



# Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

## IN TOUCH MONTHLY

1 November 2004

The Great Physician offered to make a house call, but the Centurion declined. "I am not worthy," he said, "to have you come under my roof." That is remarkable humility from a military commander of an occupation army representing the world's only super-power.

"I understand the chain of command," he said. "I have authority to give orders because I am the local representative of the higher authority in Rome. I recognize that You have authority in another realm. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed." Jesus marveled. Does your faith cause our Lord to marvel?

## Sub-Sahara Sojourn

### EAST AFRICA

ITMI's Director **Steve Evers** is currently on a 7-week, 7,000-mile journey through seven countries of Southern and Eastern Africa. He's traveling with **Tim Keller**, also from Arizona, a 6-year ITMI veteran missionary serving with Frontline Fellowship. So far they've had ministry in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya. They have taken vital supplies, visited projects of ITMI interest and involvement plus preached the Gospel along the way. This month they finish their trans-continental itinerary in South Sudan. If Steve can catch a missionary flight out he should be back home for Thanksgiving. Maybe you'd make that a matter of prayer.

One Sunday last month Steve preached to Sudanese exiles currently living in Nairobi, Kenya. To show cultural respect he was properly dressed for the occasion in a blazer, white shirt and tie. Overhead the sun was baking a clear blue African sky. The corrugated tin-roofed Church was packed but no one complained about the lack of air-conditioning, because only the two Arizona boys had ever experienced it – you don't miss what you've never had. Steve was about to melt in the stifling heat a mere hundred miles south of the Equator, but the sheer joy of worship-

ing with this part of the Body of Christ tempered the torrid situation.

The men sat on the left and women on the right. A group of ladies dressed in bright African colored attire sat on the front row behind a series of multiple sized, hand



**Steve Evers preaching in Kenya**

made drums. One lady starts singing alone and after a few measures everyone else joins in. After many traditional songs there followed the usual liturgical readings and congregational response.

Then Tim brought greetings and introduced Steve. His text was from Luke 19, the story of Zaccheus. "Being a little guy I can identify with Zac" Steve quipped. His self-

depreciating humor translated easily into Arabic, much to his relief.

"God really blessed His Word" Steve reported. He drove home many lessons from the text. There was one anxious moment, however, when after he'd finished one of his main points the lead singer burst into song and everyone joined in and sang all six verses. Steve wondered if his sermon was so bad that the singer felt she had to do something to "save" the day. His interpreter, seeing the perplexed look on Steve's face, whispered to him, "She was so blessed by your last point. It reminded her of a song that echoed that truth, so now they're singing in agreement." Africa is so *cool* – despite the heat.

From Nairobi the Team crossed the Equator and journeyed north to Sudan. We'll have more of their African adventure in our January issue.

### SUDAN

Word has reached us of a mutiny in Moruland. A report from our dear friend Bishop Bullen Dolli describes how renegade elements of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) have interfered in a Sunday morning worship service at the Lui Cathedral, abused and beat some of the pastors, threatened the congregation at gun-

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# What Happens When Farms Disappear?

A serious look at one of South Africa's most pressing problems

The first *Decade of Democracy* was celebrated in South Africa in April 2004. What is the outlook after the first 10 years? A new book, "*The Great South African Land Scandal*," by Dr. Philip du Toit, an attorney and specialist on land reform and labor law, warns of "the possibility that South Africa could go the same way as Zimbabwe."

Some background: South African President Thabo Mbeki is currently serving his second 5-year term in office. He was hand picked by former President Nelson Mandela. Mr. Mbeki, a hardcore Marxist, is dedicated to "a better life for all." One aspect of his program is the redistribution of wealth and land. The ANC's *Freedom Charter* demands that "The land shall be shared among those who work it!" Accordingly the government wants to "hand over 30% (64 million acres) of predominantly white commercial farmland to emerging black farmers by 2020."

Agricultural production by black families in Africa has traditionally been on a subsistence basis. That is, each family planted a garden and enjoyed the benefits of it. If there was plenty of rain and there was a bumper crop then they didn't have to plant for the next season. But if there was a drought, then they faced starvation.

Dutch settlers in the Cape introduced the concept of commercial farming 350 years ago. They established a food supply station to provide provisions for ships from Europe sailing out to India and the Dutch East Indies.

Over the last two years the desecration of South Africa's farmland has increased to such an extent that land is being taken out of production at an alarming rate. In 2001 the Minister of Agriculture handed over the 3,460-acre Letsitele Valley farms to the Mamathola tribe of 1,500 people. These farms showed a profit of \$2.5 million annually. The tribe was given \$750,000 in operating capital. But after the takeover none of them came to farm or live on the land. Instead they elected a committee who paid

themselves a monthly salary of \$2,000 each. They did not farm either.

Two years later investigators found that the "avocado trees were dying of thirst. While the farm dam was full the pipes for irrigation were broken. Mango trees were not watered either. The papayas hung from dry trunks, while grass and weeds grew between the expertly laid out plantation rows. Three state-of-the-art packing sheds were empty, loose crates lying about. There was not a soul to be seen. As we drove through this once beautiful farm we came upon neglected macadamia groves. Hundreds of thousands of macadamia nuts lay under the trees unharvested. Further on [we found] citrus orchards gasping for water in the searing heat. These 'ghost farms' are appearing all over South Africa." The loss of the orange harvest alone was \$5 million.

Ironically the 30% target for redistribution has been put in place with no evidence of actual demand for rural land and could have major implications for commercial agriculture. The loss of foreign exchange through exports is further compounded by the loss of tax revenue paid to the government. Dr. du Toit concludes, "The government's promise to return the land to the people as outlined in the *Freedom Charter* is an invitation to famine."

Our longtime friend, Mrs. Dorothy Scarborough of the Gospel Defense League observes, "South Africa's needs have long outgrown subsistence farming, such as most 'emergent farmers' practice. It cannot afford the subsistence mentality. It needs agricultural expertise of the highest standard and a work ethic of singular dimensions. Most of all it needs to look unto God, the great Provider, the Giver of all good things. For it is He who through obedient hands '*raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes.*'" Psalm 113:7,8

Bill Bathman – Cape Town, South Africa

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## Sudan (Continued from page 1)

point, desecrated graves in the cemetery, fired shots into the Church and frightened people away.

The entire community is appalled at the disrespect shown not just to the local Christians, but to ministers of the Gospel. There is particular disgust at the lack of respect shown for the graves of their Christian ancestors, including the Founder of the Church in

Moruland, pioneer missionary Dr. Kenneth Fraser.

When the Arabs were attacking with *jihad* in full bloom, when the Muslim government of Sudan was bombing, when times were hard these same soldiers came to the Church pleading for help. They urged us to mobilize prayer, to speak up for their cause and to build pressure worldwide against the National

Islamic Front government in Khartoum. Now the prayers of many Christians have been answered, a cease-fire is in place, peace talks are underway and there is relative calm in the land. How untimely for these ill-behaved soldiers to turn their backs on God, desecrate graves, assault ministers and threaten Believers at worship.

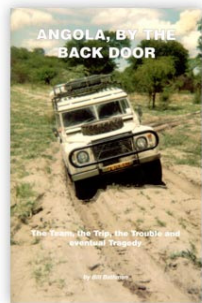
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Dear Team,

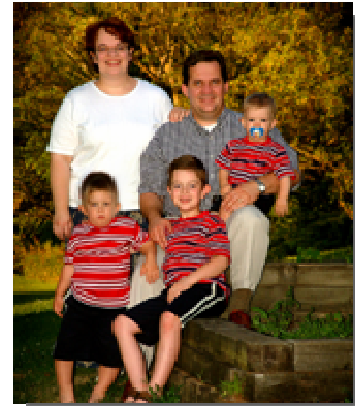
Greetings from Cape Town! We are delighted to be back 'home' in Africa once again and eager to get on with the ministry God has opened for us here.

At the end of last month it was my privilege to speak at a Reformation Conference observed here each year. Somehow, in America, we seem to have forgotten about the Reformation and the dramatic benefits it brought to Western civilization. Instead we observe Halloween, which is a celebration of witches, death and other evils. It's amazing how quickly a nation can forget its roots. Harriett has written an essay on this.

Dr. Adrian Ban is on the threshold of discovering a new direction for his ministry in Romania. These are wonderful days of leaning on the Lord and waiting patiently for His clear direction for the next step. Your prayers for Adi and Ema and their fine boys will be very much appreciated during these days of transition. More details later.



Next month marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Anthony Duncan's ill-fated trip to Angola. He was our good friend and his story inspired my first published book, *Angola, By The Back Door*. We still have a modest supply and I've asked Kristi to send a complimentary copy to everyone who sends a gift (of any size) to ITMI this month for whatever project or missionary. It's our way of saying "thanks" for being a vital part of our Team!



The Bans

Several of you have asked us about Darfur in Sudan. The media is making a big thing of it. US Secretary of State Colin Powell used the word *genocide*. Certainly the situation is bad and we do not wish to make light of anyone's suffering, but let's keep things in perspective. The war, waged by Arab banditry on horseback, has killed 50,000 people and driven 1.4 million from their homes. Compare that with almost 3 million killed in Congo's war and 2 million Christians killed by Muslims in South Sudan.

Darfur is the western-most region of Sudan. It is approximately 700 miles from north to south and 300 miles wide. The population is predominantly Muslim and black. These Muslims do not wish to live under Sharia law (who in their right mind would?), but their Arab masters in Khartoum want to impose it upon them. Now enter the UN.

The Oil for Food scandal in Iraq has brought to light the utter corruption of the UN and now we discover that France, Germany, Russia and China were in bed with Saddam, and on the take as well. No wonder they did not endorse the Iraq war.

Darfur is a distraction to give the UN an excuse to extend its life a little longer to provide humanitarian aid that was unnecessary to begin with – aid which American taxpayers will underwrite. The UN's concern is limited to Islamic victims. Where was their anxiety for the Christian victims in South Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi? Remember folks, the UN profits from peoples suffering, why would they want to ameliorate it?

Please remember me in prayer later this month as I have opportunity to preach the Word in Malawi. I've never been to that country, but I'll tell you about it later.

Yours in His grip,

Bill Bathman

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Bishop Bullen Dolli has worked hard and traveled widely representing the Christians of Southern Sudan and their just cause. He has suffered and sacrificed much. His brother was killed by Muslim troops for refusing to renounce his faith in Christ. They dragged him behind a military vehicle until he was severely injured, then poured gasoline over him and set him alight.

Bullen Dolli was the first bishop to be consecrated in Free Sudan, in liberated territory back in 1991 in the Lui Cathedral. Since then the cathedral has been destroyed three times by the Muslim government and rebuilt by the Christians each time. The government of Sudan Air Force has bombed the community, which includes the Samaritan's Purse hospital, ten times in recent years.

The Cathedral in Lui stands next to Laro, the old slave tree under which the Arabs used to tether the Moru people en route to the slave markets of Khartoum. It was under this giant mahogany

tree that Dr. Fraser started the first Bible study group.

Christians in the West have traditionally been among the best friends of the Moru people in their struggle against Islam for freedom and peace. Missionaries have, at great risk to their own lives, taken in tons of medicine and other vital supplies, trained local medics, nurses, chaplains and teachers. They helped rebuild hospitals, clinics and schools which the Islamic government of Sudan had destroyed.

Please pray for this situation. A few renegade dissidents, looting and vandalizing can spoil years of hard work. One missionary said, "They have inflicted more damage to the cause of freedom in South Sudan than a whole division of Arab troops or dozens of aerial bombardments."

ITMI recognizes that there are always two sides to every story. Misunderstandings occur and people get hurt, sometimes physically as well as emotionally. Steve and Tim are the Lord's Ambassadors. Pray that they will be able to diplomatically bring peace and healing to an area and to a



Steve and Eschol Children

### SOUTH AFRICA

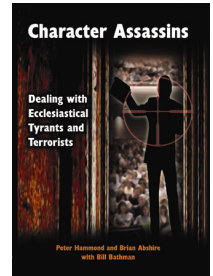
Interest is growing in **Eshcol**, the wonderful ministry to abused and abandoned children in the Western Cape. The date has been extended for their option to close on a suitable property.

Graham recognizes, "It's always a challenge to wait on God, but He is faithful and does 'give us the desires of our hearts.'"

Bill and Harriett are back in Cape Town now and we should have some first hand reports from them soon.

## **Character Assassins** – By Peter Hammond and Brian Abshire **\$16.00 + s&h** **Dealing with Ecclesiastical Tyrants and Terrorists**

To encourage and empower those involved in missions and ministry who are being targeted and undermined by critics, this book attempts to both expose the problem and provide practical and Biblical solutions. For this purpose the light of Scripture and experience is shone on the dark dealings of those relentless critics who prefer to shoot from the shadows.



Authorized to Accept  

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

1. **Bill & Harriett**: thankful for a meaningful time in the USA, now glad to be back in Africa.
2. Protection, provision & blessing for **Steve** Evers traveling overland across Africa.
3. Financial provision for physical therapy for **Michael** Banicki (10) in Poland.
4. Encouraging growth & opportunities for **Adrian** Ban in Romania & **Piotr** Zaremba in Poland.

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

1. Bill & team as they minister in Malawi later this month and into December.
2. Finances to purchase facilities for **Eshcol**, to help abused children in South Africa.
3. Safety for ministries in SA in the face of "land reform" affecting nationals we work with.

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