

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

Daniel 3:17-18

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Faith Under Fire: Piotr Zaremba on Bible Translation and Life Under Communism

Poland

History often overlooks the struggles of believers who lived under oppressive regimes, yet their stories reveal the perseverance of faith in the harshest of conditions.

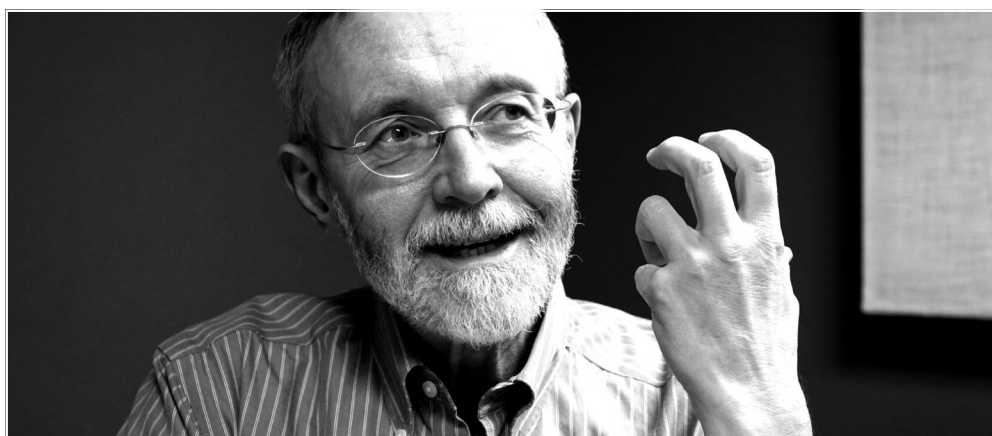
Piotr Zaremba, a translator, pastor, church planter and theologian, has firsthand experience of this reality. Raised under the shadow of communism in Poland, he witnessed firsthand the obstacles faced by both believers and non-believers.

In an exclusive interview, Zaremba shares his journey—from smuggling Bibles under communist rule to leading one of the most ambitious Bible translation projects in Poland's history.

The Reality of Life Under Communism

Interviewer: Peter, many of us don't fully understand what it was like to be raised in a communist environment. Can you share what it was like for both non-believers and believers growing up under communism?

Piotr Zaremba: Communism was a totalitarian system, which meant it promoted only one perspective on life—an atheistic, communist



worldview. The system demanded absolute conformity to Marxist-Leninist principles. Only those who aligned themselves with the system's requirements could benefit in all areas of life, whether professionally, educationally, or materially. Those who refused to conform were treated and lived as second-class citizens.

We were also completely isolated. In Poland, travel was severely restricted. Only a privileged few could visit other countries, and even when they could, economic constraints made it nearly impossible to experience life beyond Poland's borders. I recall traveling to Great Britain as a representative of Polish Baptists and realizing that a single yogurt there cost as much as my monthly salary in Poland.

Economically common man could not operate outside our highly regulated and suppressed country borders. This

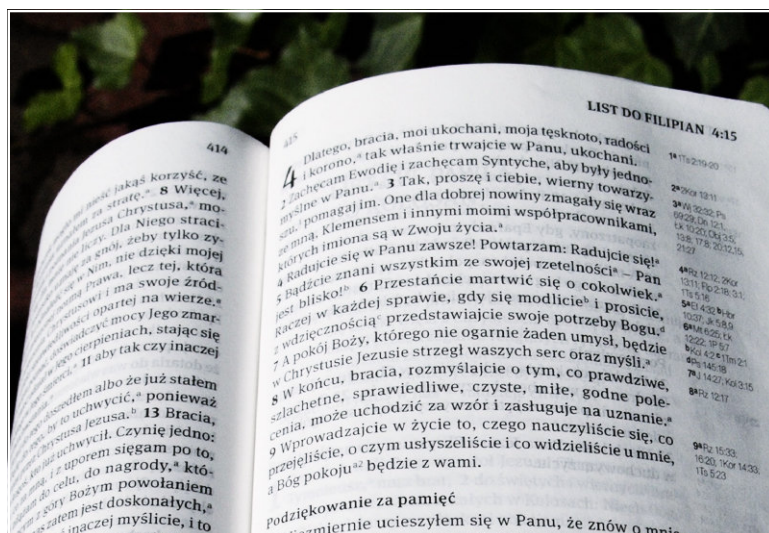
was not the case for the elite class.

For believers, life was even more challenging. The state controlled religious expression, making it illegal to print or distribute Bibles. Smuggling was the only way to obtain them, and it was a dangerous undertaking.

My father and I participated in Bible smuggling for years, knowing we could be arrested or persecuted at any moment. I remember a time when we were betrayed, leading to hours of interrogation by the authorities.

Additionally, the church was under constant scrutiny. Pastors were pressured to sign documents pledging their allegiance to the communist state. Those who refused faced hardship.

Materially, things were bleak—basic food supplies like bread and butter



even some Catholics—have embraced this translation because it is both scholarly and readable.

The response has been overwhelming. People write to me saying, “For the first time, I feel like I truly understand Scripture.” That makes all the sacrifices worthwhile.

Lessons from the Past

Interviewer: Looking back on your experiences, what lessons do you think modern Christians can learn from believers who lived under communism?

Piotr Zaremba: First, we must never take religious freedom for granted. Under communism, faith was constantly tested. It wasn’t just a matter of attending church; it was a matter of survival. Today, many Christians live comfortably, unaware of how precious their freedom is.

Second, the Bible is worth the effort. We smuggled Bibles at great risk because we knew that without them, faith would suffer. Today, people have easy access to the Bible, but they don’t always value it.

Finally, perseverance. The communist system tried to destroy faith, yet the church survived. Why? Because believers refused to compromise. That’s a lesson for all of us today.

Looking to the Future

Interviewer: What’s next for you?

Piotr Zaremba: I want to keep working on making the Bible as accessible as possible. That means not just refining translations but also equipping churches with tools to understand and teach Scripture effectively.

I also have a burden for the next generation. We need to raise up leaders who won’t just read the Bible but will live it out courageously, just as those before us did under communism.

Piotr Zaremba’s journey is one of faith, resilience, and vision. His experiences under communism shaped his commitment to Bible translation, ensuring that future generations in Poland can access God’s Word in their own language. His story serves as a reminder that faith thrives even in the harshest conditions—and that the Word of God remains, no matter the opposition.

How You Can Support Piotr Zaremba

If Piotr Zaremba’s mission and testimony have inspired you, please consider supporting his work. He continues to labor tirelessly to ensure the Bible reaches and impacts lives in Poland. You can help in two ways: through prayer and financial support. Pray for strength, wisdom, and provision as he continues translating and teaching God’s Word. If you feel led to give, consider contributing to his ministry to further the reach of biblical truth in Poland. Your support makes a lasting difference in equipping believers for generations to come.

– Piotr Zaremba, Steve Evers

were rationed and required special tickets for purchase.

We lived behind the Iron Curtain, largely forgotten by the outside world. Few visitors from the free world dared to come, but one who did was Bill Bathman, the founder of In Touch Mission International. His visit changed the trajectory of my life and God’s truth in the Polish speaking world.

A Vision for Bible Translation

Interviewer: When did you first feel the call to translate the Bible?

Piotr Zaremba: The idea of translating the Bible came to me in my first year of theological studies. When Bill Bathman visited us, he asked how he could help. I told him, “Brother Bill, send or bring us dictionaries, grammars, lexicons—everything we need to translate the Bible.”

I warned him that if we didn’t start translating immediately, we wouldn’t have a Polish Bible in thirty years. Looking back, it almost seems prophetic. Exactly thirty years later, in 2016, we published our first full Bible translation—the Polish literary version.

The Challenges of Bible Translation

Interviewer: What were the biggest challenges in translating the Bible?

Piotr Zaremba: Translating the Bible is a monumental task, especially when resources are scarce. In communist Poland, access to scholarly works was extremely limited. We had to rely on smuggled theological books and dictionaries.

Beyond resources, there was also resistance. Many in the Christian community were skeptical. “Why do we need another translation?” they would ask. They didn’t realize how outdated the available versions were or how much linguistic and theological precision had improved over the years.

But the greatest challenge was faithfulness—ensuring that the text remained true to the original Hebrew and Greek while making it accessible to contemporary Polish speakers.

The Impact of the Translation

Interviewer: How has your translation impacted the Polish Christian community?

Piotr Zaremba: The translation has given Polish believers a version of the Bible that speaks directly to them. It’s a Bible they can read and understand without struggling through archaic language.

Many different Christian groups—Evangelicals, Charismatics, and

NewsBytes - DRC

DEAR Team:

The refugee camps around Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, have become a living nightmare of devastation and trauma. M23 rebels, reportedly backed by Rwanda, have turned this once-thriving region into a wasteland of despair.



The air is thick with the stench of burning shelters and decaying bodies, as families wail over the lifeless forms of their loved ones. Children, stripped of their innocence, wander aimlessly—hungry, sick, and terrified. Disease festers in overcrowded shelters, with cholera spreading like wildfire. The screams of victims echo through the night as armed fighters commit unspeakable acts of brutality, with 572 rape cases recorded in a single week. The situation is dire—350,000 people are displaced, roads are destroyed, and humanitarian aid is blocked. Death lurks in every corner, whether from starvation, disease, or rebel gunfire.

The only way out of this chaos is through immediate, targeted action. ITMI's Charl van Wyk has connected Steve Evers to his ministry partners, Bishop Oscar and Rev. Ron Kronz who have visited various camps, bringing hope and assessing urgent needs. Meanwhile, Bishop Lamba Lamba, also a long time ministry partner with Charl and his team, orchestrates life-saving relief through his church's dedicated nationwide network. But their work is overwhelmed. Supplies can't get in, and the hands willing to serve are running out of resources. The global community must rally behind these warriors of faith.

Financial contributions to ITMI and Charl will help sustain relief efforts through their unique underground connection, while fervent prayer will strengthen those on the ground. The church is standing in the gap, but without support, even their resilience may crumble.

With proper funding and implementation of these efforts, lives will be saved. Families will have food, clean water, and safe shelter. Medical aid will reach the suffering, preventing further deaths from cholera and other preventable diseases. The church's network will continue to provide spiritual and emotional healing, helping survivors reclaim their dignity and hope. Security measures can be put in place to protect women and children from further abuse. Roads can be repaired, reopening supply routes to allow consistent aid delivery.

When the Western church steps up, the people of Goma will not just survive—they will have a chance to rebuild. The children who now wander in terror will be given a future. The oppressed will know that God has not forgotten them. The time to act is now. Every second wasted means another life broken and lost. If you feel led to help Charl and his DRC ministry team reach out and help the most needy, know that Charl has discussed with me a very detailed system to make sure the funds get to the epic center of need.

We are encouraged by the Apostle Paul, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)



-Steve Evers, Charl van Wyk

PS. Please consider how you can help Charl and his ministry partners share hope along with God's truth in this current situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Bible Translation Impact in 2024

By God's grace, we are able to look into a small window and see the impact this Bible translation is experiencing in the Polish speaking world.

The YouVersion app reports Piotr's Polish Bible Translation Project - AD 2024 reveals the significant impact of this Bible translation effort, with a total of **220,071 active users** engaging with the Scripture throughout the year. Readers opened chapters **over 83.8 million times**, highlighting a deep and sustained interaction with God's Word.

User Engagement:

- Over **1.1 million verses** were highlighted, reflecting strong personal connections to Scripture.
- More than **112,000 verses** were shared, showing active evangelism and encouragement within the community.
- **23,021 offline downloads** indicate a desire for Bible accessibility, even without internet connectivity.

The data confirms that this translation is reaching and impacting lives in significant ways, ensuring that God's Word continues to be read, shared, and cherished for generations to come.



FOR PRAISE

1. India - David and Taru Kumar - God's blessing David and Walter's rural pastor training in how to engage and reach Muslims for Christ.
2. South Sudan - Vicky Waraka - Successful SALT training to women and widows in rural South Sudan.
3. South Africa - Martie Le Roux - Her love and commitment to teach and share God's truth to the underprivileged Onseepkans children.
4. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - Continued impact of the Polish Bible Translation Project in the hearts and lives of Polish speaking world.
5. ITMI - God's continued blessings and provision allowing us to accomplish more Kingdom work as the needs grow day by day.

FOR PRAYER

1. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - Continued provision and wisdom through challenges of ministry in the country of Poland.
2. Zimbabwe - Charl van Wyk - Provision for a much needed water borehole to enlarge the Kingdom sharing truth in difficult times.
3. DRC - Charl van Wyk - Provision of prayer/financial support as they seek to meet real physical and spiritual needs of DRC refugees.
4. All ITMI - wisdom, guidance, integrity and clarity for our partners making weighty decisions around the world.
5. ITMI USA - Staff health and staff help. As God grows ITMI we need additional co-laborers in His Kingdom work.



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