

*So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.*

*I Corinthians 3:7-8*

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

## An Unusual Response to Generosity

*and what it tells us about the impact of your gifts.*

### INDIA

#### Encouraging Pastors and Reaching the Hurting

ITMI's **Paul** [last name undisclosed for security] recently held several in-person conferences with his Pastor's Fellowship groups.

This ministry was once mainly for local pastors, although some traveled for up to a day from places outside the city. During the Covid pandemic, it expanded to reach many pastors all over India when they were forced to have their meetings online by strict lockdowns.

The pastoral fellowship meetings, where Paul encourages and equips India's Christian leaders, are seen by these pastors as vital to their own well-being and ministry. Paul traveled to two different areas of India for the in-person conferences. One of those areas was a place called Bihar.

ITMI's **Steve Evers** was one of the conferences speakers, addressing the group remotely via Zoom. Another part of the conference was a **Project Joseph** outreach. ITMI's Project Joseph, started during the intense days of lockdown, aims to reach the hurting with the Gospel by meeting people's immediate need for food.

The crowds in Bihar were in disbelief that strangers would come to bring them food. An act of care and generosity was so shocking for them that one pastor had to open the food package and eat from it first to show them it was safe!

This is the harsh reality that many live with, and the hospitality of Jesus glows in such a context. Project Joseph outreaches are always accompanied by the sharing of the Gospel.

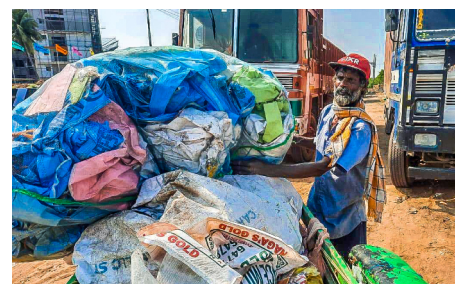
**An act of generosity was so shocking that one pastor had to open the food package and eat from it first to show them it was safe!**

Paul's team shared the following examples of some of the people who received Project Joseph food parcels.

#### Nazeer

Nazeer is a young man from a Muslim family who lives under a bridge in India.

His clothes and hat were limp and dirty. His beard was black as coal, interrupted by large patches of white. Somehow, he had managed,



Nazeer searches a dumpster.



Children lined up for Project Joseph food parcels in Bihar.



at least for that day, to keep his beard trimmed evenly around his chin.

Nazeer spends his days among overflowing dumpsters. He picks through the discarded and rotting refuse to find items of paper or

*(continued on p.6)*



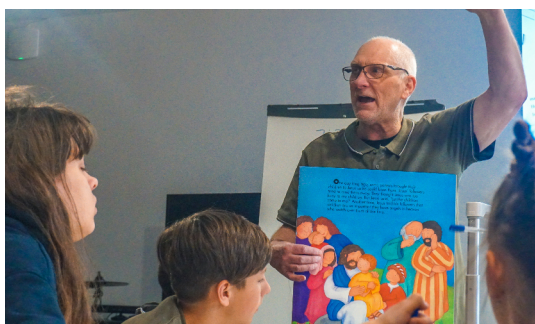
# How You Equipped our Partners to Embody Jesus' Protection and Loving Care for Those in Need



Orphans enjoy the lake near Marina and Lukasz' home.



ITMI's Jim LaRose teaches an English lesson for the children.



Jim discusses a Bible story with the Ukrainian orphans.



Jim turns learning an English phrase into an enjoyable time with a game.

## POLAND

It was 4am. ITMI's **Steve Evers** couldn't sleep. In a couple of hours, he would begin a 12-13 hour day of ministry in Poland, but he knew he wasn't going to fall asleep.

Moments from the past two days wouldn't quit haunting him. He'd arrived in Poland Sunday afternoon and been informed of an incident that happened at some point during the Sunday morning services held by K5N Church (pastored by ITMI's **Piotr Zaremba**). One of the group of orphans from Ukraine that was staying with one of the K5N families, an 8 or 9-year-old boy, had emotionally snapped and lost control of himself. The blonde youngster had kicked and head-butted two of the men of the church, leaving them bloody and bruised.

Since arriving in Poland, it was discovered that one of the Ukrainian caretakers who had brought the children to Poland and was staying with them had been abusing the children. That caretaker has been arrested, and Marina compassionately explained to the children that she, too, needs Jesus just like the rest of us.

The following day, when Steve was visiting Marina and Lukasz's home, ITMI's **Jim LaRose** was teaching the children an English lesson. The same broken boy had snapped again and this time was attempting to choke himself.

This broken boy's inability to control the hurt, pain and terror leaking out of him caused the other children to display faces filled with fear that they, too,

would soon be unable to suppress their feelings. Jim knew the lesson was over for now - they couldn't keep processing what he was teaching them.

A team of crisis psychiatric professionals were summoned. When they arrived, the largest man on the team was elected to restrain the boy and carry him to an ambulance. All the while, the boy fought and struggled to be left alone to harm himself.

Marina gathered the other children in an effort to refocus them back to the only One that can calm their fears and anxiety. She led them in a Monday afternoon time of praise and worship. Then looking into each child's eyes one at a time, she spoke with gentle passion into the life of every child, encouraging them and reminding them that they are loved by Jesus and that He is in control.

"After the praise and worship, God allowed me to stand silently and just hug a few of the tear stained children. I think God knew I needed it probably more than these precious children needed it," Steve reflected in an email to his men's Bible study group.

When they got to the hospital, the boy was not able to be admitted immediately for whatever reason. The official who was with him asked, "Would you like to have lunch at McDonald's? Have you ever eaten there?"

The boy responded that he had *been* to McDonald's but had not eaten there. He explained that every time the caretakers took the children there as a treat, he was denied a meal as a



punishment for poor behavior, and instead, given one french fry.

Later in the week, Steve and the team spent another day with the children, helping Jim with an English lesson and then taking all of the children for a special treat - lunch at McDonald's.

"The kids were THRILLED," Steve reported.

Jim organized the whole process impeccably, and made the process of ordering for 23 people at McDonald's go smoothly and everyone was enjoying their food in record time.

This story paints a stark picture of the reality that is unfolding in Eastern Europe. The refugees that are pouring into our partners' countries have intense physical needs, but many are living with trauma that can't go unaddressed. It also reveals the level of sacrifice that is being asked of our Polish brothers and sisters as they seek to honor Jesus by welcoming refugees into their homes, abandoning comfort and privacy so that they can pour out their lives and resources on behalf of strangers.

When we think of all of the possibilities for where these orphans could have ended up after fleeing their country, it is clear the Lord intentionally led them to Piotr, Marina and Lukasz, and K5N church. Though this assignment is no picnic, Piotr has discipled and prepared his people for this role.

## Protective Gear Saves a Life

Steve is joined in Poland by ITMI's Polish partner, [Johan Leach](#), and ITMI Board member, [Jon Dekkers](#), and his son and grandson, [Jonny](#) and [Van](#).

In early March, ITMI supporters helped Piotr Zaremba's church with



Steve, Johan, Leszek and Piotr enjoy Ukrainian B stew while visiting ITMI's Leszek Wakula in Lodz, Poland.



Steve and Lukasz, father of the family that is housing the orphans.



Steve, Leszek and Johan praying together.



One of the orphans girls enjoys lunch at McDonald's.



Steve helps Jim with an English lesson for the orphans.



funds to provide protective vests and helmets to those in Ukraine who were in harm's way. Piotr and others searched thoroughly, but could not find any to purchase, so they had vests made in Poznan. Steve writes, "We've already gotten a text back saying, '...thank you for the vest...a life was saved!'"

A Gospel of John and a New Testament will be put with each vest going forward, so they'll know the protection they are receiving came from the Lord. The vests are going to those putting their lives on the line to protect and serve in Ukraine. For example, local militia groups made up of fathers and grandfathers attempting to protect their families and other vulnerable citizens against Russian soldiers.

Steve and Johan made a midnight run to a small city in Poland to pick up boxes of food and medical supplies that would be taken to Ukraine. A whole church of about 50 people volunteer to build and pack these boxes. As the supplies were being loaded under dim yellow streetlights, the pastor of the church tried to give Steve and Johan the equivalent of \$50 USD for fuel. Instead, Steve gave them some money from **First Baptist Church of Tempe** and others who donated funds that could be used to meet needs and build God's Kingdom as Steve came across them during his travels.

"They tried not to take it," Steve wrote, "but I insisted that they use it to build more food and medical supplies boxes."

Steve continues, "You can't know how tight and heartfelt this pastor's embrace was...wow!"

Thanks to all of you who got involved in supporting our partners in Europe. Hurting refugees are being cared for and the light of Jesus is shining brightly during this dark hour.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers



The vests are going to local militia - Ukrainian fathers and grandfathers attempting to protect their families.



This is the vest that took a bullet and saved the life of its wearer! You can see the hole in the fabric, but the metal beneath is only dented.



A medical team wearing the protective vests.



Steve holding a box of food rations from his midnight run.



ITMI's Johan Leach wearing one of the protective vests.



The ITMI team prays with 3 believers from Piotr's church who are coordinating the creation and transport of the vests to the needy in Ukraine.



## POLAND

### A Lifestyle of Discipleship

Before Russia's February 28, 2022 invasion of Ukraine, ITMI's **Anna Wakula** attended a special weekend gathering designed to build up Christian Ukrainian women living in Poland.

Some of them had left Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, others fled eastern Ukraine, where Russian-backed separatists have been dropping bombs since 2014.

Others had left for economic reasons -lost property or job.

"I saw a lot of tears and emotion," Anna remembers, "I understood how difficult it is to leave your homeland."

Many gave their testimonies, and Anna was moved time and again by the things many of them had faced, and how God was good to them in the midst of these difficulties. Some met "deceivers" who promised them a good job in Poland but never delivered and others faced health issues.

"But in each case, they would experience God's care and protection - people sent by God to help them and meet their needs," Anna shares.

Anna's husband, **Leszek**, is the pastor of the only Baptist Church in Lodz, Poland. The foundational methodology of Anna and Leszek's ministry is a "lifestyle of discipleship". Both of them invest their lives in 5-7 others, whom they disciple.

"Discipleship is helping someone love Jesus more," Leszek said. He doesn't believe it is a complicated program, but it is a regular, slow process. "You do the same things week after week, sometimes, without much show of change."

But the guys in Leszek's group

describe this group and the spiritual growth they've experienced over the long-term as their oxygen. Over time, they've become capable of discipling others.

Eight years ago, there was no such groups like this, but now, 20% of the church is part of a discipleship group.

### How Piotr's Biblical Teaching is Helping Churches in Poland Be Faithful to Their Calling

During the Covid pandemic, the Lord expanded the reach of ITMI's Piotr Zaremba.

He was able to make his preaching and Biblical teaching available online to many who weren't located in Poznan, Poland, where he lives and shepherds his church.

He even had the opportunity to disciple and lead people to Christ via email and Zoom!

Several small groups of believers who were located in other cities gather and go through his teaching together.

The groups really appreciate Piotr's help as they study the Bible. In some cases, there may not be a pastor or church that they are able to be part of because Evangelicals are such a minority in Poland (less than half of 1%), that the teaching is like a lifeline for some of these groups and their leaders.

The leader of one such group wrote an email to Piotr, letting him know how helpful the Biblical teaching was, and how his group put into practice what they learned about the Holy Spirit as they were seeking to minister to Ukrainian refugees.

He wrote,

*"Thank you for the handouts [teaching material and worksheets] about the Holy Spirit. Today as we were finishing*



**Anna and Leszek Wakula**  
*Lodz, Poland*



**Piotr and Krystyna Zaremba**  
*Poznan, Poland*

*one of them, we spontaneously broke into prayer. Our church is currently housing two families who arrived from Ukraine, so we were praying together for their needs and also for the peace in the world. ... The church has become a warm home. People are bringing everything the refugees need, including washing machines, refrigerators and children's things. ... In the past two months I got so used to listening to your daily recordings that I'm beginning to miss them already. I also feel how much I have benefited from the last two months when I was working on the handouts [worksheets] from K5N.*



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plastic, which he can trade for coins.

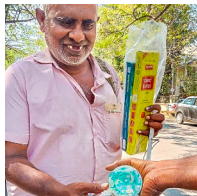
A co-worker of our partners in India, Paul and **Molly**, was distributing Project Joseph food parcels and sharing the Gospel as the Lord led him when he came upon Nazeer.

As he approached Nazeer to offer him the parcel of food, he saw Nazeer's glazed eyes were an unhealthy yellow and reflected the utter misery and hopelessness the young man lived with. The small gift of desperately needed food opened up the opportunity for this believer, discipled by Paul, to have a conversation with Nazeer.

Nazeer explained his personal situation. "I don't have hope to live in this world. My family does not accept me because of my sin," Nazeer told Paul's teammate, opening the door for sharing the Good News.

## Sekar

Sekar lives in a slum in India. In the slum, people mostly live in shanties made of any material they can



find leaned up against each other to keep it standing.

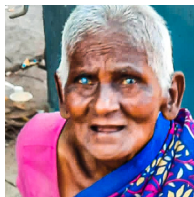
Living in one of these colonies is difficult enough. Everywhere filth and squalor overpower any effort to keep one's body and small living space comfortable or clean.

Shacks lean against one another in rows, offering protection only from a fraction of elements, but no privacy or safety.

Noticing Sekar's blindness, Paul's teammate offered him two food parcels. The blind man replied, "One is enough for me. Please give the other parcel to others." Paul's teammate was touched by his concern for others, and used this open door to share the Gospel with Sekar.

## Revethi

Revethi sat on the crumbling curb of some street or alley in India. Her family disowned her during the pandemic, and now she lives under a bridge.



A flattened cardboard box served as a cushion and barrier between her and the filthy street. Her white hair was cropped very short. Her eyes were glazed and yellow. Revethi is blind in one of her eyes.

Paul's disciples from his church bring her meals often. On this particular day, their small gift of a little food made tears well up in her eyes.

"Thank you that I could eat this day because of your help and care," she managed to say.

She had never heard of Christ or the enormous sacrifice He made that people might have the opportunity to be reconciled to His Father until Paul's team's outreach reached her and she learned about Jesus.

These open doors to plant Gospel seeds are provided by your gifts supporting our Project Joseph initiative. Your continued support allows for the watering and cultivating of these seeds, growing them into a fruitful harvest as the Lord sees fit.

*-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers*

## FOR PRAISE

1. Poland - Zaremba - Many Polish speakers growing in Christ through Piotr's Bible Study materials.
2. Zambia - Spring of Love/ECA - Thanks to ITMI supporters, brick-makers started work on the Spring of Love teacher on-site housing building mid-April!
3. Romania - Casa Dorca Children's Home - Home renovations in preparation for licensing inspection are moving forward, children making friends with Ukrainian refugees being housed in their village.
4. India - Paul and Molly - Many reached through Project Joseph outreaches!

## FOR PRAYER

1. Eastern Europe - Encouragement and strength to face the challenges and needs for ITMI partners and their teams.
2. South Africa - van Wyk - Stone Hill new believer Thuto, unjustly accused, will be in court this month (May).
3. Ukraine - Protection and wisdom for all that remain in Ukraine and anyone helping them.
4. India - Paul and Molly - For Revethi, Sekar, Naveer and those being reached by Paul and his team to put their faith in Jesus Christ, and for the millions in India who need to hear the Gospel.



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



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