

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:1

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Resilient in the Gospel:

How Teens Reached in South Africa are Standing Firm Amid Injustice

This is a compilation of articles written by ITMI's [Charl van Wyk](#), arranged by the ITMI staff.

SOUTH AFRICA

“You have the choice!” the high school principal bellowed. “Either you replace the SD card you stole, or you leave the school and don’t return.”

Siya, 14, walked away from the school and never returned to class. He’d been told that people of his race couldn’t be trusted—and he got the message.

He was in eighth-grade—his first year of secondary school.

Today, six years later, 20-year-old Siya maintains his innocence in the accusation of SD card theft. He argues that he had neither a cell phone nor laptop with which to use it. Nevertheless, such accusations continued and from an unlikely source. His own mother accused him of stealing from her. Shortly thereafter he walked away from home and lived in a metal shack in Stone Hill, all alone.

Siya survived by carrying crates of beer for the local shebeen—an informal, usually unlicensed, “watering hole” set up in an informal settlement.



Siya met boys in the settlement who invited him to Uncle Bradley’s Bible Study.

Now, he repairs shoes!

Most surprisingly, Siya met boys in the settlement who invited him to Uncle Bradley’s Bible study one Sunday evening.

There he discovered that many of the Bible study boys were meeting during the week in a shipping container retrofitted into a classroom and observed how they exited each meeting with smiles on their faces. The boys, Siya noted, shared a great friendship among them. So, he hung around outside the container/classroom to see if he could discover the cause of this mysterious joy, too.

He asked around and was again invited to attend our Soldiers for Christ weekly meeting in the shipping container. He finally did and has never left.

At our Soldiers for Christ ministry, we expect loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage, in serving King Jesus!

In response to hearing the Word of God being taught, Siya was moved! When I asked him if he had put his faith in Jesus Christ, he said that he had done more than that. In his world this means that his faith embodies his whole life.

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Why Indian Believers Rode Fifteen Miles on Motorcycles in the Rain



David in Gadag, training believers to share the Gospel with their Muslim friends and neighbors.



Trainees practice greeting Muslims.



Trainees work in groups to learn and grow in the Lord.



Indian believer, who works as a hotel cook, takes detailed notes.



David presents participants with a certificate of completion.

INDIA

It was 8:40am on July 26th, when [David Kumar](#) and his ministry partner, Pastor Walter, arrived in Gadag, India. They had left Bangalore the night before for the first of six monthly training sessions on talking about Jesus with your friends and family of the Muslim faith.

For the past couple weeks it had been raining across the state of Karnataka. Everything was muddy. As they traveled, David wondered if anyone would surmount the travel challenges of the rain and attend the training.

The church where the training would be held was built on agricultural land. To reach it, David and Walter needed to walk for about 100 meters through extremely slippery mud. It was so slippery that David came close to falling three times. "It was so funny," David wrote.

But David was wrong about the rain preventing trainees from coming. Twenty people did come through the rain...by motorcycle!

When David asked them, "What made you come even in the rain?" he was moved by their answer.

"We came because we need this training so we can share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our Muslim brothers."

David taught them how to greet a Muslim in their language. "They found it difficult to pronounce the greetings," David said, "But we had a good time practicing and made it fun." David also taught two lessons, "Islam," and "The Life of Mohammed."

Pastor Walter taught on how to share the Gospel with a Muslim a little bit at a time by grasping whatever opportunities that are offered.

One of the attendees, a believer from the hosting church, works as a cook in a hotel. He had taken time off from work to attend the training. He cooked lunch for all the trainees before the

first session began. He told the group that he encounters many Muslims in his work. David observed that he was very attentive and took copious notes. He later told David that what he learned helped him build good friendship with the Muslims in his life.

“India has a huge Muslim community and there is a vast open door among Muslims but very sadly the church of India has not been doing much to reach this huge community with the Gospel,” David shares, “We believe the local church holds a huge responsibility to be reaching to their neighboring Muslim community. When we start our training in city or a town, we notice so many wrong ideas among our rural pastors which make them not share gospel with Muslims. So, during our training one of our jobs is to clear their misunderstandings and create desire to share the gospel with Muslims.”

In November 2023, David and Walter traveled to Gadag for the sixth and last installment of the training. On the first day, the believers listened intently as David taught, “Jesus and the Qu’ran” and “The Differences Between Jesus and Mohammed.” On the second day, they were challenged by the story of Jonah to obey the Lord and faithfully share the Gospel with Muslims and presented with a certificate of completion for the course.

With the Lord’s help, David and Walter’s training has been successful. In August, David ran into Pastor Lokesh, who went through the training five years ago. He told David that as a result of the training, he was able to lead a few Muslims to Christ!

Another trainee, Pastor Ebenezer, said, “I have many Muslim friends, but I never thought of the necessity of the Gospel for them, now I know it is not difficult to share Jesus with them. ... I have already started witnessing to a Muslim shepherd community not far from my place. Some of them have even started coming on Sundays for prayer.”

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He explained how he doesn’t get drunk, smoke cigarettes, or take drugs anymore. And he can’t get enough of reading his Bible—all three of them, in fact.

“I have a big one at home in my shack,” he said. “I have one on my phone, and another small one I carry in my pocket.”

Still, life is hard, especially for those without formal jobs.

“All I wish now is to have a job so that I can buy clothes and food,” he said. “And I want to support my disabled younger brother.”

Siya’s brother lies in a shack all day and is occasionally pushed around the dirt roads in a makeshift wheelchair.

While walking in the squatter camp in November 2022, Siya was attacked by a knife-wielding thug. Although his attacker was much older than him, Siya disarmed the thug and beat him senseless. The thug went straight to the police and laid charges of assault against Siya—who was immediately arrested. He awaited trial in prison for a week.

These false charges—more accusations—cast a long shadow, forcing him to return to court multiple times over 11 months to defend himself. Finally, thankfully, the matter was thrown out of court in October 2023 due to lack of evidence.

Siya is smiling ear-to-ear and thankful to the Lord for helping him through this troublesome time, which could easily have led to years of unjustified incarceration.

Julia, at 16 years old, is trying her best to help and support her younger siblings. They live in a metal shack, in the Stone Hill informal settlement. Her mother sleeps around, is often drunk or

on drugs, and does nothing more than bring embarrassment and violent terror to her family.

There is no father around!!

After attending the Parent-Teacher Association meeting at school on behalf of her siblings, because their mother is too inebriated to do anything that might require responsibility or common sense, Julia is berated, beaten, and spat upon by her mother, on her return.

There are many Julias in Stone Hill.

They attend the Dream Girls ministry, which Sonja runs with a wonderful team of ‘aunties’ – ministry leaders.

Sonja [Charl’s wife] and the brave aunties teach arts and crafts to the girls, and you might just be thinking, “isn’t this a waste of resources? What about the Gospel?”

Considering that the Gospel effects every area of life, we use all areas of life to incorporate the Gospel into the girls’ lives. Teaching arts and crafts to the marginalized can have several important discipleship benefits:

Encouragement: Learning artistic skills encourages the girls by providing them with a creative outlet and a means to express themselves. But this does not happen in a vacuum.

Ingrid Dahl, in her article, “The Christian Philosophy of Art” states, “True art depicts God’s work Biblically, historically, and materially and acts as a lens that focuses the eye on some aspect of His work.”

In a poor, pagan, squatter camp environment there is no beauty to behold. You need to create beauty with the gifts the Lord has blessed you with.

Income Generation: Arts and crafts skills can be a source of



The joy of the Lord can be seen on Siya's smiling face!



One of the Dream Girls proudly displays her hand-made items.



ITMI's Sonja van Wyk with Dream Girls from the Stone Hill settlement.

income. By teaching these skills, they enable the girls to create products that can be sold, providing them with a means to earn a living and improve their financial situation.

Cognitive Development:

Engaging in creative activities enhances cognitive development. It improves problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and fine motor skills. Unbelievably, most of the girls need to be taught how to cut straight with a scissors.

These skills are essential for personal development and can be valuable in various aspects of life.

Covenant Community Building:

Arts and crafts activities bring people together, fostering a sense of covenant community and

belonging. Shared creative experiences strengthen social bonds and create a supportive network, leading to improved mental and emotional well-being.

Therapeutic Benefits: Engaging in artistic activities is therapeutic, providing an emotional outlet and reducing stress. This is particularly important for girls facing challenging life circumstances, like Gender Based Violence and poverty.

Educational Enhancement:

Integrating arts and crafts into education enhances the overall learning experience for the girls. It makes learning more engaging, encourages creativity, and improves academic performance.

By starting to learn these skills,

girls and women have started their own small businesses, contributing to the local economy, and created job opportunities for others.

In summary, teaching arts and crafts to the Dream Girls has a transformative Gospel impact on their lives, offering discipleship opportunities, including personal and economic growth, and fosters a Christ-centered covenant community.

I am so proud of our team of aunties, who are patient, loving and gracious, under the most difficult of circumstances.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we have ambitious plans to expand our Gospel outreach and impact even more lives.

For example, my friend, Charl (cool name, right? There's more than one of us.) will be launching a new project at our Stone Hill ministry base. He's arranging to teach valued skills such as woodwork and metalwork to jobless young men like Siya.

Our sewing project, run by a husband-and-wife team, has been a wonderful success with some trainees finding jobs in the industry and others becoming entrepreneurs making and selling clothing.

We prayerfully work towards a Gospel-centered reformation, aiming to building a generation of young, Christ-centered, Gospel-driven servant leaders to act in our broken world.

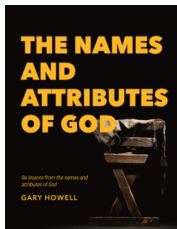
Please pray for our 'Soldiers', that they may worship Jesus Christ with their whole hearts and lives!

How You Can Make a Difference:

Pray: Prayer is powerful, and we ask for your prayers as we embark on new initiatives and continue our existing programs. Spiritual attacks have been relentless. Please pray for the individuals and

THIS YEAR Grow in Christ

ITMI is pleased to make these resources available for free to anyone, in hopes growth in Christ will be promoted. These can all be accessed on our Grow in Christ page. Scan the code or visit intouchmission.org.

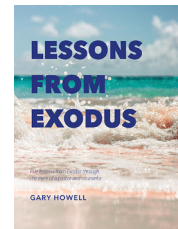


The Names and Attributes of God

By Gary Howell

Enjoy six lessons exploring several names and attributes of God by the late counselor and pastor, Gary Howell. You'll explore the names Jehova-Jireh, El-'Olam, and Jehova-Shalom while learning from the lives of Abraham and Gideon.

Available as an E-book or daily emails



Lessons from Exodus

By Gary Howell

In five lessons you'll explore topics such as Passover: the History of Easter, A God Passionate for Us, and Embracing Gratitude as the late pastor and counselor Gary Howell guides you through the story of God's people.

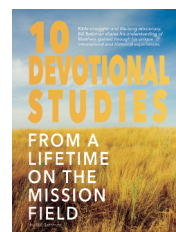
Available as an E-book or daily emails



Ask the Translator

With Dr. Piotr Zaremba, Bible Translator

Got a Bible question? ITMI's Dr. Piotr Zaremba, a pastor and Bible translator, wants to express his gratitude by making himself and his team available to answer your Bible questions and share insights they may have gleaned through the translation process.



10 Devotional Studies from a Lifetime on the Mission Field

By Bill Bathman

Deepen your faith with a fresh look at the greatest life ever lived with ITMI founder and missionary statesman, Bill Bathman. Bill shares his unique perspective gained through his experiences ministering in tough-to-access places and smuggling Bibles behind the Iron Curtain.

Available as an E-book or daily emails

Removing Obstacles

ITMI's Piotr Zaremba commented, "ITMI's support removes the obstacles to ministry," as he tried to describe the impact of your support.

ITMI's Johan Leach, who serves in a remote corner of Zambia, said it another way:

"In a physical war, the soldier has 3 primary requirements that need to be met in a timely manner to avoid disaster:

Physical sustenance - No food (or a lack thereof) physically weakens the soldier and often results in demoralization and surrender to the enemy.

Weapon and ammunition supply - A

soldier can only carry a limited supply of food, weapons, and ammunition, therefore regular replenishment is required for survival.

Emotional support - Receiving gifts or hearing from loved ones, motivates the soldier to fight on, completing his deployment victoriously. The inverse results in a low morale and the belief that no one cares for him.

Logistical support enables the soldier to successfully carry out his duties on deployment. This is just as relevant to our battle in the spiritual arena, and this support involves a whole community,

harnessing gifts, and resources such as planning, raising awareness, finance, purchase of goods, transport, storage and encouragement.

ITMI has played a major role in meeting our practical needs by raising awareness, and we have been astounded by how many of you responded by giving financially. We can never thank you enough for your selfless generosity."

Thank you for your partnership in removing obstacles and enabling our partners to make disciples!

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communities we serve, that they may experience the love and grace of Christ.

Donate: Your financial support allows us to continue our joint

ministry and expand our reach. Whether it's a one-time gift or a monthly commitment, every contribution makes a significant impact.

Spread the Word: Share our mission with your friends, family, and colleagues. Encourage others to join our cause and make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

-Charl van Wyk

FOR PRAISE

1. South Africa - van Wyk - Lives changed through the outreaches in Stone Hill.
2. India - Kumar - Believers trained and eager to share Jesus with their Muslim friends, family, and neighbors.
3. Poland - Zaremba - Piotr's translation of the Bible was included in Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas boxes.
4. Romania - Ban - Opportunity to reach more families for Christ with the launch of a new podcast.
5. Zambia - Leach - Fourteen new churches planted on the Luwale plains.
6. South Africa - Smiths - Thola Center facility for outreach in KwaZulu Natal on schedule for completion in February 2024

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 - Lazarus - Continued recovery and return of strength to minister after being ill in December.
3. USA - That the Lord would continue to give us wisdom and direction as we seek to obey His call.



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