

*"...Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

*Matthew 5:16*

**ITMI**  
*Monthly*

**1 FEBRUARY 2021**

[intouchmission.org](http://intouchmission.org)

# PROJECT JOSEPH

*Sharing the Gospel through food in South Africa and Zambia*

## SOUTH AFRICA

**Trapped** between inflated prices and low income, people start to buy on credit and go into debt.

"I can't afford groceries this month," Onthalie\* mumbled, her eyes were glued to the tops of her shoes as she confessed her situation to a member of the le Roux family.

ITMI's **Gerhard and Elmane le Roux** live and minister from **Onseepkans Mission** with their 8 children. The mission is located outside the town of Onseepkans, near South Africa's northern border with Namibia, where Gerhard leads a small congregation of believers and ministers through hospitality programs and strategic outreaches to people of every social status in the remote community.

"Many people in the rural town of Onseepkans rely on government [retirement] grants. The old age grant, for example is about R1500," writes Gerhard le Roux. That's about \$90 USD. If there are children in the house, they might get an additional \$26 USD per month per child.

Onseepkans is a small farming community at the end of a 36-mile washboard dirt road surrounded by miles of rock-strewn barren desert. Some work for low wages at the large, commercial farms in the area, but most live on welfare alone, so that meager amount must provide

everything for the entire month.

To make matters worse, it is costly to travel the roughly 80 mile round trip to Kakamas, which is the closest town with larger retail stores and non-predatory prices, specially for the majority who do not have vehicles. This forces most locals to depend on the small local shops.

"These shops sell their goods at high prices because they know people are dependent on them," writes Gerhard, "Trapped between inflated prices and low income, people start to buy on credit and go into debt. In the beginning of each month, they must first pay for the previous month's groceries, plus added interest. The amount left is so small that they end up buying on credit again. The vicious cycle goes on month after month, year after year. Pile on the COVID-19 pandemic's inflation of basic goods, and now, more than ever, people are suffering."

The le Rouxs minister to Onthalie and a few other elderly widows by purchasing groceries for them when they travel to Kakamas for groceries.

To attend a wedding in the community, Onthalie had purchased the necessary clothing on the high-interest credit offered by a local shop. Now, as the debt was due, she was left without money for groceries.

"It moved her very deeply when we came and gave her a **Project Joseph** food parcel. She experienced how the Lord provided for her family's needs



**"THEY EXPERIENCED THE LORD'S LOVE TOWARDS THEM IN A NEW AND MEANINGFUL WAY."**

during a difficult time financially. She had tears in her eyes and said that she wanted to cry out of joy and thankfulness. We could share that the Lord loves each of us (continued on p.2)

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and looks after our needs. As we were leaving, she asked us to pray for her and to thank the Lord with her for His provision,” Gerhard reported.

“It was a great blessing to us when we were given the opportunity to participate in ITMI’s Project Joseph,” Gerhard continues, “We prayerfully asked the Lord to lead us and show us to whom we should provide with food parcels. We felt led to start by assisting 15 families and later increased it to 18 families.”

As the le Rouxs were preparing to leave for Kakamas to purchase Project Joseph food parcels, Tom\* approached Gerhard, wondering if they could buy groceries for him. Tom is a local man who visits Onseepkans Mission when he is nearby. He and his wife have befriended the le Roux family. When Gerhard agreed, Tom carefully calculated the cost of each item on the list he gave Gerhard, unsure he’d have enough to buy it all.

“As we drove off I experienced the Holy Spirit prompting me that we should buy the groceries for them through Project Joseph. At the store, while we got the groceries for different families, I again experienced that God wanted me to buy him more than the quantities Tom listed,” Gerhard testifies. When Tom came by the next morning to pick up his goods, the le Rouxs assembled his items on the large, homemade table in the center of the mission kitchen. As he watched, Tom began to look worried. There must have been some mistake. They’d gotten him more than he asked for and he wouldn’t have the money to pay for it all!

“I could see that he was worried that he would not be able to pay for all the groceries,” Gerhard recounts. “When I shared with him about Project Joseph and how much God loves him and his family, he sat quietly for a while. Then we could see tears in his eyes as his emotions surged up in him. When he started to thank us, we told him we are only the couriers. He must thank the Lord for His provision.”

Later that night, Elmane got a message from his wife. It

read, “My heart runs over today with joy for what you have come to bless us with. I do not know how to thank you and how to say thank you to the Master from above because He provided for our needs and because He, through Mr. le Roux and his wife, worked to bless us beyond our expectations with the food. I told my husband last night, “...There is nothing in our food cupboard, but I know the Lord is going to provide.” This afternoon when I got home, a great blessing was waiting for me. ... I will be forever grateful and today my faith only got stronger and stronger in the Lord.”

When two of the le Roux’s daughters went to deliver a food parcel to another lady, she had just come from the river, where she was fishing for small fish to eat. The minnows she caught - the family’s only source of food - were drying around the outside of her home. “She was in great need and was ashamed that we should see the condition of her food supply. The Lord provided for her by leading us to give her a food parcel without us knowing anything about her challenging circumstances,” they reported.

“Project Joseph really makes a big impact in these people’s lives,” the le Rouxs share, “They experienced the Lord’s love towards them in a new and meaningful way. We appreciate your prayers for these recipients of the Project Joseph food parcels. We thank the Lord for granting us this great opportunity in which we can bring Christ to the people in a practical way.” The le Rouxs ask that we pray that the Lord may continue to work in the lives of the recipients and open their eyes to His faithful love and care.

“Joseph was available so that God could work through him and use him to glorify His name during the difficult time of famine in Egypt,” reflects Gerhard, “Currently, we are facing the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic. May we be available like Joseph so that the Lord may use us to bring hope and peace to the people around us.”

*\*Name changed for privacy*

*Summer Kelley, Steve Evers*

# MEET PAUL

## SEVEN YEAR OLD PAUL HAD TO STOP ATTENDING SCHOOL TO HELP HIS FAMILY EAT



But thanks to **Excellence Christian Academy** and **Project Joseph**, he was able to return to class!

Paul normally attends classes at the Caleb Center for Children with Autism, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, he had to help his sister sell goods at the market to help his family eat.

Our partners at **Excellence**

**Christian Academy** under the leadership of our partner, **Eugene Kalunga**, regularly support Caleb Center by supplying them with needed supplies for the children.

“Raising a child in Zambia with a disability, speaking from experience has been very, very difficult,” says Nellie, whose son, Caleb, is autistic. “Especially where people do not

want to associate with you because they fear your disability is actually contagious.”

Children with disabilities and their families commonly face social disgrace and ostracization in Zambia. Myths about disability being a curse and contagious prevent social connections that would offer crucial support.

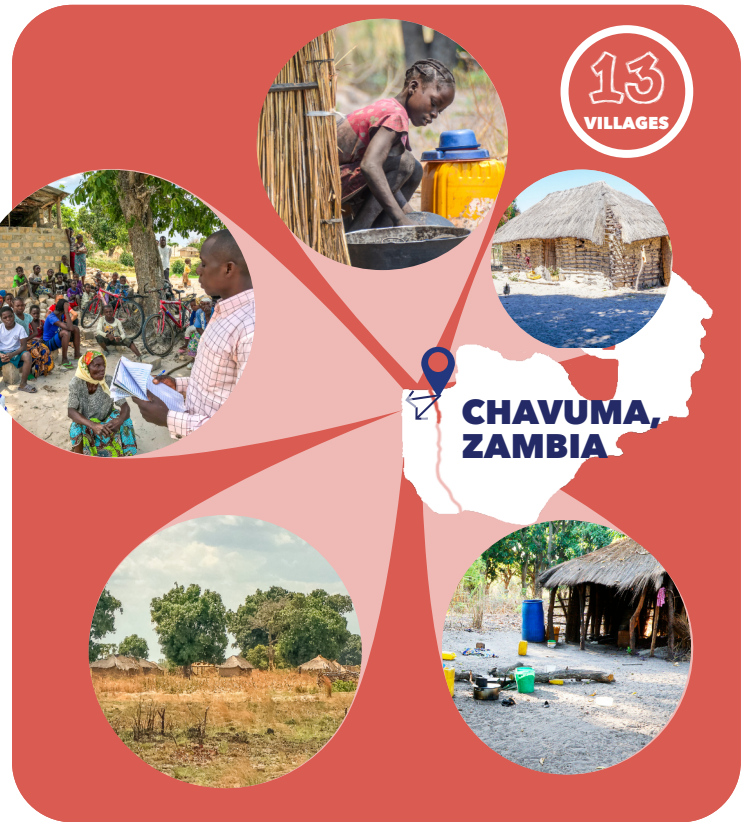
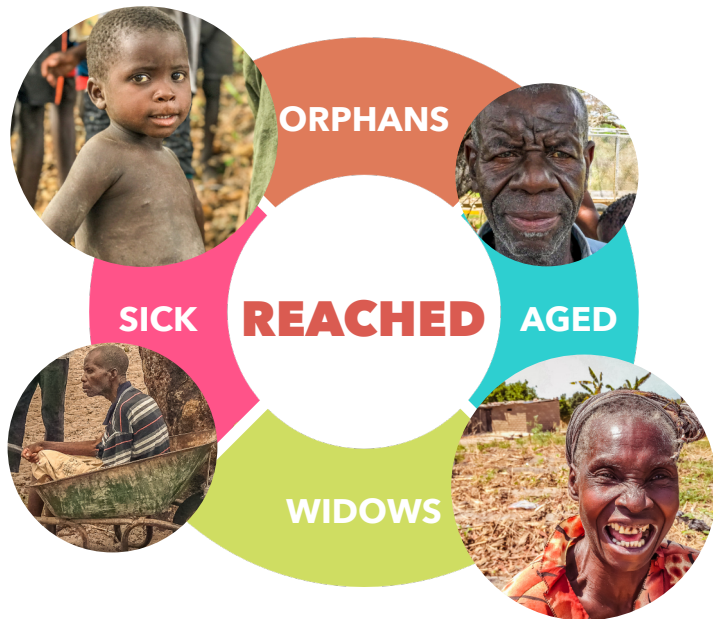
“Stigma did not just come from the community, but even...members of my own family wouldn’t accept my son. He was too weird for them.” Nellie said, “...When people came to visit it would be worse, they would even suggest locking up my son in my bedroom.”

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# Project Joseph:

## Lives Touched on the Zambezi Plains!



## ZAMBIA

THERE'S NOT MUCH TO SMILE about for the villagers living in isolated villages west of the Zambezi River near Chavuma, Zambia. Life here is hard. The villages are nothing but a collection of huts - no clinics, no schools, no water or electricity. Hauling water takes up most of their time and energy. Their diet is dangerously limited. But, through the work of our partners, **Johan and Lesley Leach** and those who have supported Project Joseph, these faces are graced with smiles of gratitude.

A short service of thanksgiving and sharing God's Word was given by local pastors who have been mentored by Johan's team, then each recipient received their food parcel. Many of the recipients spontaneously sang and danced, giving thanks to God and those He used to provide it! Johan says, "To God be the glory! With Christ as the Head of the Body, and we being members joined working in response to Christ's leading, together we made a huge difference in the lives of many."





## SOUTH SUDAN

He complained that the shop's customer should give him more money for hauling the goods to their vehicle.

The oversized burlap bag of supplies extended several feet in both directions from atop his head as he made his way through the South Sudanese shop. He and several other men were carrying supplies that had just been purchased from the shop to the customers' vehicle.

These men earn a living by carrying things from shops to customers' vehicles. His income had probably been devastated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when fewer people could afford to make purchases.

As he wove through the hand-constructed wooden tables that held bundles of merchandise, he complained that the shop's customer should give him more money for hauling the goods to their vehicle. The customer was actually a team of people, led by a man named Morris. Morris' team was purchasing supplies to take to a community that had recently experienced flooding. One of the team members heard the porter's complaint. She was a small-statured, South Sudanese woman with a kind face and smiling dark eyes. She was none other than ITMI's **Vicky Waraka**.

"Can I share God's Word with you?" Vicky queried. They agreed. The porters ended up confessing to drug addictions, mistreating their wives and other sins.

"They repented and were happy," Vicky reported. "We



The porter, after repenting and receiving the Gospel.

thank the Lord for saving them," Vicky says, "Our prayer is that they will be able to be faithful."

Vicky and her church recognized that South Sudanese women are facing incredible challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, so Vicky taught a two-day training to build them up in the Lord so they could stand firm, live holy lives and commit themselves to the Lord's work. Most of the women attending were from Vicky's church, but about 50 were from other churches. Many responded during the prayer time by seeking the Lord and His forgiveness in tears. They emerged eager to learn and more committed to the Lord.



Women listen eagerly as Vicky builds them up in the Lord so they can stand firm in the Lord during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ROMANIA

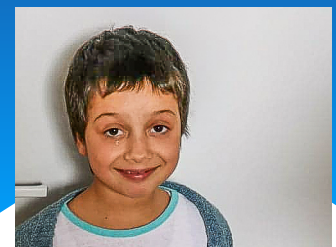
For them, 2020 was not just a difficult year. It was filled with the stuff nightmares are made of.

Eleven-year-old Andrei\* and his eight year-old-brother, Darius\* (pictured below), slowly climbed the seven steps to the double doored entrance of **Casa Dorca Children's Home** in the rural village of Prilipet, Romania. The cold December air urged them to take refuge inside, but fear and uncertainty caused them to hesitate. What they'd been through had deprived them of any assurance of safety. The one person in the world they thought would provide them with safety had physically abused them repeatedly.

They'd lived in a trailer with their father and seven other adults, but sometimes, the boys were alone for days. They dropped out of school so they could spend their days begging for food.

When the police began investigating their father and one of the other adults for physically abusing the boys, they were brought to Casa Dorca Children's Home, where they will be well-cared for and welcomed into the family-like atmosphere. They'll be loved and cared for by the staff.

*\*Names changed for privacy*





# From the Director



## DEAR TEAM: Don't hit unsubscribe!

My oldest son, Andy, and I had a good laugh at the beginning of last month when he sent me a meme that stated:

***"I'd like to cancel my subscription to 2021.***

***I've experienced the free 7-day trial and I'm not interested."***

So far, with elections results being certified, riots, and an inauguration that was not like any previous inaugurations, 2021 has been interesting to those of us who live in the USA.

Dan Rockwell, in his daily mentoring email called "Leadership Freak" shares a couple ideas that leaders should implement into their daily lives, and we as believers in Christ and heirs of the God who created all things and holds all things in the balance, should consider how we are now going to "...let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." *Phil 2:5*

Allow me to share a few statements from Dan's post:

"We miss opportunities for personal growth, acts of service and relationship development when we wait for the storms to pass..."

"Leadership is most relevant in turbulence."

"Turbulence is inevitable...Instability drags on...You may not solve everything, but you can solve something."

"Leadership reflects you. You're doomed to stagnation, frustration and excuse-making when you blame your actions [or life] on circumstances or people."

"2020 [2021] reminds control freaks that we don't control everything. You never flourish if all you do is wait for something to be over."

It's interesting to observe that most of our national partners have long needed to push back from stagnation, frustration and excuse-making when it comes to living and doing ministry in their cultures and environments in order to fulfill the daily mission they have been called to.

They were born into struggles and difficult times. It is their main staple on a daily basis. They have - or are learning to - rest in a God that is in control and able to overcome any and all challenges. They grow in trust, faith and hope as they just carry on with the lives that God has placed them in. Many times, they do this all with smiles and joyous laughter that encourages and lifts the heart of one very blessed mission director who is visiting and talking with them.

Speaking of those who have been an encouragement, ITMI honors **Dene Kegerreis** for many years of faithful ministry as a volunteer serving our partners. Dene went to be with the Lord last month. Our group of volunteers enjoyed Dene's sense of humor and warmth, and she will be missed.



God is not finished with each of us. We are all here because the task is not yet complete. People still need Jesus and His hope-growing promises.

Many years ago when dealing with a possessed woman in Uganda, I was exhausted both physically and mentally. I was done. I wanted to close up shop and move on to the things I enjoy doing. I wanted to "unsubscribe." I wanted to be...comfortable. But I clearly felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit to "...not give up...if you give up...they win..."

These brief words cleared my mind and revealed to me anew the truth that the enemy, both back then and even today, has *already lost*. We know the ending. We know the author. We know His promises are true. We will win if we don't get discouraged and despondent, because Jesus has already won the victory.

Will you re-double your efforts to "not quit", to "not let them win"? We need each other, as we obey and follow God's leading and His plan to "reach the nations." We love you all and pray for you often.

In His Service,



(continued from p.2)

It seems parents, bowing beneath the heavy weight of the financial burden, social stigma and lack of resources face overwhelming temptation to tap out. Sixteen-year-old Nala's mother left her with her grandmother because of Nala's disability. Nala's mother remarried and began a new life. Enoch's father, too, left after learning that his first-born son had a disability.

Mapaso's father began noticing differences in his son when Mapaso was about two years old. Unable to handle the challenge and social shame of having a child with a disability, he abandoned his wife and son.

But Caleb's mother didn't tap out. In 2016, Nellie started the Caleb Center for Children with Autism. Then, there were just 3 students. Now the center serves 25 families, offering in-home support and on-site education.

These families that face unthinkable difficult challenges, only exacerbated by the pandemic, were introduced to Jesus and his care through Project Joseph. In addition to sharing provision with the families of the Caleb Center, ECA also shared Jesus and food with inmates at a local women's prison where representatives from the school regularly visit. They also reached out and provided for families in Kabowa. Kabowa is the rural village where Eugene is constructing a second Christian School to bring Jesus and education to this area.

Project Joseph's simple mission is to share Jesus through the provision of the food so many impoverished families are struggling to obtain during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Together, through this initiative, we've brought hope, health and Jesus to thousands of hurting and hungry people. But there are still so many more opportunities. Many are still hungry. Many are still hopeless, and many still need to hear that there *is* Good News.

*Summer Kelley, Steve Evers*



Eugene Kalunga's wife, Audrey, (left) and Nellie Luluulu with the family of a Caleb Center student after delivering a Project Joseph food parcel.



A Caleb Center student with his family, thrilled with the Project Joseph provision.



Audrey shares the Word with Kabowa village families before they receive a food parcel.



Audrey shares a word of encouragement with Caleb Center founder, Nellie Luluulu.

## FOR PRAISE

1. South Sudan - V. Waraka - Salvation received by the porters Vicky encountered at the market!
2. South Africa - le Roux - The blessing of two rainy days already this year, much needed due to extreme drought.
3. Romania - Casa Dorca - Two brothers, new to the Casa Dorca family have a safe and loving place to belong.
4. Zambia - Eugene Kalunga - If not delayed by COVID-19 concerns, the new village school is scheduled to open on Feb. 1 (as of our date of publication)
5. All - Project Joseph - Lives touched and Jesus shared with many!

## FOR PRAYER

1. India - Kumars - David travels to train people in a rural area to share Jesus with their Muslim friends on Feb. 8.
2. Poland/India/South Africa - Multiple partners have asked for prayer regarding challenging visa issues that are complicated further by the pandemic.
3. South Africa - le Roux - COVID-19 has reached their area, which does not have hospitals or ambulance services.
4. USA - ITMI - Wisdom as we adapt and help our partners adapt to our new world.