



# Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

## IN TOUCH MONTHLY

1 May 2009

Jesus Christ is an equal opportunity Savior, because He is *no respecter of persons*. Salvation is not for just one nationality or class or political party. His invitation is open to all: *"Whosoever will may come."* We are deck stewards on a sinking ship pointing people to Christ. That's the purpose of Missions. We could use your help to rescue the perishing.

## "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away"

### SOUTH AFRICA

**Durban:** The hardest part of ministering to a people devastated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic is seeing the swiftness with which death takes its victims. **Kelly and Cherise Smith** are in one of these hard places of the earth, where HIV/AIDS has afflicted every household in the community and freedom from the disease is considered miraculous.



Penn Gumbi, Zulu caretaker

Recently, death came knocking at the door of the Smith residence to lay its hands upon a Zulu man, **Penn Gumbi**, a caretaker on the large property the Smiths purchased a few

years back. Because Penn had become so dear to the family, Cherise fought hard against this unwanted intruder into her home and told us of the struggle to give the hope of life to a man destined for death. Listen to this fight in her own words:

*"Where do I begin? My mind races as I try to figure out how to start telling you about this experience of mine. I suppose I would consider myself privileged – being allowed to fight for someone's life, doing the best I know how, praying constantly for a chance for this person to survive. Day in and day out, not a second going by without me wondering if I should quickly pop my head in and see what he needs.*

*"Oh, Lord I need your strength. I pray for him and tell him that God will give him strength. I get so encouraged when he has a few good hours...I am excited about his prospects of survival.*

*"And then, I walk into his room to say, 'Good morning!' and I can't help myself; I just about fall to the ground sobbing. His skin has sunken completely into his bones overnight, just like that! I have to leave the room before he sees me. I need to be an encouragement."*



Cherise teaching Penn how to read

*"I watched him outside the other day, slowly touching his face where the big recesses of skin are – he knows how sick he is. He listened to the gospel message that Kelly shared with him. When Kelly asked him if he wanted to pray, he said that he would rather repeat the words inside his head. Kelly encouraged him to confess these words of commitment to the Lord out loud with his mouth. Penn was willing. That day, he joined our family of believers."*

Cherise went on to explain other details of this long struggle with death, but finally admitted that the fight *"was taking a toll on me."*

(Continued on page 4)

# The World's greatest evil

For the past 48 years, beginning with my first serious trip behind the Iron Curtain to Yugoslavia in 1961, my wife and I have been working in restricted-access countries. Now for the past nine years our work has been increasingly focused on Islam.

Without a doubt, communism constituted a tremendous threat to America (and believe-it-or-not, still does). Until the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the Reds ruled almost a third of the earth and intimidated the rest. But there was a unique factor that constituted its Achilles' heel – only 5% of any country was actually members of the Communist Party. The 5% controlled the 95%.

Today Islam boasts approximately 1.2 billion followers. The most significant difference is that almost 95% of the people in these Muslim countries are committed to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century ideology of a desert-bandit pedophile who told his followers to “spread the faith by the sword” – jihad.

Communism and Islam: There are many parallels in these two faiths. Both *claim* an interest in “peace.” The communists speak of “the lion and the lamb lying down together,” but in their mind the lamb is *inside* the lion.

When the Muslims speak of peace it is the “peace of Islam” which means “submission” to Allah and Shariah law. As they spread the faith there are only two alternatives: submit or die. Islam is a religion of death. They

love death and are willing to die as martyrs and the more infidels they can kill the more brownie-points they gain with Allah. What kind of god is that?

Yet, many of our pulpits are silent today in the presence of this evil. Some pastors are afraid of liberal cells within the church that will be critical of them if they speak out. In the growing climate of multiculturalism they are worried about being accused of bigotry and left to swing in the wind by their own church.

Paul warned the Church at Ephesus, “*We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age.*”

Eph. 6:12 The Ephesians persevered in many good works, but eventually – in a series of unguarded moments – gradually left their first love. Rev. 2:1-4

We must beware the disaster facing a church that fails to speak out in the presence of this clear and present danger. Why this timidity? Are we afraid of being labeled controversial? For 28 years ITMI has been dealing with tyrant regimes that have tortured saints in the restricted-access countries where we operate. As far back as the 80s we warned of the rise of radical Islam. Few listened.

As theologians de-emphasize the centrality of Christ in our life and society and neglect to assert the *uniqueness* of Jesus as “the Way, the Truth and the Life” a spiritual vacuum is created which radical Islam will rush to fill. Where are the ‘watchmen on the wall’?

The Arabian culture in which Muhammad was born had 360 gods – one for each day of the lunar year. That was too much for the self-proclaimed “Prophet” so he chose one, the lunar god Allah, to replace all the rest. But Allah is **not** Jehovah. Allah is a false, left-over pagan god of the moon worshipers. Allah did not create the “heavens and the earth.” Jehovah created the object of worship that Allah represents. Let's get it straight.

Multiculturalism discriminates in favor of those who challenge the established values of America. Even our President, on a recent Summit tour of Europe, told the President of Turkey (a Muslim country), “We do not consider ourselves a Christian nation, a Jewish nation or a Muslim nation. We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values” – which is another way of saying, “If you don't stand for

something, you'll fall for anything.”

Alexis de Tocqueville understood in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century that it was a strong Christian faith present in the churches across America that made this country great. Today

***“We must beware the disaster facing a church that fails to speak out in the presence of this clear and present danger.”***

some churches are falling over themselves to accommodate the Muslims, while in many circles Christianity is viewed as irrelevant and Christians are becoming an oppressed minority.

In my lifetime I've seen two great evils confront our Faith – Communism and Islam. The latter is by far the worst and in our increasingly secular society the most dangerous, for while Christianity is being sidelined by so-called “progressives,” Islam is rushing in to fill the vacuum.

There are liberal politicians and even some churchmen who seek to sideline those whom they perceive as *aggressive* Christians; whom they feel “increase the level of fear by exposing the threat of radical Islam.” Thus in this prevailing climate of appeasement and religious submission on the part of Christians, the Muslims are rubbing their hands in glee at what they consider our fatal weakness. We must keep our eyes on Jesus, proclaim Him as the **only** Way of salvation – and prove them wrong.

Bill Bathman - Tempe, Arizona

## Founder's Page

May 2009

Dear Team,



Many of you have been praying for our grandson, **Christopher Hammond** in Cape Town, and his ongoing condition of renal failure. **Lenora** has been very touched by the emails and responses from those of you who have communicated in recent days. For most of his 13 years, he has been in 'mild' renal failure, but now the doctors have reclassified this to 'severe' impairment. The doctors are hesitant to tell them exactly what the time frame for a transplant will be, but they have indicated a renewed sense of urgency. Christopher is taking 5 different medications now, and his diet has been severely restricted. His toxic levels have risen to an all time high, and his body is struggling to maintain normal levels of phosphate and calcium.

Having reached puberty Christopher is in a growth-spurt just now. His doctor would like to delay the transplant to allow his growth to continue as long as possible, because after surgery the anti-rejection medication will virtually preclude further growth.

His aunt, **Deborah Pelzmann**, has volunteered to donate her kidney. She's been tested in Cape Town, and found to be a suitable donor. She is a Professor at the University of Salzburg. Austria is a long way from South Africa, but she is eager to make this life gift to Christopher. His mother, Lenora, is also in the process of being tested to see if she is a suitable donor. We will appreciate your prayers for the Lord to show them the "who" and "when" details and to discern His perfect timing. Peter, his father, has a number of long ministry trips booked for this year, and some will need to be cancelled if the transplant takes place during such a journey.

Dr. **Peter Hammond** is scheduled to be in the USA from mid-May to June 2. You can get his itinerary from [info@frontlinefellowship.net](mailto:info@frontlinefellowship.net) or on the web: [www.frontlinefellowship.net](http://www.frontlinefellowship.net). He will be in Arizona May 16-18. On Sunday May 17 he's speaking at the Sunland Village East Chapel at 9 a.m. – then 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at Cornerstone Bible Fellowship Church, 4248 E. Broadway in Mesa.

Harriett and I begin this month, May 1-3, in Ft. Worth, Texas where I'm speaking at the annual conference of the National Association of Christian Financial Consultants. They've asked me to share my thoughts and research on Sharia finance. Then its back home to Arizona where I'm scheduled for morning surgery on May 7 (left inguinal hernia repair) – and will appreciate your prayers.

Yours in His grip,



Bill Bathman

P.S. ITMI was able to send \$10,000 immediately to MCH for rebuilding the Children's home after the fire. As we go to press another \$10,000 has arrived for MCH rebuilding. We praise God for your generosity. There's still a way to go, so keep praying.



**Cherise spending last days with Penn**

She needed a break - a renewal of strength in the Lord's presence. Feeling guilty if she were to leave Penn's side, but desiring to worship the Lord with her family in Sunday church, another helper graciously volunteered to stand in her place. It was her last day seeing Penn alive.

But this is not the end. There is more to Cherise's letter - you can read the full version of it on our website in the Smith project page. We want to say that what you have read in this newsletter is one of the many reasons why ITMI exists. We are partnering with those in restricted-access countries who are sharing the Gospel of Christ and exhibiting His magnificent love to the dying. We are all dying. Christ Jesus is our only hope!

Please continue praying for the Smiths as they minister to those south of

the community of Durban. Through their ministry, the Lord gave life to a Zulu man and took Him into His arms forever. Pray not only for the lost, but also for the Smiths who would benefit by another missionary couple or two in this difficult field of labor. For a more detailed list of prayer concerns and needs, see the Smith project page.

**Malmesbury:** (Follow-up on the fire at MCH. Visit the MCH project page on our website for future updates.) Another missionary couple in South Africa who experienced a sudden loss recently was **Gerhard** and **Elmane le Roux** as highlighted in last month's newsletter. On March 18, a fire broke out that started with a short in the wiring of a metal electrical conduit above the boys room that began glowing red-hot and soon caught the roof on fire. In the Lord's providence, many of the children were with Elmane outside doing some physical labor. Gerhard's first reaction was to rush in to save any others that might be trapped within. All had gotten out safely.

*"The burned wires," Gerhard said, "tripped the electricity of the whole farm and none of the electrical water pumps could work. When we opened the taps, only a few drops of water*

*came out."* However, Gerhard still praised our heavenly Father and gave thanks for His mercy and grace.

He said in an email: *"We were literally flooded with people that offered us help. We received so many gifts in the form of blankets, clothing, toys and food that we also generously could give to others...One lady started an email campaign and people from all over responded and offered to help in some or other way. So many new people came in contact with the mission and we had many opportunities to witness to people about the goodness of Christ in the whole situation."*

The le Roux family sends their thanks to everyone involved in helping them over the past month. Gerhard summed it up beautifully by saying, *"We could experience God carrying us through. Truly we can sing 'Great is Thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies we see.'"*

At ITMI, we join with the le Roux's in singing this great hymn of praise to our God and Savior - for we remember that though "the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; **blessed be the name of the LORD.**"

Job 1:21 KJV

Cherise Smith, Gerhard le Roux - South Africa with Jeff Black

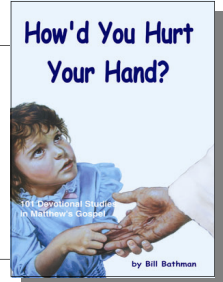
### **How'd You Hurt Your Hand?**

by Rev. Bill Bathman

101 Bible studies in Matthew's Gospel. This 205-page book by ITMI Founder **Bill Bathman** is a current commentary considering the question, "What if Matthew took a look at us? Would he recognize 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christianity?" We are encouraged by the positive response to its launch. This is a great gift for someone you love.

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

1. **Charl van Wyk's** USA speaking tour: April 23 to May 13!
2. Many are responding with open hearts to the **le Roux** family since the fire!

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

1. Continue to pray for **Christopher Hammond** and wisdom for when the transplant should take place.
2. Please remember the **Smith** family as they minister to the needs of those dying with HIV/AIDS.

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