



# Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church **IN TOUCH MONTHLY**

1 February 2004

**It was a perfectly logical question.** “What if they ask me Your Name?” But Moses was stalling. The prospect of going back to Egypt, after 40 years of quiet in the solitude of desert living, did not appeal to him. In response God said to Moses, “Tell them, ‘I AM THAT I AM’ has sent you.” Exodus 3:14 God revealed His name to Moses in the first person, present tense. He is present with us – here and now. Of course, He is past and future as well. Since He knows the past He is the perfect Judge. He knows the present, so He is the perfect Counselor. He knows the future, so we can trust Him completely.

## Focus on Poland: Expanding & Moving Forward

### POZNAN

Poland’s second largest city is the epicenter of ITMI’s work in this strategic north European country. To find it on a map, Poznan is on a level with Berlin and Warsaw and about mid-way between the two.

Leading our work there is Rev. **Piotr Zaremba**, who manages on a financial shoestring and hardly 4-hours sleep each night. He achieved a long-time dream at the end of 2003 by finishing the translation of the New Testament from Greek into Polish. Piotr’s zeal for the Lord has attracted some outstanding young people who have come alongside to minister in a variety of ways. The primary focus of each one is to win precious souls to Christ.

ITMI’s **Richard and Brooke**



**Nungesser** originally went to Poland to evangelize while teaching English as a second language. Soon Richard became Pastor of the International Church. As this dynamic duo traveled on public transportation they were moved at seeing homeless people, sheltering from the bitter winter cold, at the train station in Poznan. They went back that evening with a thermos of hot tea and some sandwiches and a new ministry was born: Bread of Life.

This work is growing. The Lord is adding new people regularly (see testimony on p. 2). A permanent center is urgently needed. Nungessers are understandably reluctant to refurbish rented property that could be reclaimed as soon as its upgraded. This has happened before to other Christian organizations.

Recently a couple of possibilities emerged “for sale.” One is a former Polish army barracks. In your wildest dreams during the Cold War, could you ever imagine buying a Warsaw Pact Army Base and turning it into an evangelistic center to spread the



Gospel? It could happen for about a \$150,000.

A second, and perhaps more realistic opportunity is “Krzystof Manor” – four buildings located on 7-acres, 30 minutes out of Poznan. There is a 3-story home with 12 rooms. A large 2-story brick barn that would easily convert into housing. A very large brick stable, suitable for a workshop and educational activities. Plus a small office with two garages. We can close the deal for \$65,800.

**Jim LaRose** is ITMI’s latest missionary to Poland. He works with Zaremba’s, **Pro Novis** and five different churches in Poznan and Gniezno.

**Pro Novis** is a Foundation established by ITMI’s long time friend, Don Christensen, to provide help to Christian businessmen, pastors and missionaries.

# Walk a Mile in My Shoes

A dramatic testimony as told to Brooke Nungesser

**My name is Mateusz Ostrowski**, and this is my story.

Growing up in Poland without a father is not uncommon, nor is watching them die from tragic deaths. Many children suffer painful losses watching their fathers succumb to the bottle, falling drunken out of a window, dying slowly from a failed liver or going into a coma from an intoxicated stupor.

During these heartbreaking times, the mother holds her family together, rears her children and makes a life for them that their father failed to do. Unfortunately, I grew up without a mother. My childhood memories recall only life with my father. My alcoholic father.

With a population of 40 million people, Poland has fewer than 70,000 born-again Christians – fewer committed “Believers” than are in some Muslim countries. Spiritual Warfare is a daily battle. Having only an alcoholic father as a role model, my spiritual warfare began at the age of 9, when I, too, began to take to the bottle.

In 1991, I ventured beyond the golden liquid to drugs. It started with marijuana, then led to LSD, amphetamines and eventually to my most beloved, heroin. I was an addict. Worse, I became a dealer. I wasn’t a dealer for money; I was a dealer for habit – my habit, heroin.

At 22, three years after my father died of alcohol, I had to escape from my hometown. I owed \$50 to a new gang. They needed to prove their clout locally, so I was chosen as an example. They set out to kill me. Fleeing for my life, I became a homeless musician playing on the streets of Krakow, Szczecin, Miedzydroje and Poznan. I played solely for alcohol and drug money.

All I needed to survive was my guitar to support my addictions.

In Poznan I entered my first 14-day “dry” detoxification program. Later, I entered a rehabilitation center in another city, only to be thrown out with my housemates for continuous robberies that were taking place. Once again, on the streets, I immediately engaged in my previous lifestyle. I was a homeless, wasted druggie. It was another year before I chose to try rehabilitation again.

For a second time, I failed. I couldn’t stop smoking cigarettes (the quiet killer). So, after a year of drying up, I left the rehabilitation center, to pursue my old life.

During this second time out of rehabilitation I got into serious trouble. My friends and I horribly beat up another junkie on the streets, while we were stoned. The man went to hospital and we went to jail. There I was given my first Bible. My uncle, a Christian man, visited me repeatedly in jail. He talked incessantly about Christ. One night when I was reading the Bible, I realized that I had lost EVERYTHING! Nobody needed me. I was nothing. Then and there, I prayed to Jesus to take my broken and useless life. I prayed for Him to change me. It was in a vile and dangerous place that I became as white as snow!

My uncle did not live with me, so in prison I lacked a role model. My conversion to Christ was real, but my habits remained. I continued to curse, smoke (cigarettes and marijuana) and when I left prison, I became the man I was before, a heroin junkie. For two days I binged on my beloved.

If it wasn’t for a voice I heard on that second day, I might still be in a gutter. The voice said, “Get up. Go. Leave this city at once!” I picked up my few belongings and fled, never once looking back! I praise God for speaking audibly to me that day.

From there, I went to live in Turek with my uncle and his family. I started attending church regularly, got a job making plastic windows and began studying for my high school diploma. During this time, the Lord set me free from my addictions to alcohol and drugs, but cigarettes were still a daily battle. Many people from church were praying for me. On December 24, 2000, nine years after my first experience with hard drugs, I was set free from all harmful addictions! I told Him, “God, I have no power over my cigarettes. You have all the power.” On this holy eve, God conquered all of my demons. I have never had the desire to smoke, drink or do drugs since!

Not only did God cleanse me of all addictions, but He also gave me a second chance in life. In Turek I met my wife, Magdalena, a beautiful and wonderful Christian woman. She graduated in May of 2003 with her Master’s in Russian and is now attending a Social Work School. Her dream is to work with children that come through the Bread of Life program.

After moving from Turek to Poznan, I met Brooke and Richard at First Baptist Church where they hold weekly Bread of Life Bible studies and discipleship classes. I attended the 6a.m. prayer time at my church and was in the kitchen afterwards drinking coffee when

*(Continued on page 4)*

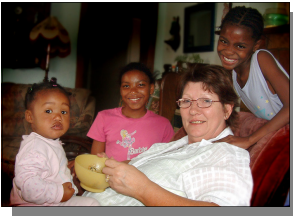
Dear Team,

After seven trips to the Department of Home Affairs in Cape Town, spread over as many weeks, we finally have our 4-year, multiple-entry resident visa for South Africa. This specific answer to prayer is cause for great rejoicing and peace of mind. Thanks for your part in prayer.

Please be sure to read Mateusz's testimony (opposite on p. 2), as told to Brooke Nungesser. It's very well written and a powerful, heart-moving story of what God can do. ITMI is currently processing his application to work in Poznan, with Nungessers in the Bread of Life Ministry to the homeless. We invite you to help this young couple with prayer and practical support.

Last month Harriett and I were both involved in the "Summit" Biblical Worldview Conference that attracted a record number of young people from various parts of Africa. I spoke at several of the training sessions and Harriett helped to feed the hungry masses during the Week of Outreach that followed. We also stayed with our grandchildren at the Hammond home so Peter and Lenora could attend a Pastor's Conference together.

Several have asked if we have any ministry in South Africa to abused children, some of whom have HIV. Recently Steve Evers and I visited Graham and Jene' Des Fountain at their residence near Cape Town to see the wonderful work they are doing to provide a Christian home for just such children. Harriett and I visited again and discussed their urgent need for a larger facility to accommodate the growing number of children. The Des Fountains have submitted their application to ITMI. Stay Tuned!



**Jene giving love**

Perhaps the most significant ITMI project underway just now is the Polish Bible translation undertaken by Rev. Piotr Zaremba. He completed the New Testament right on schedule and several of the books have already been printed and are being widely used in evangelism. This is the first time in Poland's history that the Bible has been translated directly from Greek and Hebrew into Polish. Pray for God's Word to bear fruit.

By the time you receive this several team members will be on African field trips up north. Let me encourage you to remember Lawren and Tim especially as they face many difficulties both along the way and in their target countries.

We never cease to be amazed at how the Lord works in answer to your specific prayers. Johan and Walda's daughter, Kina was really very ill this time last month with a severe respiratory illness. Several wrote to us that they were praying. The family was at Church last Sunday and 7-month old Kina was just beaming. Another testimony that God answers knee-mail.



**Morning prayers**



**Johan and Kina**

Bill Bathman

Yours in His grip,

(Continued from page 2)

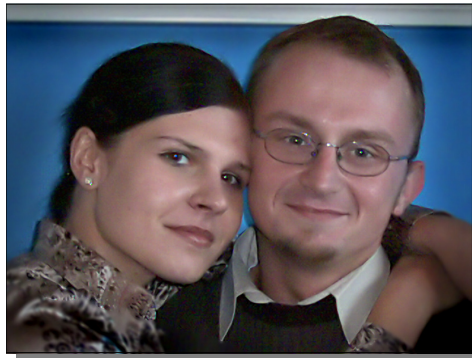
Brooke and Richard came in and began making breakfast.

We began to talk about Bread of Life, and I knew immediately that was where God wanted to use me. I volunteered for that day and came back the following weeks as a volunteer. My job was selling sandwiches from store to store during weekdays. On the weekends, I was attending school for my high school diploma. At times, I couldn't even afford groceries to eat. I had to completely rely upon God!

During the month of October 2002, I volunteered regularly at Bread of Life, in exchange for groceries and grocery money. I went through the application process to become a missionary of the First Baptist Church of Poznan, my church. Since November 2002, I have been the Bread of Life Ministries Polish missionary, supported by the ministry.

My first year as a Polish missionary has been a fruitful but often difficult one. Due to years of needle use and possibly my many tattoos, I acquired Hepatitis C. Many of you know this is a disease that a person

has forever. I spent many weeks in the hospital and afterwards had to give myself weekly injections. Although I worked, I often felt nauseated and lethargic. My friends at church always prayed for me; for my health and healing.



**Mateusz and Magdalena**

Magda became my wife in May of 2003, not knowing what the future held for me physically because I still had Hepatitis C. In the summer of 2003 the doctors declared a miracle! My body had been completely healed of this disease.


Conversion to Christ was my first miracle. The second, a desire for what my body previously couldn't do without, my addictions-GONE. Third, Hepatitis C, a

disease with no cure, taken away! My life is a testimony of God's might and power!

I finished my secondary school in January of 2004. Now I am going to rehabilitation school to become a drug and alcohol therapist. Later I would like to go to Seminary. I will be doing all of these things while helping (and living) at the Bread of Life Transformation Shelter. As I look to my future, I also reflect upon my past. Sometimes I curse my tattoos. Other times, I know that they are a reminder of what I have conquered and overcome, thanks to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

I try to identify with every person that walks into Bread of Life – see their life through their eyes and experiences. Their circumstances are the result of some unwise choices, but God can redeem every lost soul.

On your walk with me, I hope that you, too, felt the power and mercy of God's grace! Bread of Life reaches people like me every day ...in the redeeming name of Jesus.

Authorized to Accept  

### **For Praise . . .**

1. Kina, 7-month old daughter of Frontline's Johan & Walda, has completely recovered.
2. The Bathmans received their 4-year, multi-entry visas for South Africa.
3. Best ever Summit Conference with over 80 young delegates attending Biblical Worldview.

### **For Prayer . . .**

1. Wisdom for ITMI Board as they consider the increased number of applications
2. Devaluation of the U.S. \$ forces some cutbacks and limits ministry expansion.
3. Lenora Hammond, home-schooling her 4 children.



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