

*For you equipped me with strength for the battle;
you made those who rise against me sink under me.*

Psalm 18:39

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5 Things You Should Know About the Gwayi River Mission Base in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE

“I’m looking for Cozmore,” the visitor said loudly as he wove through the crowd of widows.

The widows in Gwayi River were waiting to receive a food package, which they knew was provided through the proceeds of the Gwayi Mission Base’s mill and other projects.

Cozmore Fungulani was busy speaking a word of encouragement to a recipient as he handed her the food package. Cozmore functions as a project leader alongside ITMI’s **Charl van Wyk**, for the Gwayi River Mission Base project reaching villagers in Zimbabwe with the Gospel.

Looking up, Cozmore identified himself. “That’s me,” he said.

“Oh, uh, sorry,” he stammered, a little bewildered by the Zimbabwean missionary, “I got it all wrong.”

Cozmore waited for him to explain, but he was pretty sure he knew what was coming.

“I didn’t know you are native,” the man continued, “We have support to help, but not through you. If you want to excel, go to local politics.”

He turned on his heel and left right away.



Cozmore distributes food to Gwayi River widows.

“The widows who were standing around didn’t fully understand what he was saying,” Cozmore explained later, “but I knew. Several times I’ve heard even people in the church say, ‘A black person can’t be a missionary.’”

Cozmore reflected further on the encounter,

“We stand for the call regardless of the obstacles we face. In my ministry life, I have been supported and trusted by all races, and I don’t get offended anymore. I feel sorry for those who still have issues with color or tribe.”

Charl recently wrote, “I witnessed a policeman threatening Cozmore with a beating, come elections.”

There are four tribes in the area:

Ndebele, Shona, Tonga and Nambya.

Despite the attitude of some, by supporting churches and involving the community, the mission base is seeing the tribes of the area grow in unity.

Cozmore writes,

Keep praying for us. We have adversaries as a ministry, politicians are not that happy with us because we don’t advertise their political party in our services. We stand strong as a Christian organization. We don’t choose people based on politics, tribe, race, or religion. As they campaign, they try all angles to manipulate us, but our Gospel goals and vision never change.

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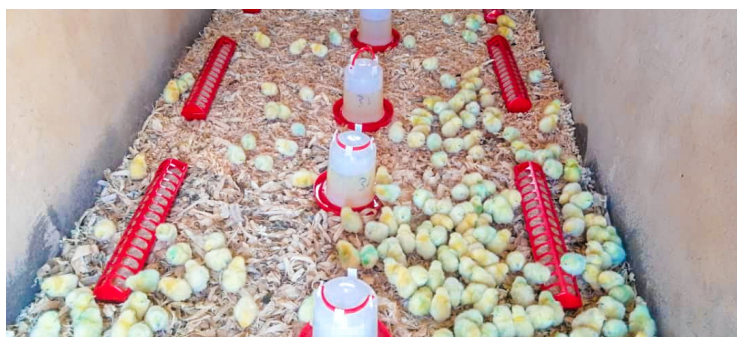
Every Thursday, a group of young widows volunteers at the mission. On this day, they were working to plant grass.



Cozmore Fungulani with the Gwayi River Mission Base grain mill that helps provide for widows.



Cozmore with youth from Gwayi River, Zimbabwe after volunteering at Cozmore's Mission base in exchange for their own copy of the Bible.



Gwayi River Mission's chicken project was funded by the generosity of ITMI donors.

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Our ministry appreciates ITMI so much and we are so thankful to have partners like you. May God keep blessing you [which causes blessings to] flow to many for the Kingdom!

1. Gwayi River Mission's water is crucial to many in the area.

About 25 households make use of the clean, safe water that is pumped from the borehole on the ITMI supported mission base by a solar pump.

The borehole and the watering system were made possible by the gifts of ITMI supporters.

For many of the people in the area, the availability of the public tap outside the mission fence means their trek to collect water was cut from 3 miles to 1 mile.

Some of them have demonstrated their gratitude by taking the initiative to clean the area near the tap outside the property.

But, the solar pump struggles to keep the tanks full, especially on overcast days, and Cozmore has been praying for a generator to support the solar pump on cloudy days.

2. The Mission serves the community with counseling, youth programs and support of the local church's activities.

Cozmore has developed a good relationship with the secondary school in the village.

The teachers openly communicate needs, and Cozmore follows up with those families to see how he can serve them in a godly manner.

Many young people come to the mission base for Gospel-centered counseling.

Every second week, there is an inter-church youth group that meets on the base. Through that program, Cozmore seeks to meet the spiritual, physical, and social needs of those struggling in the community.

Sometimes this is done through local churches. The mission will direct resources, if they're available, to help churches run seminars, or help fund the youth camps, couples' meetings or church gatherings.

Groups of youth - mostly orphans or children who live in terrible home conditions - also come to help keep the mission base running and complete projects. They are rewarded with points, which they exchange for food or a Bible.

3. The mission's vegetable garden is an important part of its ministry.

The vegetable garden is an incredibly important piece of the mission's outreach.

It will make it possible for the mission to hold regular food-based outreaches, like the **Project Joseph**

outreaches that ITMI has found so effective in reaching people with the Good News.

Growing the vegetables with the help of volunteers is a cost-efficient way to continue reaching people with food and the Gospel.

It also creates the opportunity for groups to work together toward the common goal of the provision of vegetables for their own families and others.

The mission has an immediate need for a booster pump so the garden can be irrigated more efficiently. Cozmore can purchase a booster pump for \$311 USD.

4. Mission volunteers work on a point system.

Volunteers at the mission earn points, which they can exchange for food parcels or a Bible.

The mission has been blessed with Bibles through ITMI supporters' gifts to Charl's Bibles, Books and Bicycles fund.

The recipients value the Bibles highly, because they earned them.

5. Zimbabwe is a financially difficult mission field.

Zimbabwe's citizens are extremely poor. There is little to no work, and people must live off the land, usually as subsistence farmers.

For a mission like Cozmore's, the legitimate needs of struggling Zimbabweans abound.

Cozmore has to cover the mission's own expenses as well, and there is precious little to do it with.

The mission owns vehicle, which it depends heavily on for its projects and outreaches.

The mission hasn't been able to cover the \$665 for the license and insurance that was due this year, so Cozmore had to park the vehicle, and do any outreaches on foot, instead. Recently, with funds provided by ITMI supporters, we were able to provide Cozmore and

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ENDANGERED!

"Young Girls are Not Safe at All"



SOUTH AFRICA

Iminathi* was not yet 9 when it happened.

She was violated physically by one of the men herding cows in her rural community of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.

The following Sunday, when the community missionaries, the Smith family, came to give her a ride to Entabeni Church, as they often did, she could barely bring herself to get in the vehicle. She kept her eyes on the grass and dirt beneath her feet as much as possible.

Eventually, Iminathi and her mother, Zandile*, stopped attending church.

Zandile loved to laugh and make jokes, sharing her beautiful smile with everyone around her. She seemed to have true faith.

But after her daughter's traumatic encounter, she couldn't understand why something so horrible could happen to her daughter, and the temptation to see the witch doctor was too much.

Mother and daughter avoided the Smith family and everyone from the church, assuming they would only be judgmental.

"Sadly, rape is such a "normal" sin in my community. It happens a lot.

**Name changed for privacy*

Young girls are not safe at all," writes ITMI's **Fifi Smith**, a Zulu young woman in her twenties.

Fifi grew up in the Zulu community of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, a cluster of three villages. In her teens, ITMI's **Kelly and Cherise Smith** adopted Fifi and her sisters.

Now, Fifi serves the Lord as an ITMI partner, called to reach her people in KwaZulu Natal with the Gospel message.

One of the ways she ministers to the community is by lovingly hauling and delivering water from the distant community water taps, particularly for the elderly and widowed.

It is a daily struggle for the elderly, single women of the community to haul the heavy buckets up the punishingly steep hills. Using contaminated water may be closer but it is costly in other ways.

"Since I was born, I have had issues with my skin and digesting food," Fifi explains, "Before my parents adopted me and my sisters, they found us in such an unhealthy environment. From using dirty water to bathe and drink to eating food that is not healthy. We ate mostly starch food since it was very cheap food in South Africa. Going to bed on an empty stomach was normal to us. But because of God's grace, I'm where I am because of Him. I am improving with my skin, and I can eat without feeling so sick. Even

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though I am gluten-free and have certain foods that I can't eat, I am healthy. I can only thank the Lord Jesus Christ. Serving Him on the field is one of my biggest blessings.”

The government promised to deliver water, but it had been two months since a water delivery truck made it out to the rural village outside Durban, South Africa.

A family friend of the Smiths from Durban has been blessing people with 5L bottles of water. He brings them to the Smith's Farm, and then Fifi delivers them.

It was a humid summer day. Fifi was delivering the water bottles when she ran into Zandile. She looked quite different than she had when she was faithfully attending Entabeni Church.

Now the chicken feathers and raw meat she wore on her head proclaimed her new faith in the power of her dead ancestors to protect her from harm.

Immediately, Fifi pulled the truck she was driving to the side of the hilly dirt road. She hopped out and hugged Zandile, enthusiastically asking how she was doing.

“I wanted to show Christ as much as I can,” Fifi later shared, “I wanted her to know that there is forgiveness in Christ, and we can be cleansed. She can be restored. ...But reading from the book of Mark, seeing Jesus healing and having so much compassion for people, that's what I want to show to my Zulu people, that Jesus is the only solution. Please be praying for me, that I speak the truth in love and show compassion.”

Many young girls in this area find themselves pregnant at young ages - whether through their own doing or forcibly - causing them to drop out of school.

Income is difficult for most families in the remote villages of KwaZulu Natal. If they can find work in town, for most, the meager paychecks

barely cover the cost of daily transportation to town and back.

Once a week, Cherise offers young girls in community the opportunity to earn a little bit of money by hand-crafting jewelry made of beads from a local plant.

ITMI also helped Fifi purchase some sewing machines so she could teach young ladies to sew.

They are still in danger, but earning income - even the small amount they can make by selling the jewelry and sewn goods - builds up their security and their ability to see themselves as God sees them - valuable and capable of contributing to His world.

But that's not all that happens during the weekly crafting sessions!

Cherise or the local pastor's wife leads the group in a Bible study each week. This has been an effective way to lead young women in KwaZulu Natal toward putting their faith in Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior.

At the beginning of 2022, Fifi's phone rang late one night. It was her friend, a young lady named Thandeka*. Someone had set fire to the home where Thandeka lived with her mother and baby daughter.

When she got the call, Fifi wasn't in KwaZulu Natal, where Thandeka's family resides. Fifi immediately called her mother, Cherise, who was. The family escaped safely, but all of their possessions were burned.

After the fire, Entabeni Church, Fifi's church where Thandeka has been faithful to attend since 2015, rallied around the family, helping them with food and clothes.

Thandeka finished her senior year of high school in 2013. She was forced to take care of her mom since her father died when she was young. Her older brother took his own life a few years ago. Thandeka also had a niece who recently took her life.

Thandeka has faced a lot of trauma for her young age. But Fifi says her faith in Jesus has not wavered.



Fifi (left) and Thandeka with a few of the kids.

“Because of her faith in Jesus Christ, she has been doing well, even in all she has been through, she hasn't left her faith in God. She has been such an encouragement to everyone,” Fifi says.

Before the fire, Thandeka started a *creche*, or daycare center, in one of the villages in KwaZulu Natal.

Most of these parents who bring their children to Thandeka to look after during the day are still teenagers and can't or don't send their children with lunch. But she is required to provide one, so she has appealed to the government for help.

When they can, the government provides Thandeka the equivalent of approximately \$150 USD monthly so she can provide lunch for the children in her care. But this has not been reliable.

When the government money doesn't come in, she has to close the center. When she is open, she allows Fifi to visit and teach the Bible to the little ones she watches.

When Thandeka started the *creche*, she had to take some classes to be able to open it. She finished the first required certificate, but not the second certificate. Now, that certificate is coming due. Thandeka has to take weekend classes for about nine months, but she can continue working while she earns the certificate. If Thandeka doesn't complete the classes, Fifi will lose this opportunity to impact young minds and hearts with Biblical teaching.

Fifi is praying for and has let us

From the Director



DEAR TEAM: How Biblical Logic Helped Solve One South African Boy's Hunger Problem

War is devastating. War destroys almost everything in its path. War is not God's original plan. War is the ugly reality that God has allowed through history to help wake humans to their inability to manage themselves and their need for a Savior and a Lord.

The enemy loves war and all the "...kill[ing], steal[ing], and destroy[ing]...." God is greater than any mischief and carnage that the world, the flesh, and the enemy can create.

We see God using the Ukrainian-Russia conflict to wake up and remind people that He is God and they need not depend on the comforts and controls in this life.

We, too, are wise if we continually remember this unyielding Biblical truth about life on this planet.

Melissa Durr has written about her 5-year-old granddaughter, Charli, sitting alone on her new teeter-totter. With a very sad face, Charli said, "I can teeter...but I can't totter."

This world may be able to live with out God, but they will never LIVE without Him. Humanity desperately needs God's love, mercy and truth in their lives, or war on some level breaks out and kills, steals, and destroys.

Sometimes we need the difficulties of life to cause us to experience God's goodness and truth in ways that are not intuitive to us.

Allow me to share a short example of this via a story that ITMI's **Charl van Wyk** recently shared.

"I'm now teaching the Soldiers for Christ young men [from the **Stone Hill** settlement] Biblical money management, including tithing and how blessing others is of primary importance in our walk with the Lord – you are aware that these young men have been brought up surrounded by a world of mismanagement of all resources - a world of taking and never giving.

They've been perplexed, then concerned, and now reporting back on how they are blessing others.

Another example: one of the 'soldiers' asked me for money for food. I questioned him regarding this need and found out that he was hungry due to his own laziness, incompetence, and lack of resourcefulness.

They get fed at school, but he didn't want to stand in the long queue.

We also feed the children in the squatter camp every day, and his grandmother and siblings sit around watching TV– I explained that I wouldn't feed him because his siblings could stand in our ministry feeding queue and keep food for him when he arrived home from school. He could also join the queue at school.

Two weeks later he was the first to run up to my car when I arrived in the township, with a big smile on his face; he had access to food and appeared very happy.

All he needed was someone to point out his illogical thinking, laziness, entitlement mentality and lack of time management - and how his hunger was a result of these issues.

God's truth is our only hope. It is the lost world's only hope. It is not always easy, but God knows what is best for us and His ways are always better than ours.

Thank you for helping us help the nationals who do the frontline ministry among the lost and needy. We couldn't do it without you.

In His Service,

(continued from p.1)

the mission with the fee so he could use the vehicle for outreaches again.

Though the mission's resources are meager, with hard work and compassion, Cozmore and his wife, Laizah, are demonstrating and declaring the Gospel in Zimbabwe. The mission could greatly benefit from a few supporters who have a heart for the poor and suffering and want to invest in sharing Jesus to come alongside them to bring the Gospel to Gwayi River.

He could really use some monthly supporters that would commit to providing any dollar amount each month.

This would help stabilize his ministry and enable him to plan to meet expenses while also serving and helping those in need.

Cozmore and Charl are also praying for the provision of a few one-time expenses - investments in the mission's ability to conduct ongoing outreaches:

- A booster pump to water the plants more efficiently and prevent losing the plants, a crucial resource for the mission's outreaches, in the hot Zimbabwe sun. (\$311 USD)
- A generator to supplement the solar-powered water system on cloudy days. (\$1430 USD)
- License fees and insurance for the mission vehicle, allowing Cozmore to reach further with the Gospel. (\$665 USD)

Cozmore can make use of your partnership in any amount, and he



An elderly widow receives a food parcel.

will stretch them as far as they can go, investing them in the mission or helping the destitute in Jesus' name. If you're feeling led to join this mission, gifts of any size and frequency will make a big impact.*

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

**Any funds received over the stated amount will be used for other Cozmore/Zimbabwe ministry opportunities.*

(continued from p.4) know of this need for \$1880 to help Thandeka complete her second certificate and maintain her position of influence in the community.

This will not only help Fifi preserve her opportunity to mold and shape young minds with Biblical teaching,

but it will keep a believer employed, providing income with which she can continue to be an agent for the Kingdom of God in her own family and the community.

This help will also demonstrate to this hurting family - a family that made a decision to trust the Lord in situations

where many Zulus would struggle with the temptation to return to the witch doctor - that the Lord is worthy of their trust and allegiance. More than that, it will also be a testimony to His faithfulness to the entire community.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

FOR PRAISE

1. South Africa - van Wyk - Opportunity to encourage and support believers in the DRC later this month.
2. South Africa - Smiths - Opportunities to reach, serve and help the Zulu community with the Gospel.
3. Zimbabwe - van Wyk - Cozmore's faithfulness to demonstrate and declare the Good News.
4. Zambia - ECA/Spring of Love - Construction of onsite teacher housing progressing.

FOR PRAYER

1. Zimbabwe - van Wyk - Provision for the important outreaches at Gwayi River Mission Base.
2. India - Paul and Molly - Wisdom as they prepare for pastors conference later this month and an encouraging time of equipping for those who attend.
3. South Africa - Smiths - Provision for Thandeka to meet the requirements to keep her creche open.
4. Ukraine - Continued provision for the acute needs of both those in Ukraine and those who have left Ukraine.
5. USA - Wisdom and clear direction on how to effectively fulfill God's command to reach the nations.



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