

HOW OUR PARTNERS DECLARED
THE GOSPEL AT CHRISTMAS

With Your Help

ITMI
Monthly

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*“See, I will create a new heavens and a new earth.” – Isaiah 65:17***SOUTH AFRICA**

“There’s no life in gangsterism - what you see on the outside is not what you get on the inside, I gained nothing out of it except a criminal record, pain and regrets.” Vuyo Anta pounded the side of his hand into his other open, flat hand for emphasis.

The bill of Vuyo’s dark cap shaded his serious eyes as they scanned the group of youth gathered in front of him, seated on a pale grassy slope. Some sprawled their legs out, and others sat leaning on their raised knees for support.

But all of them listened intently. Many were ex-gang members themselves, from disadvantaged and broken families and backgrounds. Some had recently experienced an attack from their former rival gang.

The South African youth were being taken on this outing because of the generosity of an ITMI supporter, whose \$6,000 contribution made it possible for ITMI’s **Charl van Wyk** and his project leaders to fund a myriad of outreaches to over 600 men, women and children in various countries during the recent advent season.

One of those project leaders, **Vuyo Nyabaza**, founded and is the pastor of Center of Hope Community Church near Cape Town, after being rescued from a life of crime and gangsterism. He shared that when this group of youth first heard about the outing to the public pool, they were “filled with joy.”



Ex-gang member encourages young men to follow the Lord.

The youth had arrived 45 minutes before their scheduled time to enjoy swimming in a local public pool. Before swimming, they each shared where he or she was spiritually, and the challenges that they were facing.

Many said their lives aren’t the same anymore. They are no longer part of gangsterism and now they can walk freely without fear. They said this was because of the investment made in their lives by Nyabaza.

After the youth shared, Vuyo Anta was introduced. Anta had served a 12 year sentence for a murder committed while part of a gang. Now he is being disciplined by Nyabaza.

Vuyo went on to warn the young men not to follow in his footsteps, advising them to surrender their lives to God and trust Him.

“Due to lack of awareness and education available to our young people, many of them become involved in self-destructive activities such as crime,” Pastor Nyabaza shared, “but through our initiatives and intervention, we are able to involve the youth in healthy and positive activities, which will keep them away from these negative influences and help them to become responsible young Godly leaders and role models to their peers.”

Nyabaza also plans to reach out to the parents of the rival gang, and asked for prayer support for that outreach.

The Christmastime outing was a moving success, demonstrating love and care for the marginalized while reinforcing the Biblical truth the youth have been given through this ministry.

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The generous gift provided for a handful of other outreaches like this one.

In South Africa, the Dream Girls, Soldiers for Christ, children in a registered institution of care (who were placed there by court orders), our Stone Hill early childhood development center children, the Stone Hill youth, people literally living in shacks under a bridge, children in a squatter camp and still others in another pre-school; and former gangsters, who are now following King Jesus – were all blessed by the faithful giving of this ITMI supporter.

Hope was also shared in Zimbabwe, a country and people ravaged by generations of godless politicians, by another of Charl's project leaders, **Cozmore**. Cozmore was able to reach out to the youth in a small neglected village with food and gifts. Leftovers of their barbecue went to the village chiefs who were having a formal meeting. They were thrilled to have food delivered. (It's hard to imagine that the youth didn't eat every morsel in sight, but there were leftovers.)



In the Congo, outreaches included a pre-school in very disheartening circumstances and an orphanage.

Those who give generously - like the supporters mentioned earlier in this story - understand. They understand that because of Jesus' advent into the world, "we are not hopeless. We are at the break of God's future. The Lord will come in power and in grace, to turn the hearts of children and to turn the hearts of the parents, to turn us from despair and anger and brutality and greed and

fear." (Walter Bruggemann, *Celebrating*

Abundance: Devotions for Advent)

Those who embrace this truth are free from the resignation, the despair, the selfishness, greed and anxiety that stem from the world's hopelessness. Through obedience, faith and generosity of those who have been freed and given generously, the hearts of *these* children have already been turned.

No more do they lay beneath the shadow of the world's hopelessness, condemned to a life of gangsterism, violence and regrets.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

HOW GOD INTERVENED TO AVERT DISASTER

The day of the Project Christmas Blessing event dawned with dark clouds hanging low over the grassy hills of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, promising to live up to the ominous weather predicted by the local meteorologists.

The government had even issued an announcement that schools must release students early, so they could traverse the dirt paths over the area's steeply graded hills before the heavy rain and lightning made it too dangerous.

The Smiths had watched as heavy rainwater poured from heaven for the previous two days and collected in the local river, causing it to swell to impassable heights.

But the event could not be rescheduled.

It was today or never, so the Smiths and their team turned to the One who calms the storm with their predicament.

This year's Project Christmas Blessing was going to be different than previous years by design.

Previously, the event, put on by ITMI's **Cherise and Kelly Smith** and their team would piggyback on the schools' already scheduled semester-end events.

But this year, Cherise and her daughter, Fifi Smith, had prayerfully made a change.

They'd worked it out so that there would be no other distractions. They'd organized it so that they would have ALL the children all to themselves.

The Smiths asked the Lord to hold off the rain until after the Zulu elementary school children had heard the Gospel message demonstrated and declared at the Project Christmas Blessing celebration scheduled for that afternoon. And that's just what He did!

Not only did the rain hold off long enough for the Project Christmas Blessing celebration to finish, He also allowed the swelling river to recede enough so that the Christmas gifts for each child could arrive at the school's sports field for the celebration!

After the event started, Fifi and Cherise were surprised when the teachers, who were scheduled to have a grading day, came out to join their students at the party!



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From the Director



Dear Team: Abundance Without Character

It is difficult to believe that anyone in America does not know what is happening, at least on some level in our nation's capital. With television, radio, newspapers, 200 cable TV channels, and lest we forget, social media, we have been deluged with the onslaught of political maneuvering going on in our two party system, and for what ends? To get what *they* want!

Many years ago, I was given this well-worn bit of experiential wisdom by an old-timer, "...don't discuss religion and politics..." I hope to follow that advice and to discuss neither in my musings this month.

I am reminded, however, of what some of the founders of our country had to say about this grand experiment they had been entrusted with. This new, fresh and basically never- tried-before creation of a country based on God's truth and principals.

Respected statesman, Patrick Henry once said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone, people of other faiths have been afforded freedom of worship here."

Other statesmen shared their basis of decision making in this statement, "We recognize no Sovereign but God, and no King but Jesus!" - John Adams and John Hancock (April 18, 1775).

Our third president said this very insightful truth, "Yes, we did produce a near-perfect republic. But will they keep it? Or will they, in the enjoyment of plenty, lose the memory of freedom? Material abundance without character is the path of destruction." - Thomas Jefferson

It seems that our forefathers voiced and displayed a belief system that is sorely lacking in our modern day politics. We are seeing the truth of Jefferson's statement, "...abundance *without* character is the path of destruction."

As bad as it is here in the USA, many other countries have been crushed, controlled and broken by multiple generations of this same type of departure from God's foundational truth. In Mark 2:17, we see Jesus remind the Pharisees He had come to minister, not to those "...that have no need of a physician, but to those that are sick, I came not to call the righteous but sinners." Of course we all need a physician. We all are sinners. We all need the life and truth Jesus brought to this planet that continually moans under the consequences of not submitting to the one and only King Jesus.

Because God has chosen you and me to be His tools to this planet - tools of truth and light, hope and love, compassion and peace - each day, each moment we are afforded an opportunity. We're given a chance to be in step with His ultimate plan.

Piotr Zaremba has been faithful for over 30 years in God's service. Over twenty of those years he faithfully served not only as a pastor and church planter, but he faithfully translated the words of Christ, the prophets, the whole of God's written communication to mankind, so that the 40 million plus Polish-speaking people could read in their heart language with clarity.

This month, Piotr comes to Canada and the US, bringing for the first time his newly translated study Bible with its thousands of notes and cross references that assists the reader to have a fuller understanding how God's Word is interwoven with the truth of Jesus' redemption plan from Genesis to Revelation.

As God uses you to help us, God uses us to help the Piotr Zarembas, the Smiths, the van Wyks, and all the other ITMI partners in their unique and specific countries, to share God's truth and give an answer to those that have forgotten what foundations our countries, our leaders and our own lives should be based on. May we all unite in God's army and allow Him to bring about His saving truth and hope to the nations.

In His Service,



P.S. If you haven't had Piotr speak to your home group or Sunday school class, or sat down with him over a cup of coffee, you might consider inviting him to come and share some of the richness he has experienced from translating and building this exceptional study Bible.

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Teachers and students heard - in their own language - that we can only find hope by placing faith in Jesus.

They were taught that each of us will spend eternity somewhere and that somewhere can be in the presence of Jesus should we choose to repent of our sins and follow Him exclusively.

“As missionaries of the gospel we strive to organize events such as this, throughout the year where the message of hope in Jesus is delivered in the Zulu language to the communities who would otherwise never step foot in a church to hear,” say the Smiths.

Project Christmas Blessing is one of the longest-standing outreaches that the Smiths have been able to use to share the Good News, but their team is focused on that all year long.

Kelly, Cherise and Fifi are free to focus on creating opportunities to present the Gospel in the Zulu language

because they have dedicated, faithful supporters providing the means for them to live and minister in South Africa, and helping shoulder the extra expenses of the Project Christmas Blessing outreach.

These supporters are ensuring with their sacrifice that the Gospel is being demonstrated and declared to Zulu people who otherwise might never have crossed paths with a believer and never heard that the hopelessness, fear and pain they are drowning in can be replaced with hope and peace in Jesus.



-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

LOOK
what your
generosity
did!

CHRISTMAS CATALOG

Giving Update



13 audio Bibles and **7 printed Bibles** can be purchased and distributed by our partners to people hungry for God's Word!



10 widows in South Sudan will be **discipled to provide for their families Biblically** and receive seed money to start a micro-business!



Piotr Zaremba can produce a **Bible course** that explains Biblical concepts that help Poles understand the truth about the Lord.



Paul and Molly's **water system** for their future school is about halfway funded, moving them closer to declaring the Good News to many families in India.



2 more children from the Muslim Modi Road slum **will get to learn about Jesus** at David and Taru's primary school in India.



Eugene Kalunga's village school has funds for **doors, windows**, and many **chairs and tables**, meaning village children are closer to being discipled through Christian education.

For Praise

1. India - Paul and Molly - 650 came to hear Paul preach the Gospel at Harvest Bible Chapel's holiday service!
2. Poland - Jim LaRose - the Lord's clear hand of protection during a recent serious health scare involving a brain aneurysm.
3. South Sudan - Lazarus Yezinai - elated that the purchase of a simple motorbike has increased his time for ministry and family.
4. South Africa - Onseepkans Mission - the Gospel declared to many through Christmas outreaches, including children from three different neighborhoods.

For Prayer

1. South Africa - Gerhard le Roux - Provision of rain to end a drought affecting the livelihood of many in Onseepkans.
2. Poland - Tomek and Piotr - Opportunities to meet with and mutually encourage many during visits to the States this month.
3. India - Paul and Molly - Continued protection for their family and their 19 rescued girls.
4. South Sudan - Lazarus Yezinai - Daughter, Lydia, and Rose, an orphan raised in their household, fighting malaria and typhoid.
5. India - David and Taru Kumar - Provision to finish constructing a prayer room above their home.



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A higher purpose.

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