

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

ITMI
Monthly

1 JULY 2020

intouchmission.org

“I WAS COMPLETELY LOST, AND AT THE SAME TIME, SO EXCITED!”

POLAND

Andzia had never seen anything like what she was experiencing. She stood in the balcony of the large concert hall, tears spilling down her cheeks. Andzia’s best friend was part of the volunteer event staff, and she’d invited Andzia to be in the audience. Andzia had arrived at the concert too late to sit in the already full lower level.

Her seat was next to the sound booth. Andzia hoped the operator wasn’t noticing her overflow of emotion. She squeezed her eyes closed, trying to contain the droplets of moisture, but at the same time, she knew she needed them to come out. Scenes from her past flashed on the back of her eyelids like movie clips.

Andzia was raised in a Polish Catholic family she describes as having a “frivolous attitude toward tradition and church rules.” Growing up, she was heavily involved with social and cultural activities like music, theater and helping people with disabilities. As she reached her teenage years, she began searching.

“My adolescence was also a time of getting into inappropriate relationships,” Andzia says, “...I kept looking for authority outside of my home - in group guardians or my friends with whom I got involved romantically. College was a time of getting hurt...”

The painful scenes washed over her - all the times where a search had dead-

ended and all her misplaced hope was ripped away. In those moments, hope had seemed gone forever.

As the joyful music of the Gospel Joy concert surrounded her, touching her very core and giving rise to hope and past pain at the same time, questions began piling up in her head.

“I felt like a child,” Andzia recalls, “I was completely lost and at the same time so excited. I had never seen this many people gathering together because of God. I felt so lost with myself - I was thinking, why hadn’t I heard that the Lord is good and mighty, why hadn’t I seen this kind of joy, much greater than I had [ever]seen in relation to God and Jesus?”

At the end of the concert, one of the Gospel Joy leaders took the stage. What he said answered a few of her long-held questions. He told everyone in the crowded concert hall that Jesus has provided a solution for their sin problem.

The average Pole knows they have a sin problem. They go to confession, attend mass and strive to help others and the world - as Andzia had done - in order to atone for their shortcomings and failures to keep church regulations.

But few realize that Jesus’ saving work on the cross means their sins can be forgiven if they accept Him as their Lord and Savior. Many don’t know that Jesus pursues a loving relationship with them.

After an altar call from the stage, Andzia responded. “In my utter

helplessness over my life and its burden,” remembers Andzia, “I gave my life to Jesus, I wanted Him to take everything that was overwhelming me - the shame, and the feelings of uselessness in my family and professional life.”

After the concert, Andzia accepted an invitation to join one of Gospel Joy’s Word Zone groups.

“After the concert, my heart desired to serve God,” Andzia says, “I wanted to fight so that what I experienced would become my everyday life. Joy and peace. The feeling that in Jesus, I am

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New
believer,
Andzia,
baptized!



UNDETERRED: *Avoiding the Landmines of the Mission Field*

The team knew to expect dishonesty as they planned the outreach. But they were undeterred.

When the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions came to South Africa, it was the halted vital taxi service that impacted Zulu families living in KwaZulu Natal first.

“We don’t have a lot of people here who have lost their jobs because we don’t have a lot of people with jobs here,” explained ITMI’s **Kelly Smith**, who has lived and ministered with his family in the rural area for over a decade.

Parked taxis mean families who normally depend on them for the arduous task of getting to the nearest town to buy groceries, are without food. Under normal circumstances, getting to town for groceries involves traversing steep hills by foot in hopes of finding a taxi with an available seat. All that must be done with groceries in tow on the return trip.

Kelly and his wife, **Cherise**, are joined in ministry by their 25-year-old daughter and ITMI partner, **Fifi Smith**.

A few weeks ago Kelly, Cherise and Fifi worked with a team of believers from their church in Durban, South Africa to provide relief in Jesus’ name with parcels of groceries to about 215 Zulu homes in their area.

The parcels were accompanied by a flier that explained the gift as an act of provision from the Lord, specifically presented the Gospel, brought it to bear on the current pandemic and invited recipients to attend the local Zulu church plant.

After much prayer and thought about how best to distribute the resources they had available, the team had decided they would give a small amount to each household in the area, which is about 215 homes.

Later, through our **Project Joseph** initiative, additional resources came in allowing the parcels to be big enough to feed families for 20 days.

The outreach involved days of logistics, multiple trips to town and long hours of hard work from quite a few volunteers. Due to the number of deliveries, the hilly terrain and the spread out nature of the community, the deliveries themselves also took many people working hard for several exhausting days.

As the team visited homes to hand out parcels, they weren’t surprised to encounter recipients who, after expressing sincere thanks, attempted to position themselves to receive more than a fair share - even though that meant their neighbors might go without.

Kelly and Fifi estimated that about every third delivery someone would deceitfully try to convince the team that their household was bigger. They would point at a structure that wasn’t theirs to evidence their “larger” household and need for more.

In fact, the team knew to expect this dishonesty as they planned the outreach.

But they weren’t deterred.



The Smiths knew they’d need to rely on intense prayer each morning and the Holy Spirit’s guidance throughout the day as they made deliveries in preparation.

If the distribution team had fallen for false stories, they could have run out, leaving some families without while most of the rest of the community was cared for.

The result could have been divisive and disastrous, not to mention drag Christ’s name through the mud. In short, help would have turned to harm.

“Praise God,” Fifi said, “we know almost everyone in the community, so we could recognize what they needed.”

This is why we’re grateful for our national partners. They are uniquely equipped to provide relief in situations such as this. They know their communities better than anyone.

An outsider attempting to distribute aid in the community would not have known the families and their needs like Fifi, Cherise and Kelly do.

Instead of glorifying the Lord by caring for people, they might have gotten caught in or unintentionally created animosity among neighbors... in Jesus’ name!

The focus could easily have shifted from the Gospel to politics and accusations of injustice. But faithful, godly ITMI partners, like Fifi Smith and her parents, understand how to most effectively combine relief in service of glorifying the Lord with sharing His offer of redemption.



Fifi and Cherise Smith prepare food parcels for delivery.

PROJECT JOSEPH

Several in our circle test positive for COVID-19, food parcels lead to equipping local believers to share Jesus with Muslims, and Casa Dorca thanks an ITMI supporter for help with a money-saving solution.

A week or so after the training, Matthew's six-year-old son was hospitalized for seizures.

After sharing **Project Joseph** food parcels with groups comprised of their impoverished neighbors and also several pastors and evangelists who were in need, the pastors learned about the specialized training ITMI's **David Kumar** does in rural villages. They asked him to teach them how to share Jesus with Muslims. Shortly thereafter, David spent 5 days training them on how to build relationships with Muslims and share Jesus with them. One of the men who eagerly joined the training was an evangelist, Matthew Raj, who works mainly in rural areas outside their city. A week or so after the training, Matthew's six-year-old son, John, was hospitalized for seizures. Through this incident, Matthew shared the Gospel with 5 Muslims! At the time of publication, John remains in the hospital and his family is deeply grateful for the ongoing prayer support of God's people.

ZAMBIA

LAST MONTH, ITMI'S **Excellence Christian Academy** had to respond to government mandates to resume classes for grades 7,9 and 12 under strict protocols. They were given a very short period of time to meet the same requirements for opening as public institutions that received

help with purchasing supplies such as hand sanitizers, gloves, disinfectants, masks, soap and infrared digital thermometers. Our partners at ECA would be grateful for any help with these extra expenses the Lord might lead anyone to provide.

SOUTH SUDAN

ITMI PARTNER, **Lazarus Yezinai** has been including personal hygiene education in his repertoire of ways to reach people with the Gospel. He reports that most who learn about hand-washing and other preventative measures don't have access to running water. Instead, they have a bowl of water - usually used more than once. Lazarus can provide families with potentially life saving water jugs with spouts that deliver unused running water for about \$12.

ROMANIA

EARLIER THIS YEAR, AN ITMI supporter helped **Casa Dorca Children's Home** with funds for a greenhouse. **Ionel Lovescu**, who currently runs Casa Dorca, said, "We would like to thank our partners at In Touch Mission for providing us with a greenhouse this spring." Ionel says the 78-foot-long greenhouse will extend their growing season to March through November and could save around \$150 a month (rough estimate) in the cost of fresh vegetables to feed the children and staff.

COVID-19

ITMI'S **TIMOTHY KELLER** tested positive for COVID-19 while on furlough in Colorado. He was hospitalized a day later as oxygen levels dropped. Timothy has now been released and continues to recover. Meanwhile, two families in **Paul and Molly's** church had members test positive for the virus. Per protocol, police were posted to prevent them or their families from leaving their homes. Tragically, one of Paul's cousins succumbed to COVID-19, leaving behind a widow and two young children. North of there, one of the women involved with David and Taru's ministry in Modi Road was swept by officials into an empty hotel with 60 others who had been exposed to someone who tested positive last month. When Taru made contact with her, they had been there four days without food. Taru desperately wanted to bring them food herself, but was not allowed. Instead, she worked behind the scenes and found a way to get food to them. Eventually Taru's friend was allowed to return home and, praise God, seems to have avoided infection so far.

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loved, important and strong.”

At that time, the Word Zone group was meeting at a coffee shop. *(For long-time readers and supporters, one of the leaders of the group was Joanna Przybylo, also known as “Cookie”, whose story of coming to Christ through Gospel Joy’s ministry we shared years ago.)*

Andzia wanted to understand and know God’s Word, and she thought the Word Zone group seemed like a good place to start. She was right.

“Those were some great Tuesdays!” Andzia remembers of the Word Zone meetings, “It was a safe space to share what I was really thinking and feeling while reading the Bible.

“I also had a lot of fear - would I be able to persevere in God? I wasn’t sure, since I already tried so many times. After some time I understood why I failed before, it was because back then I didn’t know Jesus, I only had some feeble practices that were supposed to bring me close to God.”

Andzia’s friend, who had invited her to the concert, kept discipling her, reading the Bible with her and answering her questions. They talked about God, the Word Zone meetings, Andzia’s personal conversations with God about what was happening in her life, and about how lost she felt without Him.

“It was my friend who shared the

Gospel with me, it was her perseverance and willingness to answer all of my questions and lead me to understanding the Word on a deeper level. The Word Zone and testimonies of other people encouraged me to keep turning to God. Also through reading the Bible I understood that I can only be saved by Jesus, not by helping others, not by going to church or any other good things for the world and people.”

Overnight, Andzia stopped cursing, taking God’s name in vain and lying, “I stopped thinking only about the things that are pleasant and comfortable to me and I started thinking if what I’m doing makes sense to God and for my eternity with Him.”

Other growth, such as surrendering worries about small things and trusting Him to be in control took longer, and she still continues to grow in these areas.

A few months ago, Andzia was baptized. Because evangelicals make up just one half of 1% of Poland’s population, being baptized is often viewed as having joined a strange cult. Andzia was fearful about what her friends and family would say about her decision to be baptized. But her desire to be obedient was greater than her fear.

“It was an excellent decision! God gave me a conviction that He will bless me and He showed me that He is the King,

not other people. He gave me comfort during this time.”

Today Andzia is part of the new church, **Amazing Grace Church**, planted by ITMI’s **Andrew and Anna Gorski** in 2019. She’s also a wife and the mother of two young daughters.

Andzia says her family life “is where my relationship with God happens. God is deeply sanctifying me here. He’s leading me out of my selfishness and self-centeredness. He’s teaching me about serving another person, being sacrificial. He’s teaching me how important it is to invite Him to my marriage. I think God is using me now for His Kingdom through my prayer - I have a burden on my heart to pray for people and care for them spiritually. He’s also giving me the desire to share my life with Jesus with other moms who base their lives and motherhood on children and husbands and not on Jesus.”

With your support, our partners, **Andrew and Anna Gorski**, have built the thriving ministry of Gospel Joy Workshops and Evangelism that meets many Polish seekers where they are at and offers a discipleship process that gently and patiently guides them to Jesus. The Lord has used your sacrificial gifts to reconcile many like Andzia to Himself.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

FOR PRAISE

1. Poland - Gospel Joy - The Lord’s saving work in Andzia’s life and her continued growth in Christ.
2. South Sudan - Vicky Waraka - New believers saved through evangelistic outreaches in local public places.
3. Romania - Casa Dorca - ITMI’s help in providing a money-saving greenhouse where they can grow vegetables.
4. India - Kumars - Pastors that were helped with food asked for David’s training to share Jesus with Muslims.
5. ITMI nationals willing and undeterred from proclaiming the Gospel through multiple challenges.

FOR PRAYER

1. Zambia - Timothy Keller - Continued healing from COVID-19 after being discharged from the hospital.
2. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - Project leader, Pastor Vuyo, grieving the recent loss of his mother.
3. India - Paul and Molly - Comfort for families affected by COVID-19 and related losses.
4. India - David and Taru - Healing for the six-year-old son of an evangelist they helped recently, hospitalized for seizures.
5. Ivory Coast - Bread of Life - A flight home to Norway for Charles Dibble, currently stranded in Ivory Coast by the pandemic. Charles’ wife is due with their third child soon.



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A higher purpose.

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PO Box 7575, Tempe, AZ 85281 (480) 968-4100 (888) 918-4100
intouchmission@intouchmission.org | fb.com/intouchmission
@intouchmission | instagram.com/intouchmissioninternational

intouchmission.org