



Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

IN TOUCH MONTHLY

1 January 2007

Jesus Christ advised the lukewarm Church at Laodicea to “...buy of Me gold tried in the fire.” Revelation 3:18 They thought they were rich and had everything they needed. Jesus knew better. Gold is refined by fire to burn up the impurities. Any purifying process is painful. Many Christians shy away at this point and miss His blessing. Contrary to popular belief, our Lord’s last words were not “Go ye into all the world” but rather “**repent.**” That is where the purifying begins – and it’s painful.

Africa: New frontiers and fractures

South Africa

Last month ITMI’s **Timothy Keller** completed his latest field trip through five countries opening up new areas to the north in Zambia and Malawi. His team-mate for this 5-week jolting journey was **Johan Meintjes**, an ex-South African Navy man and a newcomer to Frontline Fellowship.

Eugene Kalunga, Director of Excellent Christian, Academy, received them warmly when they arrived for ministry in Kabwe, Zambia. There was just one catch. The town was host to a couple of NGO meetings and consequently there was ‘no room in the inn.’

Johan remembered some missionary friends of his in town working with Pro-Christo. A quick visit resulted in a cordial welcome by Coen Scholez (whom Tim had met earlier at a conference in Kimberly). Small world.

But that’s not all God had in mind. Coen is deeply involved in a project on the northern border of Zambia on Lake Tanganyika – Africa’s deepest (4,700 ft.) and second largest lake. Formed by the Great Rift Valley, the lake is 420 miles from north to south and 30 to 45 miles wide.

There are over 1.5 million

people living along the shores which border Tanzania and Congo as well as Zambia. The fishing villages spread out along the 3-country shoreline are mostly unevangelized. Coen shared his vision to reach these forgotten people and the concept matched Johan’s burden to use his naval skills for the Lord.

Coen shared his vision to reach these forgotten people...

Our two men traveled all the way up north, an extra 1,400 miles to evaluate a large boat currently for sale. Will there eventually be a naval wing to ITMI? Stay tuned.

While in the north they met up with **Grant** and **Lynne Schaefer** who lead a vital ministry in rural areas of northern Zambia. ITMI sponsored Grant through 4 years of Bible College back in the early-90s. Small world indeed!

There were plenty of opportunities for ministry on this trip – so much so that Tim and Johan often had simultaneous meetings in separate locations. They held Biblical Worldview Seminars, preached in Colleges and public schools, [impossible in American schools these days!], shared Christ with several government officials and preached in various denominational Churches along the way.

There were the usual discomforts and dangers, par for the course in mission work. The weather was quite hot, hovering around 100 F, as the expected rains had not yet come. Tim was putting his shoes on one morning and found a snake under his bed. “I used a mat to chase it out of the room,” he said, “because I didn’t think it was poisonous.” The next day he woke up when a cockroach dropped from the ceiling and hit him on the head.



Tim encourages Zambian Christians.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

After a meeting one evening at the **Lusaka Bible College** they were driving home through the Soweto market. There were several attempts by thieves to open the windows or break in through the tailgate of the bakkie (their pickup truck) and loot it while they were stuck in traffic. By God's grace, nothing was stolen.

Looking back over 2006, Tim led three field trips (autumn, winter and spring); preached the Gospel in numerous churches, schools and colleges; participated in two Biblical Worldview Summits; personally conducted 5 seminars and 3 evangelism workshops throughout Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania plus a lecture on missions at a Muslim Evangelism workshop in South Africa – and drove his 4-WD Toyota 22,375 miles over some of Africa's most punishing roads. Tim's wide variety of missionary experience has honed him into a valuable team member. His teachable nature and humble spirit make him a joy to work with.

Toward the end of the year, God rewarded him with engagement to a lovely young lady, Ashley Hilde. They are planning a spring wedding in Tucson, Arizona. Thought you'd like to know.



Tim Keller and Ashley Hilde.

Pre-Christmas African Safari

Harriett has a broken ankle. She has a cast up to just below her left knee and the doctor says she will need to wear it for about 6+ weeks. We've bought crutches, a special shoe and rented a wheelchair so we are mobile. Those are the facts. Here's what happened.

Our adventure began December 5 when we left *Pennireef*, our little home in Cape Town and headed east along the Garden Route which closely follows the southern coast of Africa along the Indian Ocean. After leaving Somerset Wes we were watched with indifference by an assortment of monkeys and baboons as we climbed over Lowry's Pass and plunged almost immediately into the rich sub-tropical vegetation near Hermanus. It's beautiful, and the weather was perfect.

The first night we stopped in Knysna at the Log Inn. It's a rustic old landmark in a quaint little town just along the coast from George. After dinner – ostrich steak and chips – we decided to stroll down toward the water front to get some exercise after being in the car all day. When we were accosted by a young man just a block from where we were staying we decided it wasn't too good an idea to venture out like that after dark. We took evasive action, returned without incident to our second-floor room and watched from our balcony as a full summer moon rose silently out of its

eastern bed. It was so romantic.

Our destination for Wednesday night was East London. We've been in contact with a veteran missionary of 45+ years, who has recently lost her second husband to cancer. Her first husband died of cancer also. We promised her we'd arrive by five. It was 4:50pm when we pulled up in front of her home. She was waiting in her front garden and welcomed us warmly.

Gaye Stillwell is an extraordinary lady with deep spiritual insights. She and Harriett connected immediately. We talked non-stop about the Lord and His wonderful dealing in our lives. Her ministry is teaching children, first of all about the Lord Jesus and how to be saved, then about the 3-R's. She is also a gifted poet and talented artist.

Friday morning the weather was closing in. A summer storm was on the way. We talked and prayed until mid-morning and then it was time to reluctantly say 'goodbye' for now. We spent two nights and a significant part of three days with one of God's choice saints. One thing is certain: we will never be the same.

The weather deteriorated rapidly as we pressed slowly eastward toward Durban. The

mountain passes were already socked-in with clouds and it was pouring rain as we crossed from the Transkei into KwaZulu Natal. Visibility was less than 50 meters for long stretches and my windshield wipers were at full speed. Harriett spotted a thatched roof log cabin Inn up on a hillside above the road we were on. "Maybe we can stay overnight there!" she exclaimed. I turned into the long driveway that took us up the hill. They had one room left. We took it!

Saturday morning we were up early and after a fabulous African buffet breakfast set out for Port Shepstone in a light drizzle rain. By the time we reached the coast and picked up the toll-road to Durban the rain had stopped, but the sun tried in vain to break through.

From Durban we took the coastal road 70km to Stanger, then turned north on the R74, through Mapumalo (where the revival began 40 years ago) and arrived at KwaSizabantu at 2:45 p.m. My first scheduled preaching service was at 7 p.m. that evening.

The theme of the youth conference was from Luke 14:22 "... **there is still room for you.**" I did not know the theme ahead of time. In the next 2 hours the Lord gave

(Continued on page 4)

Dear Team,

This month marks the 34th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. During that time we as a nation have murdered some 50 million of our unborn children. By now most of them would have been grown and in the productive work force contributing to the ongoing welfare of our nation. America has mortgaged its future and now the creditor is knocking on our door. *"The wages of sin is death"* – indeed.

What could Almighty God do with a great country like America if it truly repented of its national sins of abortion and homosexuality? What will He do if we don't repent? We deserve God's judgment for our disobedience. *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby."* Hebrews 12:11



Bill preaching dedication service.

Last month, before leaving for the KwaSizabantu Youth Conference, we had the joy of sharing in the dedication service for the new worship center at **Moreson Children's Haven**. I was totally astonished at the work they have accomplished with the funds from ITMI. Every dollar you contributed has done at least four dollars work.

The task was humongous. They had to start from within and work outwards. In the process everyone benefited – thus your gifts were quadrupled. The new Worship Center (which is an all-purpose room) will benefit not only the children, but the adults as well. There is a kitchen area where meals can be prepared for several hundred people. There were around 250 at the dedication service and afterwards all were fed.

The building had been a cow shed. In my opening remarks I noted: "The last time I stood in this room it was a cow-shed. Farm animals had lived here. The revival in Natal at KwaSizabantu Mission began 40 years ago...in a cow-shed. Today, the most important message preached around the world is about a Savior who came to this earth to be born in Bethlehem, in a cow-shed."

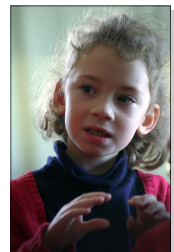


New Worship Center.

The day was marked by miracles. For over a week the weather had been scorching hot and there had been a plague of flies. There are no screen windows in this area. On the Dedication Sunday (Dec. 3) there was a mild misty rain that cooled the temperature and a steady breeze that abolished the flies. Everyone was aware of what God had done, and praised Him for His goodness.

A great joy to share is the engagement last month of field missionary **Timothy Keller** to Miss **Ashley Hilde**. Ashley is a dedicated missionary with a sweet and humble spirit. She has a delightful ability to anticipate needs and initiate work before being asked. Her teaching capabilities are outstanding. Wow, Tim – you picked a jewel! Wedding bells will ring in May.

Last month we requested prayer for MCH's **Elmane Le Roux** who had hepatitis A. We rejoice in her recovery! Then just before Christmas her husband, **Gerhard**, came down with the same disease along with their oldest child **Martie**. Their first youth camp at MCH is scheduled for this month. Please remember this dear family in your prayers.



Martie.

Yours in His grip,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Bathman".

Bill Bathman

(Continued from page 2)

me a message from His Word on that subject and the Holy Spirit enabled me to preach with power for an hour as Harriett prayed for me. There were just over 4,000 present with more delegates arriving hourly all through the night.



Youth Conference at KwaSiazabantu.

Gray clouds and a misty-drizzle greeted us on Sunday morning. We assembled with about 8,000 people for the Sunday morning worship service in the big auditorium. Rev. Erlo Stegen preached a powerful sermon. The presence of the Lord was evident and the people very moved.

After the service we walked to the car through a misty-rain. Our car is right-hand drive. I opened the door for Harriett on the passenger side. As she was getting into the car I opened the

back door for Margrit Olsen, Kjell's wife to get in. I heard Margrit gasp and stare in shock as she looked past me. I turned to see Harriett, lying on her back in the mud by the side of the car! I couldn't believe it, but there she was, in obvious distress and pain. I dropped to her side and gathered her in my arms and she whispered to me, "My left leg just gave-way."

She had lifted her right foot into the car which meant her weight was on her left leg. Suddenly her knee gave way; she fell backward to the ground. Her left ankle was twisted and it looked like the bone was completely out of joint. We learned later that it was broken. Her foot was turned sharply outward at a grotesque angle. She was in great pain, but she never screamed or cried out.

We lifted her up and sat her sideways on the seat. Then I pushed the seat back as far as it would go, and let the back of the seat recline as much as possible. People brought cushions to put under her leg for support and blankets to keep her warm. She was trembling with shock. Dr. Albie gave her an

injection to ease the pain.

We left immediately for the hospital in Durban – an hour and forty minutes drive. Kjell drove, because he knows the road and the quickest way to the hospital.

Dr. Albie phoned ahead and contacted an orthopedic surgeon friend of his who met us at the emergency entrance of the hospital. The staff was extremely kind and understanding and very professional. Harriett sensed this and was immediately reassured. After prep she was taken to surgery where Dr. Buchan inserted a metal plate and five screws to the broken bone and placed her leg in a cast. She was in Durban's St. Augustine hospital from Sunday until Wednesday.

I preached my last message at the KSB Youth Conference on Wednesday evening. We left the next morning for the 1,073-mile return journey to Cape Town. It took us two days. We stopped overnight in Bleomfontein and had a pizza sent to our room. Harriett rode all the way in the back seat with her leg straight out. We praise the Lord for some beautiful highways in South Africa – unique on the Dark Continent.

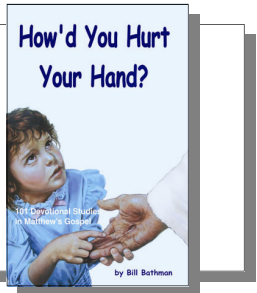


How'd You Hurt Your Hand? by Bill Bathman

101 Bible studies in Matthew's Gospel. This 205 page book celebrates ITMI's 25th Anniversary. It is a current commentary considering the question, "what if Matthew took a look at us? Would he recognize 21st Century Christianity?"

\$10 + S&H

Discounts available for quantity purchases.



For Praise . . .

1. **Elmane** Le Roux's remarkable recovery from hepatitis A.
2. Completion and dedication of the new Worship Center at **Moreson Children's Haven**.
3. Opportunity to preach the Word to thousands at KwaSizabantu Youth Conference.
4. God's blessing on Dr. **Piotr Zaremba's** translation of the Bible into the Polish language.

For Prayer . . .

1. **Gerhard** Le Roux, mission leader at MCH, and daughter **Martie**, now have hepatitis A.
2. Current financial needs of Gerhard and Elmane LeRoux and Moreson Children's Haven.
3. Complete recovery and successful rehab for **Harriett** Bathman's fractured left ankle.
4. Ongoing need for school computers at **Excellence Christian Academy** in Kabwe, Zambia.

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