.S. The prayer room will also mean David and Taru get many opportunities to pray for people who come to use it in need of prayer for very real and immediate needs.

(continued from p. 1)

advice and friendship, which Jim gently saturates with the Good News and Biblical wisdom.

Though Jim lives on a limited missionary's income, he takes Antoni's family grocery shopping once each month, and they are allowed to get anything they feel they need for the month. This is something else he wouldn't be able to do if not for his supporters standing with him.

Antoni and Amelia live rent-free in an apartment Jim paid for. Jim makes frequent visits, spending hours with the two children, and fills in other financial gaps, such as helping with gas, school supplies and the children's developmental needs.

Jim was making the half-hour drive to visit Antoni, Amelia, Jacek and Maja the Lord intervened once again!

On the trip south, Jim was driving down a gentle hill, following a gradual curve in the two-lane highway as it eventually makes a 90-degree change in direction. As Jim's vehicle rounded the curve, a little white car was approaching the highway from a side road.

For some reason, the white car didn't stop to wait for the highway traffic to be clear before entering the highway. It pulled right in front of Jim's car, which was traveling at the highway speed limit. At just the same moment, a small, flat-bed truck was traveling in the oncoming traffic lane.

Jim knew there was definitely no space to squeeze between the white car and the oncoming flatbed truck.

Though a major accident would likely derail his application for a permit to stay in Poland, Jim had a sudden sense of peace. He thought, "I'm going to get in a wreck." In an attempt to minimize the damage, Jim swerved to avoid the white car.

"In the blink of an eye, my car was in front of that white car! I instantly knew in my spirit, it was a miracle I avoided that accident," Jim testifies.

Jim believes the Lord, once again, intervened on his behalf, for the at least one purpose: sustaining Jim's long-term ministry in

Poland. So when he got his landlord's termination email, he didn't panic. "I didn't fret as in the past. I knew it was God moving me to something new now. I believed there would be provision coming."

Jim spent a month looking for a new place online. Others even helped, but he couldn't find anything that would work. He continued praying for a solution. Then, one Sunday after the service, a woman from the congregation of Jim's church, called K5N, approached their pastor, ITMI's **Dr. Piotr Zaremba.**

What she had to say was incredible.

"Piotr, I am confused about something," she began, "I had a dream. In my dream, God came to me and said, 'Take Jim into your home.' Does that make any sense?"

As it turns out, having an English-speaker in their home, with his experience mentoring and discipling youth, is going to be an answer to prayer for this family, too. They offered him a room in their home, rent-free, in exchange for several regular English conversations with family members each month.

Having come to the conclusion that the Lord wants him to remain in Poland until he dies, Jim needs to save up a downpayment to purchase property, but couldn't do it while paying rent on his limited income. Now, just as he had been demonstrating the Lord's provision to Antoni and Amelia, this family has been an instrument in extending that same provision to Jim.

At the same time, double underlining the confirmation that Jim should stay in Poland so that he may continue pursuing redemptive relationships with the many youth in difficult situations and adults with painful pasts that the Lord has placed in his path. Those are lives that wouldn't be reached if not for those supporting Jim so that he can share what he has with the hurting and needy in Poland.

**name changed to protect privacy*

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

For Praise

1. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - Celebrating thirty years of ministry in Poland, made possible with your support!
2. South Sudan - Lazarus Yezinai - Gang members continue to attend workshops and listen to preaching of the Gospel.
3. India - Paul and Molly - New restrooms for the marginalized village, called "Fox people" or "Untouchables" dedicated and opened!
4. Poland - Leszek Wakula - Five people declared their intent to follow Jesus in baptism recently!
5. Poland - Bread of Life - Funds raised to bless families with sick children at two massive Christmas events last month.

For Prayer

1. India - David and Taru - Comfort as Taru grieves the loss of her mother.
2. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - Protection as the country experiences a rise of opposition to Christ and Biblical ways of living.
3. Zambia - Eugene Kalunga - Continued provision for the new school being constructed to provide discipleship in a remote village.



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