

*"...they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."*

*Acts 17:11*

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## Three Seekers Find Christ:

*A story of the power of God's Word*

### POLAND

PRZEMEK STARED AT THE comment he'd just read during a discussion on social media. It was a challenge directed at him. The commenter was challenging him to look into the doctrines of his religion.

Like 85% of Polish people, Przemek identified himself as Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic faith is deeply entrenched in Polish society. For many Poles, to be Polish is to be Catholic. It is part of their very identity.

Przemek took the challenge to heart. As he began to investigate Roman Catholic doctrine, he realized that he needed to read the Bible for himself. He wanted something as close to the original documents as possible, so he searched for a literal translation of the Bible into Polish. He found the version of God's Word translated by ITMI's **Dr. Piotr Zaremba** and his team at the Evangelical Bible Institute.

Przemek was joined on his quest for truth by his then-girlfriend, Justyna, and his friend and neighbor, Marcin.



**ITMI's Piotr Zaremba and his daughter, Carolyn, live on Facebook, answering Bible questions.**

Finding Piotr's translation led Przemek to learn who the Bible translator and pastor was. Although Piotr ministers in Poznan and Przemek lives in a different city, he could subscribe to Piotr's Facebook group, where Piotr answers Biblical questions live every week. Przemek also followed Piotr's YouTube channel, where Piotr posts Biblical resources regularly.

ITMI's visionary supporters provided the funding for the decades-long project of



**Piotr with Przemek and Justyna at a K5N service.**

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Food runs in India are risky business. It can easily turn into a fight or stampede. Shown here: previous outreach in this leper colony.



Living conditions in the informal township of Stone Hill, South Africa.



Stone Hill doesn't have proper drainage for water or sewage.



A Stone Hill woman learns to sew through the sewing outreach project.

## INDIA

### An Incredible Moment While Visiting a Leper Colony

ITMI's **Molly** had never seen anything like it. It was truly an incredible moment.

The colony of lepers stood still and calm. They weren't shouting and pushing one another to try to be the first to receive the gifts that Paul, Molly, some of their children and church members had come to deliver. Tears streamed down many of their cheeks.

Paul, Molly and some of their 23 children had driven a bus to the end of the road, where it ended at a mountain. Half the bus was packed with food and handmade gifts for them to hang in their mud huts.

A dozen men from the church Paul planted and continues to shepherd as the pastor were involved in preparing and protecting, loading and organizing to make the outreach possible.

Paul got out of the bus first. The colony leaders, including a priest, met him at the temple near the lepers' homes, where many of them beg daily.

"...food runs in India are risky business," Molly writes, "It can easily turn into a fight and stampede with gangs coming to interfere and steal."

Paul spoke to the leaders and with wisdom gained from many experiences, clearly shared with them,

"We are happy to see you, our family loves you—we are the same family who helped you in the pandemic. You are all precious. If you shout and push, we are going to get in our bus and leave with your gifts. That will be very sad. We are a family who wants to share that Jesus loves you so much and made you in His image with a beautiful plan before time began."

They stood unbelievably still, and the children emerged from the bus. Paul



and Molly's teenage daughters decorated the huts with the handmade garlands and stars.

Some of the lepers were Hindu. As they walked next to Paul and Molly's family, some of the lepers pointed to the first home that the girls decorated. "Jesus loves her most," they said, referring to the woman who lived inside, "and she always speaks His name." The woman they were referring to sat on the step of her home as Paul and Molly's children sang to her. She was missing her fingertips and hair, but she was beautiful.

Molly reflects, "As a missionary or pastor's wife in India, the heavy weight of the hopes of people can be suffocating. Our aim is to point to Christ, the author of our salvation. The only Way, Truth, and Life. Our first work and passion has become to point ourselves to Him and pray our crew follows."

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Planning for Growth in 2024

*"For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living." 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12*

Teens in the informal township of **Stone Hill**, South Africa, face difficult home lives and poverty. Many face broken families and relationships, parents that work long hours or are drunk most of the time. Getting to school, completing homework, and taking care of the basics like food and clean clothes are a big ordeal when you live in a lean-to or shack.

ITMI's **Charl van Wyk** and his team

of believers seeking to bring Jesus' goodness, light and truth to the settlement have determined that one way to effectively share the Gospel and disciple young men there could be to teach them carpentry and metal working. This project goes hand in hand with the already effective sewing outreach for women in the settlement.

Charl and his team have already been blessed with over two-thousand dollars worth of tools to start this project!

Over the course of 2024, Charl and his team are praying, planning and hoping the Lord will provide funding so that they can expand the capacity of their outreaches in Stone Hill. They are praying the Lord will provide for them to convert a shipping container to accommodate the new carpentry and metal working outreach. Other prayerful plans include a septic tank and infrastructure to build a laundry for the community where the cloth for the sewing ministry can also be washed, western-style lavatories, finishing a computer room, paving at the Early Childhood Development Center, and gates and fencing.

If any of these projects piques your interest, and you'd like more information on their Kingdom building value, please contact our office or stay tuned for future newsletters.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Growing the Church in South Africa

ITMI's **Mark Parris** is the pastor of Durbanville Community Church (DCC) and an ITMI partner.

Mark writes,

We are constantly amazed at how God is building His church where we serve. We thank God for adding 20 new members last month. Many

of them have come to faith recently. Maryke told how she grew up being dropped off at Sunday School when she was a little girl. She knew the stories of the Bible and that Christians were to live differently, but as hard as she tried to be good, she kept failing. She eventually gave up and just followed the crowd.

Years later, she was invited to DCC (Durbanville Community Church) and she was surprised at how normal the people were. She kept hearing that she didn't have to earn God's approval and that God's grace was greater than her sin. She said that she felt the welcome of God in the way the church welcomed her. She understood grace for the first time and now she is living daily with faith in Jesus Christ.

Maryke was baptized as we celebrated God's kindness to her and many others. The church enjoyed a *braai* (barbecue) and the children had a blast with the water slide and jumping castles. We encourage as many opportunities as possible for the church to gather and celebrate God's faithfulness.

Thank you for partnering with godly nationals like Mark, so that well-equipped, godly leaders like him can devote their time to shepherding God's people in a Biblical way. This kind of leadership is wildly valuable for the growth and discipleship of God's people.



**ITMI's Mark Parris baptizes Maryke in South Africa.**



Piotr married Przemek and Justyna in August.

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translating the Bible from its original languages into Polish, which Piotr led his team to accomplish, all while planting and pastoring churches.

Your partnership with Piotr produced two widely beloved versions of the Bible in Polish - a literal translation and a literary translation.

Though both translations are complete, Piotr's ministry as a Bible translator continues to grow, thrive, and point Polish-speaking people to Christ by creating Biblical resources that build on the translations.

Piotr and his team of scholars continue to do Biblical research, producing Biblical material that is faithful to the Bible's original translations.

### Why is continued Bible research necessary?

When the King James Bible was published in 1611, it influenced and enhanced the emergence of Protestant Christianity and, beyond that, shaped the English-speaking world's culture.

One author writes, "The new Bible indeed shaped the emerging English language, and spread those patterns of speech, thought, and meter throughout the world. And the fact that this Bible, of course, proclaimed the core Judeo-Christian message and worldview meant that those were the irreducible, foundational ideas of the English-speaking world." (Baylor Magazine).

Multiple examples of the influence of the King James Bible on science, literature, and politics are easy to find. The language of the

King James Bible was "inextricably bound up with the evolving political discourse on freedom" of the day, both in Britain and the American colonies. God's Word gained vast influence in sectors of society simply by being translated into language that was readable and understandable for those of that day.

Piotr's vision is that the investments they are making today will pioneer the creation of Biblical materials that will shape Polish culture as the King James translation did for English speakers in the 17th century. Translators and publishers have continued to build on that influence to this day so that English speakers have a plethora of material, allowing them to dig deeper into the themes of God's Word and grow in their faith. The continued Biblical research of Piotr and his team provides resources that continue to get God's Word



# From the Director



DEAR TEAM: Look where you want to go!

Three

They are moving so fast that they cannot really stop to think, instead, they can only trust their reactions.

On a curvy road, when a huge pothole comes into view, racers know to direct their eyes to the part of the road that they want to use and avoid focusing on the thing that you want to avoid. Experts say that we are drawn to what we fixate on. Our minds somehow, little by little, pull us toward what we allow our minds to fixate on.

I learned this the hard way as a younger man on Kim Allen's motorcycle in our church parking lot. I intently fixated on the concrete parking bumper that I desperately wanted to avoid. Let's just say when Kim got his motorcycle back, it was in worse condition than when he let me take it for a spin!

Today, I'm consumed with the phrase spoken by Jesus to the tempest on the Sea of Galilee: "Peace be still." (Mark 4) It is what I have chosen to fixate on. It would be easy to fixate on all the turmoil around the globe. Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Russia, elections, inflation, health, finances, or any other number of tempests that arise daily or hourly.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 reminds us, "The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord...is blessed. He will be like a tree planted by water: it sends its roots out toward a stream. It doesn't fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit."

John agrees, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33)

ITMI's **Adi Ban** just returned from another trip to Ukraine to encourage the church's leadership to minister to the saints and to mentor the pastors to focus not on the war and the losses and the destruction but on the opportunity that God has given them to reach and shepherd more people than they did in their little corner of Ukraine before the war.

ITMI's part - your part - in this process of serving and discipling the mass of hurting and broken people was to intentionally focus on where we wanted to go; to build up the worn-out pastors who have had to deal with more death and heartache than a human was ever intended to handle.

With Adi and his wife, **Ema**, leading the way, we focused on loving and recharging the church leaders in Ukraine through two events last year - one in April and one in August. We were able to give these leaders a break from being required to focus 24/7 on the logistics of feeding, housing, and caring for the literal millions of fleeing and broken Ukrainians, and redirect their focus to how loving, gracious, and empowering our Lord really is.

Adi relayed that one older Ukrainian pastor shared with him, "... because of your [multiple visits last year where you cared for us and taught us] I have seen the reality that I need to be open to learning new [life insights, ministry insights, biblical truths] that I didn't know before." This statement comes from a man who is at peace. One who can rest in the fact that God is in control and that God always desires for us to focus on HIM and let the tempest that we happen to be placed in fade into the background.

We thank you all for standing with us as we seek to strengthen and empower the godly nationals with whom our Lord connects us. May we all experience this coming season, "Peace be still," in our lives and in our souls as we focus on Who brings this peace and not distracted by that which draws us away from HIS peace.

In His Service,



Adi and Ema helping leaders from Ukraine focus on where they want to go rather than the turmoil around them last August.

into the hands of Polish speakers and illuminate the themes and truths for them in new ways.

As Przemek, Justyna, and Marcin continued to grow in understanding of the Lord through their study of the Bible, all three found a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Przemek and Justyna also understood the Biblical importance of marriage and how their relationship wasn't separate from their religious practices but something in which their Lord wanted to be intimately involved. Their understanding of what a wedding is for was also turned upside down by their study of the Bible.

They realized their wedding could be a Christ-centered event where they could faithfully point to Jesus and what He had done for them rather than an expensive show that glorified them as a couple.

Piotr Zaremba married Justyna and Przemek last August (2023). It was a moving, Christ-centered ceremony, declaring the Gospel to their friends and family.

After the ceremony, Przemek turned to the audience and, as calmly and matter-of-factly as if he were explaining where they could find the refreshment table, shared the couple's story of coming to know Jesus, why they were getting married and what Jesus means to them. Their friends and family were astonished by the event, which seemed very unusual to them in its simplicity and lack of production.

A week or so after the wedding, Przemek felt the Spirit nudge him to read his Bible on a bench beside the main pathway leading to a row of high-rise, ex-communist housing flats. Nothing special happened after a few days of this. Then, while reading his Bible, he heard a loud domestic dispute coming from the open window of one of the apartments. He knocked on their

door and told the arguing residents he was there to share how he met Jesus and pray for them. They allowed him to come in and do just that! When he left, a calm had come over the apartment, reminding Przemek of the story of Jesus calming the storm, and gifting Przemek with a deeper understanding of the meaning of that story.

This is just one of the many stories of the impact of partnering with a Bible translator and pastor to put copies of God's Word faithful to the original languages in the hands of more Polish speakers, as well as discipleship materials that build on the messages of the Bible. The Lord has already used it to bring seekers like Przemek, Justyna, and Marcin to a saving relationship with Himself! Our prayer is that He would continue to take our humble contributions and use them to make His name great among the nations - Poland, in particular.

*-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers*

*Baylor Magazine. Summer 2011. How the King James Bible Changed the World.*

## FOR PRAISE

1. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - Lives changed through the outreaches in Stone Hill.
2. India - Paul and Molly - Opportunity to reach and love marginalized and outcast lepers in their city.
3. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - Opportunities to help people better understand God's Word.
4. South Africa - Mark Parris - Church growth and baptisms.

## FOR PRAYER

1. South Sudan - Lazarus Yezinai- Recovery from serious illness for Lazarus' mother.
2. USA - That the Lord would continue to give us wisdom and direction as we seek to obey His call.
3. South Africa - Charl van Wyk - Provision for ministry expansion in Stone Hill.
4. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - Continued expansion of opportunities to reach people with Biblical truth.
5. USA - That God's great name be proclaimed through the many mission conferences during the month of February.



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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