

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!'

Psalm 46:6,9-10

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Sin Hurts and Jesus Cares: Examples from Around the World

IT HAS NEVER BEEN SO evident as it was last month that sin hurts people. It happens in our homes when a sharp word escapes frustrated lips or when our emotional baggage seeps through our carefully crafted exteriors of “self-control” and causes us to hurt someone we love. It happens in our workplaces, schools, and public arenas: one person’s sin wounds or traumatizes another, who injures another, and the pain pays itself forward.

SOUTH SUDAN

In South Sudan, unspeakable suffering has ripped through every life in the country for decades. Every month, our partners in South Sudan send us heart-wrenching stories of lives wrung with traumatic catastrophe after catastrophe.

Mary was orphaned when she was 10. Her siblings could go to school, but because of a disability, she could not. Now in her twenties, she recently fell and broke her arm. Her suffering has been prolonged unreasonably with a homemade splint instead of proper treatment. The pain makes it difficult for Mary to sleep at night.



South Sudanese youth sleep in the streets, often they have no one who cares about them or for them.

Years ago, a South Sudanese village was attacked by another tribe. The attackers did atrocious things to their victims. Tremendous suffering resulted from this sin. As one young man escaped, a bomb landed behind him. It disseminated a fellow villager just steps behind him.

Years of instability in the region has so degenerated daily life that families can scarcely stay together. So many are displaced from their homes - 2 million have fled the country and another 2.2 million are internally displaced. Youth roam the streets, often never having had anyone who really cared about them or taught them how to be human beings. Alone in



Mary struggles to heal from a broken arm.

the world, they form alliances with others like them, terrorizing citizens and committing violent crimes - sometimes to meet their basic needs and other times, just because it's the only way of life they know.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the weight of sin means it’s shameful not to pursue an upstanding status as a devout Muslim. You avoid shame by following the prescribed actions and behaviors. Non-Muslims are shamed and cast out. Violence, neglect, and abuse are justified through blaming the victim for their inability to march to the beat of societal drums. Not long ago, a

(continued on p.2)

(continued from p.1)



A Pakistani slave makes bricks 7 days a week.



Six-year-old Ruman lives with his neglectful father in an Indian slum.

Muslim accused a believer of blasphemy against the Quran and Mohammed. He called a mob of Muslims to burn and destroy the Christians' churches and homes. The victims are still sleeping in fields. In less extreme examples, Christians in Pakistan struggle constantly for income, and for various reasons, some end up enslaved. These unfortunate Pakistanis live in fear and must do backbreaking work seven days a week. They will never earn enough to live, much less get out of debt and slavery.

INDIA

In India, countless injustices are the order of the day, every day. Hoards of families with nowhere to live

squat in shanty towns and endure shame, rejection, and cruelty at the hands of others. Whether because they are Muslim, Christian, or some other culturally unacceptable label, they are relegated to the lower castes, denied human rights, and eke out a harsh and difficult life, often in slums with abhorrent living conditions. Six-year-old Ruman, for example, couldn't hide his tears at school. Ruman's abusive father drove his mother to run away. The families living in nearby shanties said Ruman's father "cares little for his family." His father doesn't provide food, school supplies, or the emotional connection of a parent for Ruman and his siblings. This kind of life is not unusual for children in Ruman's slum.

UKRAINE

In Ukraine, families are still separated as their fathers remain unable to leave the country, but it is perilous for women and children to stay. Lives are lost on the battlefields and in bombed cities. Victims have endured unbelievably inhumane conditions and left everything behind. They are often separated from their extended families, friends and support networks. Income isn't available, and winter is a formidable threat to health and life. People were uprooted from their homes and separated from their communities. Some, especially those from the eastern part of Ukraine, have lived with war for years. The stress takes its toll on health and relationships.

Dima was injured while serving in the Ukrainian army. He couldn't walk on his mangled leg, but the Ukrainian military decided his injury didn't qualify for their medical treatment. Despite this intensely problematic situation, he was doing what he could to serve a church made up of Ukrainian refugees in Kyiv. The church has a meeting place, but is made up of refugees with a meager collective income, so the church struggles to rent a place to meet.

If all this heartache in the world weren't enough, a new violent conflict broke out in the Middle East last month. In these conflicts the pile of human sinfulness continues to mount - rejecting God, harboring bitterness, refusing forgiveness, lack of humility, violence instead of gentleness, closed ears rather than a peacemaker's heart - leading to the suffering that is revealed when one nation attacks another.

We find all of these vices in every country, culture, community, and heart, including our own. As a result, this sin-filled world can be a terrible, nightmarish place. Sin - both individual and national - hurts. And it hurts real people.

THANKFULLY...that ISN'T the end of the story!

Our Lord saw the misery humanity created with our terrible decisions - long before these modern-day woes. He saw - and still sees - the misery of humankind in our sin. He has seen and been heartbroken at the suffering of each human being down through the ages. *And He took action.*

He set in motion a plan to redeem and restore creation and all of humanity to what He originally intended it to be.

The plan that included choosing Israel and led to the birth and crucifixion of His beloved Son is not complete yet. Yes, He has already defeated Satan, sin and death and made a way for people to be free from sin and shame. But, the plan has not been completed as there are still many who have not yet realized that the blood and sacrifice of the perfect and sinless Jesus Christ has forged a path out of shame and guilt and into a relationship with Jesus Christ and life in His everlasting kingdom. As a result, many still suffer at the hands of others who are reeling from their sin and the sins of others.

We have His promise that the plan will be completed successfully.

Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess. We understand that the means to His desired end is the Spirit of Jesus Christ Himself coming to abide with and in us, His people, changing our hearts and enabling us to follow Jesus.

Here is where we place our hope.

In Jesus' ability and faithfulness to do what He said He would do: put everything in creation fully and entirely under His good, just, and loving rule.

Our hope is not in Congress somehow getting unpolarized or the results of any election. Our hope is not in doing away with the political parties or principles we find distasteful. Our hope is not in scientific or medical advancement. Our hope is not in peace between Hamas and Israel, Russia and Ukraine, or the Dinka and the Nuer tribes of South Sudan. Our hope is not in health and comfort. Our hope is not in the power to maintain a certain way of life and values and exclude others. Our hope is not in our ability to avoid cultural shame by avoiding certain behaviors and engaging in others. As long as our hope remains firmly rooted in Jesus Christ, it is secure.

The heartbreaking examples above don't end in despair, either.

As one small part of God's good plan to redeem and restore His people and His creation, He has brought you together with the ITMI partners you support, and the light of Christ is gaining ground.

SOUTH SUDAN

Lazarus, the South Sudanese man who lived through a horrific trauma the day his village was bombed, has become a man guided by Jesus' Spirit as he works to reach his people with the Good News and help them follow Jesus. His faith in the Lord prevented him from becoming bitter after the attack on his village. Lazarus' heart was

available for the Lord to prepare him for a role in His plan to reach other hurting youth. The Lord placed ITMI's **Lazarus Yezinai** in South Sudan, and brought him the partnership of ITMI supporters so that suffering, violent gang members who once terrorized the streets of Juba could find the path of redemption Jesus provided.

Mary, the disabled orphan with the broken arm, didn't lie in her bed unseen and uncared for. No, the Lord sent ITMI's **Vicky Waraka** into Mary's home for a visit filled with Biblical encouragement, prayer, and nourishment.

Vicky and Lazarus don't have to spend every minute of their days providing for the many who rely on them because ITMI supporters do that. They are free for these ministry activities because they don't have to spend time finding supporters every month. The ITMI staff, through your gifts to our General Fund, are available to them to help with that. When they need someone to walk with them on a project or provide encouragement, the ITMI leadership is a phone call away.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, **Abid** used to provide for his family as a math teacher, but now, the Lord has provided for their daily needs through ITMI. Abid was able to visit the Christian victims whose homes were burned, pray with them, and remind them of their hope. You enabled him to give some of them audio Bibles. Our partnership has equipped Abid to teach the SALT discipleship material to many as well as launch the Goat Project. All of this is a result of the Lord's Spirit, bringing His people together - donors sacrificing to support financially, prayer warriors faithfully remembering our partners and leadership in prayer, and the work of our staff, funded by **General Fund** donations, to equip, disciple, and provide



Gang members happy to be part of Lazarus' sports outreach!



Yousif Masih, blind and also one of the Christian victims, overjoyed to be given an audio Bible!



This recipient of an audio Bible said, "Every time I listen to a song or God's Word, I will pray for you."



David and Taru’s students learn to call on Jesus every day.



Deepam students receive a nutritional drink provided by ITMI supporters.



Dima with his family after surgery was completed, thankful for your prayers and support.

logistical support as needed as well as ensure support keeps fueling this ministry. The Lord brought these resources together so that the body of Christ could be built up in Pakistan.

INDIA

In India, the Lord forged a partnership that may seem run-of-the-mill to us at ITMI, but when you think about it, it is truly an act of the Lord. How else would we have known **David and Taru Kumar** were humbly and quietly serving suffering Muslims in an Indian slum? We can’t explain it other than the Lord put us together so that impoverished Muslim families could experience His love and have the chance to become His disciples.

David and Taru’s presence in the slum is a bright light of hope to these families. The morning that Ruman came to Taru’s school, Deepam Primary, in tears, Taru took Ruman on her lap, listened to his heartache and dried his tears. Then she eased his hunger with a bit of extra food, on top of the meal that Deepam students already receive as part of their morning, provided by the support from ITMI. Onboarding David and Taru, like onboarding every new partner, was funded by your contributions to the General Fund, which allows the ITMI staff and leadership to function.

UKRAINE

In Eastern Europe, our partners were well-equipped and in the right place at the right time to find safe places for Ukrainian refugees to shelter, food for them to eat, and clothes they could wear, help them learn a new language, and find ways to earn income and communities to become part of. For years, the Lord had been quietly building networks of believers and businesses who could pull together a logistical

miracle to get supplies and aid into Ukraine, where believers were positioned and ready to exercise their calling to make disciples using refugee centers as conduits for the love, hope and message of Jesus to reach them. The networking ministry of ITMI’s **Adi and Ema Ban**, and your General Fund contributions made it possible for ITMI’s **Steve Evers** and **Mark Burritt** to take a team to minister among believers in Ukraine twice in 2023, offering discipleship training and encouragement. This all led to their encounter with Dima, the young believing soldier in need of medical attention, and his church, who needed help to rent a place to meet. ITMI supporters provided both medical treatment and rent for the next year so these godly national refugees could continue ministering in the heart of the Ukrainian conflict.

MIDDLE EAST

Because of the Lord’s faithfulness to keep His promise to redeem and restore creation across the globe, we are confident He will also do so amid the horrors of the rising conflict in the Middle East. We are confident, by faith, that He has also prepared godly believers already in the region for this moment.

We wait on Him to see whether He wants to use ITMI to forge a partnership between you and one of them. If Israel is on your heart and you feel led to donate but prefer your contribution go toward help that is focused on making disciples, follow the QR code or visit intouchmission.org/israel and let us know you’d like us to keep you updated on anything that develops.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

From the Director



DEAR TEAM: Why I'm Thankful for My Recent Dental Pain

Living in Arizona affords us proximity to some great deals in dental, eyeglasses, and pharmaceutical needs, just across the US border with Mexico. Up to this point, it has been worth it to drive the 3+ hours to the Mexican border town of Algodones to get dental work done.

This time, however, I received the news that a long-festering infection had invaded two of my upper teeth with such a vengeance that I would need to have one extracted and one blessed with a root canal. Unfortunately, these enjoyable procedures could not even begin until the infection was under control. Infection severely inhibits the effects of numbing agents, and the doctor predicted that it would be excruciating. I'd have to drive back to Phoenix and return after the infection was under control. Five days later, I made the three-hour drive again. This time, we went ahead with the procedures. The magnitude of the pain of those two procedures made my previous sufferings feel like a mosquito bite. It was mind-numbing. It would seem the infection had not been sufficiently curbed, and although they tried 15 times to "deadend" the tooth to the pain, it was ineffective.

Today, I am so grateful for antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, and pain medications. They have been some of my very best friends the last few weeks. I am also grateful for the pain; it was a vivid and needed reminder of what so many of our foreign brothers and sisters deal with as their daily "normal."

Last week Adi Ban shared a letter from a Romanian pastor in Northern Israel with me, detailing what his ministry has been like over the past few weeks. You might be interested in the pain that he and many other believers live with just because the Lord called them to minister in Israel.

Pastor Daniel (last name withheld for security) has been ministering in Israel since 2007, about 16 years. He has to work a second job as a tourist guide to feed his family. You will recognize his care for the people of Israel when you read what he is doing in this highly volatile country.

Shalom, our dear collaborators, and supporters in prayer.

As a result [of the conflict in Israel], the Christian and Messianic people are now called to unity in prayer and to financial support.

Our assembly, together with several organizations in the area, organize[s] fundraising for:

*1. **Soldiers from the Northern Sea** - already for 2 weeks we have 2 cars that go every Sunday and Monday to the Golan Heights area and carry tents, underwear, socks, toothpaste, raincoats, flashlights, sweets, and New Testaments. The need is weekly, and our church collects money every Shabbat in this direction*

*2. **Refugees from the Israeli Gaza Strip** - 28 villages that were destroyed by terrorists and cities destroyed by bombings. Hot meals, water, juices, coffee, clothes are delivered to these areas. People have lost everything and are in hotels where the state only pays for their accommodation, the rest is up to them. Monday will be the next transport in that direction. Now we are also looking for Messianic Jews who have been affected [so we can also] help them.*

*3. **Soldiers' Families** - The families of soldiers who are reservists and left their homes and left their children and wives behind, we give a surprise to these families every week to let them know that they are not alone.*

*4. **For us as a family** we have supplies and everything we need until the end of October, maybe another week in November, but I have been on unpaid leave [and little tourism will be happening for quite some time]. We [are] still [expected to] pay taxes to the state ...[from past tourism efforts and there is no sign of the State freezing these payment requirements].*



My dental discomfort, our Western world discomfort, is nothing compared to what life is now like in Israel. This is a God-given opportunity to show His love and provision to Jews, Palestinians, Christians, and faithful, (continued on p.6)

They call it love and encouragement.

We call it the General Fund.

Your year-end contribution to the ITMI General Fund enables our staff to provide the support our partners in the field rely on.



(Continued from p.5) godly pastors consumed by this throbbing, mind-numbing pain. God has promised to bless those that bless Israel, I am hoping that ITMI and all of you will stand with these believers on the ground and in the trenches in Israel who are seeking to demonstrate Jesus

in a time of great need, great anger, great anxiety, and even greater eternal opportunity.

I am asking you to consider what God would have you do, above and beyond what you already do for all the ITMI partners and projects, to come

alongside and bless those on the ground who are meeting the greatest needs in The Promised Land. Thank you in advance for your sacrificial generosity and obedience-driven help. Blessings on you!

In His Service,

FOR PRAISE

1. Ukraine - Evers, Ban - Dima's successful operation and the opportunity to aid the body of Christ in Ukraine.
2. Pakistan - God's Word going out and His people being encouraged in the Lord through our partnership with Abid.
3. India - A godly, loving presence among hurting families in Modi Road slum through David and Taru's ministry.
4. South Sudan - ITMI partners available to serve, minister and share truth with the hurting.
5. Poland - Zaremba - 20 kids indicating a desire to follow Jesus through summer camp outreaches in August.

FOR PRAYER

1. Ukraine/Israel - Guidance and direction for the Lord's people in these areas, in this place and time for a reason.
2. South Sudan - Vicky - Continued health and eye problems, a lot of death around family members.
3. Pakistan - Abid - Brothers and sisters in Christ who were recently attacked by extremist Islamic groups.
4. USA - Pray for the Howell family as they grieve the loss of Gary's life.
5. USA - That the Lord would provide for ITMI's needs and projects through the faithful year-end giving of our supporters.



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