

*"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust destroys and where
thieves do not break in and steal."*

Matthew 6:20

ITMI

Monthly

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intouchmission.org

The Gospel is advancing in ways we
NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE

SOUTH AFRICA

"The Kingdom of God is now advancing in ways we never thought possible; hope is being restored daily and none of this would've happened without your special donation, we truly appreciate the partnership," writes Pastor Vuyo of Gugulethu, outside CapeTown, South Africa.

Pastor Vuyo's church ministers in a tough area, known as "gangster land."

Last month, we helped our South African partner, Charl van Wyk, provide Vuyo's church with food parcels for impoverished families languishing without food due to stay-at-home orders.

The help was part of our Project Joseph initiative, driven by our Director, Steve Evers.

Steve understands the desperation created by the Coronavirus pandemic stay at home orders and quarantines around the world as a highlighter, illuminating people's internal hunger for hope in a new way.

Project Joseph aims to provide that hope by creating opportunities for godly, faithful believers to share the Gospel, an opportunity that is open - and even promoted and encouraged by governments - through meeting physical needs.

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PHOTO SOURCE: MARK PARRIS





Rural pastors being trained by Paul.



Pastors fill the room to be equipped and encouraged

INDIA

When ITMI's Paul faced shepherding his young church plant while stay-at-home orders were in place, he never dreamed this apparent set back would result in extended reach.

BUT IT HAS.

Online teaching only reaches about half of this body of believers shepherded by ITMI partner, **Paul**, whose last name we don't disclose for his security. The other half don't have access to the internet.

Putting the weekly teaching together and getting it uploaded from his village home with internet that would lose a race with a computer from 1981, hasn't been easy.

But in the midst of the dark cloud, the Lord has revealed not a silver lining, but a golden one.

Most months, Paul meets with a group of rural pastors and provides training and equipping, something most of them haven't had access to. These pastors sacrifice from their own meager budgets, their survival money, to pay for transport to come to Paul's church - some up to 90+ miles away - because they so greatly value the training.

Paul has been fielding an endless stream of communication from this group. They have been reaching out to him for wisdom as their own flocks panic and languish in hunger under the strictly enforced lockdown.

Being forced to minister via the internet while everyone was stuck at home gave Paul and his brother, Xavier, another idea.

They created a live, online training group for a whole new group of Indian pastors. These pastors are located all over India, far beyond Paul's normal ministry reach. They generally have larger congregations and wider influence. Though many of them do have more education than his group of rural pastors, they are excited to learn and grow in Paul's new group!

Paul and Molly are well-positioned to be a light during this time, and they're in place because you've supported them faithfully.

HOW IS ITMI DOING?

IN A WORD, GRATEFUL. As of late May none of our partners or staff is sick.

As our partners have mobilized to take advantage of new opportunities, our staff has been in high gear to provide the necessary support. We are thankful to have been able to do this while remaining safe and healthy.

Because of the size of donations given during the first quarter of 2020 - historically a lower quarter for ITMI - we've been able to accomplish more Kingdom work than in past first quarters!

The majority of that has gone right back into the field, primarily in the form of basic food and supplies for the extremely needy.

We've always held that if we are faithful in promoting and helping our partners, God will take care of our home office and the staff, so we continue to put our trust in Him. He may use a healthy economy to provide, but He can certainly sustain His people without its help.

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One of them, Andiswa, and her three daughters live in a small, one room shack. In response to the ministry of Vuyo's church and the Project Joseph food delivery, Andiswa turned from her entanglement in ancestral worship and became a follower of Jesus!

As the leadership from Vuyo's church delivered the food, they shared about God's love and stressed that even in dark times, He longs to carry us through if we would only allow Him.

People were very receptive to God's Word. Some said they can't wait to come to Vuyo's church. In fact, during the delivery team's debriefing, they concluded that many families were not at all opposed to the Gospel, and the visit and food opened their eyes to God's love and church.

Instead, the team observed there was "a deep hunger for God in their lives and this disaster has allowed us to see the need beyond the church four walls and to demonstrate God's love in action."

In the meantime, new believers were added to the church's messaging group for discipleship and to participate in the teachings the church is putting out.

The church will provide cell groups for follow up discipleship when gatherings are allowed again.

Vuyo and his church continue to extend the Gospel to different townships through once a month soup kitchens. They have committed to supply food parcels once a month to those without incomes.

The church's relationship with those families will continue to be strengthened and the Word of God continued to share in their homes.

Charl provided some of the Project Joseph investments from donors to **Cozmore**, a long-time ministry partner of Charl's who now ministers in Gwayi Village, Zimbabwe.

It didn't take much to knock the struggling communist Zimbabwean economy on its back. At the first whisper of the Coronavirus pandemic, the country's impoverished citizens began to suffer even more.

Zimbabweans were already dirt poor: years of government corruption, draught, injustice, inflation and communism has driven their economy into smithereens. Thirty-four percent of Zimbabwe's population lived in extreme poverty in 2019, according to The World Bank.

Because Cozmore's is known for his integrity and Biblical character and his ministry owns a vehicle - through the generosity of supporters - the Zimbabwean government began giving Cozmore US dollars to purchase and deliver food to the hungry.

When the Project Joseph funds came from Charl, things were already getting bad. Cozmore drove 270 miles and slept in line outside the bank to withdraw the funds to feed the suffering.

With so many in need, Cozmore first distributed food to

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IT'S NOT OVER, BUT THE LORD IS AT WORK.

ALTHOUGH STAY-AT-HOME RESTRICTIONS ARE easing around the US and we are moving toward re-opening, around the world, the Coronavirus pandemic is not over.

In South Africa, the country-wide postal service has collapsed and closed, and suffering is wide-spread. The first case of COVID-19 was just confirmed in the crowded informal settlement of Stone Hill, South Africa where our partners Mark and Cindy Parris and Charl and Sonja van Wyk minister.

In Uganda, there are reports of children being taken to the hospital, not because they have COVID-19, but because they are starving.

In Zambia, a Ministry of Community and Child Development officer says, “The virus has contributed to high prices of basic foods which has also affected the vulnerable people, they cannot meet basic needs because of how things have skyrocketed,” and restricted movement and closed borders affects the 65% of the population that relies on “informal sectors” for their income.

According to the United Nations, this is coming “at a time when the country is struggling with recent drought and flood disasters which has resulted in increased food insecurity in more than 58 districts for the past two seasons.”

In South Sudan, the price of food and basic supplies has also launched into the atmosphere, at the same time many families lost all or some of their incomes.

Those who depend on casual work - such as breaking stones, selling tea by the roadside or collecting empty water bottles - were at risk in a matter of days when the country began staying home as a result of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, local violence and armed clashes that have brought South Sudan to its knees and displaced over 4 million people over the past seven years, continues to displace families and now, subject them to the virus.

ITMI's Vicky Waraka was told that seven were killed in an attack on a small South Sudanese village outside the Juba area.

Last week, our South Sudanese partner, Lazarus Yezinai, alerted us of an armed confrontation that occurred about 60 miles from his home, lasted 10 days and claimed 5 lives.

We can see the Lord at work to bring good from evil and suffering.

Lazarus' impassioned comment was simply, “Please, your prayers are needed for South Sudan.”

These are just the things our partners know about - tip of the iceberg when it comes to the suffering that is occurring in this war-torn country.

But if we look closely, we can see the Lord at work to bring good from evil and suffering.

When a Juba resident left his home to visit someone in a village outside the city, little did he know that this visit would take a very surprising turn.

As he approached the settlement, the enraged villagers mistook him for one of the attackers who had killed seven of their number.

The visitor from Juba was captured and held in the village store to be executed later that night.

Then something unexpected happened. With the help of the son of the village chief, he escaped and hurried back to his home in Juba.

The morning after he returned, his wife flagged down her neighbor, Vicky Waraka. In tears, she related the unexpected events of her husband's venture to the village.

Vicky was on her way to pray with a small group of church members, but after her prayer meeting, Vicky visited her traumatized neighbors and shared the Gospel with the household.

As a result of Vicky's visit with her neighbors, many accepted the Lord and believed it was He who spared this man's life.

Though people are in great need for food and basic supplies - many of those who received Project Joseph food deliveries from Lazarus had already been without food several days - our partners know where the real hope for their desperate country lies.

“We focus on discipleship and evangelism,” Lazarus states.

Each delivery of food made was accompanied by the sharing of God's Word and praying for the family. Some recipients shared their hearts' sorrows and were blessed with Gospel-centered counseling and healing Biblical truths they could cling to.

Project Joseph's provision of supplies amplifies our partners' message. It puts a megaphone in their hands and underlines the validity of their claims who God is.

Your part in this initiative is - and continues to be - crucial.



“We focus on discipleship and evangelism,” Lazarus states.

Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

From the Director



DEAR TEAM: We've Begun Well. Here's an Example of Finishing Well

HIS NAME WAS FREDERICK ANTONY RAVI KUMAR Zacharias. We all knew him as Ravi Zacharias.

Ravi is now home with the one that he spent his adult life pointing people to. Ravi is now face to face with his Savior, Jesus Christ.

Ravi was sharing Jesus to the kind nurses that were helping him into the transport that would carry him home to finish out his days here on this earth.

Ravi left his mark on so many hearts and souls, both believers and unbelievers. He spoke with such gracious clarity and yet he pointedly directed people to the errors of this world's ways and its hell bound direction.

In 1963, at the age of 17 years old, Ravi laid recovering from a suicide attempt in a Delhi hospital when he read these words of Jesus, recorded in the Bible by the apostle John: “Because I live, you will also live.” Ravi was always grateful that God's Word came to him as he lay in that hospital, and he spent the next 57 years helping people know his Jesus.

A short portion from Ravi's official obituary reads, “Zacharias's great-great-great-grandmother shocked her Nambudiri family, the highest caste of the Hindu priesthood, by converting to Christianity. With conversion came a new surname, Zacharias, and a new path that started her descendants on a road to the Christian faith.”

Friedrich von Hugel once shared, “Behind every saint stands another saint.”

God graciously includes and uses each of us to stand behind another generation of Ravis, Billys, Spuregeons, Bathmans, and all the missionaries that we stand with at ITMI. God used Jacob's son Joseph to save his family and future generations from starvation by strategically placing a young foreign immigrant into the second most powerful position in all of Egypt.

God has given the church a pandemic that is worldwide. A pandemic that is being stirred up into a frenzy of fear by politicians and the godless media. God has given the church this panic driven state to cause His light to shine even brighter in the midst of the darkest storm.

Our need to feed...continues until Jesus returns. Our need to feed food...is just beginning. We are hearing many stories of how God is using Christian love, in the form of stomach-filling food, to pierce previously hard hearts and reveal the need for a Savior. We ask you to continue to help us help our brothers and sister who are serving on the frontlines, continue to accept the opportunity God has placed before us, to use, at this time, food to reach hearts and minds for Christ.

Ravi often said, “Beginning well is a momentary thing; finishing well is a lifelong thing.”

As long as God gives us such exceptional opportunities, and He gives us provision and strength, we will, with each of you, seek to finish well. May you be richly blessed as you humbly follow His leading.

In His Service,

PS. Your gifts are opening doors for the Gospel, and its changing lives. We've begun well. Let's continue in obedience, that we may finish strong!



ITMI's David Kumar shares a true Gospel tract.



ITMI's David Kumar prays with his neighbors.

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those over age 65. One recipient told Cozmore that her village is skeptical that she and other elderly villagers are witches because they are not dying. This elderly recipient was touched by the extra mile Cozmore went to demonstrate God's love. In simple faith, "she asked us to pray for her," says Cozmore, "and she wanted to receive Christ. We prayed with her and she gave her life to Christ."

Cozmore says those who need relief comment that they are not seeing people meeting their needs, "they are seeing God," and how "He never left us to die, He always provides right on time."

Cozmore's organization has also been able to teach and share Christ via social media, as suffering Zimbabweans reach out with the concerns of their hearts to which Jesus is the answer.

Project Joseph Impact: Stone Hill

Charl says this about the impact of the food donated for Stone Hill.

Aubrey is a young teenager in the Stone Hill squatter community, near Cape Town, South Africa. His father and mother play no part in his life.

For him and other Christians in his informal settlement, grabbing a bite from the fridge or picking up a Bible and diving into the scriptures, anytime they need strength, aren't always an easy option.

I almost asked Aubrey to not come to our Soldiers for Christ ministry. Must admit, I thought he was too young to understand our "meat of the Word" Bible studies.

Today, Aubrey and hundreds of other suffering people, young and old alike, are being served both spiritual and physical food through our Stone Hill ministry - because of you.

Through your gifts and prayers, our team has been serving Aubrey's squatter community, an area that has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown. ...The young teen in the black jacket now smiles widely, "All my life I just roamed around the squatter shacks. But now I am part of the Christian community helping with the feeding of our people and I have a better understanding of my Bible."

Investments made in sharing the Gospel, accompanied with demonstrations of God's love in action are always a good investment, regardless of the time it takes to see yields. In his devotional book examining the Gospel of Matthew, Bill Bathman wrote, "Treasure invested in Heaven...[is] guaranteed a fair and generous return, 'some 30, 60 and 100 fold.'" If all we'd done is faithfully declare the Good News to the suffering, that would be enough. It would still have been a solid investment of obedience to the Lord on our part. But we are already seeing the exciting results of people coming to newfound faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior through your participation in Project Joseph.



-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

FOR PRAISE

1. India - David and Taru Kumar - Provision of food gifts opens way to share the Gospel with neighbors.
2. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - New believers coming to faith in response to provision.
3. Romania - Casa Dorca - The children are responding well to weekly in-home church services during lockdown.
4. Poland - Bread of Life/Tomek - Bread of Life Kalisz has a new van, meaning more can be reached with the Gospel!
5. ITMI - God's provision allowing us to accomplish more kingdom work in the first quarter of 2020 than previous years' first quarters.

FOR PRAYER

1. India - Paul and Molly - Continued protection, provision and guidance through challenges and decisions.
2. Zimbabwe - Charl van Wyk - Provision for Cozmore and his ministry to the suffering in Zimbabwe.
3. Romania - Adi and Ema Ban - Provision of salaries for teachers at their preschool during school closures.
4. All - wisdom, guidance, integrity and clarity for leaders making weighty decisions around the world.



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