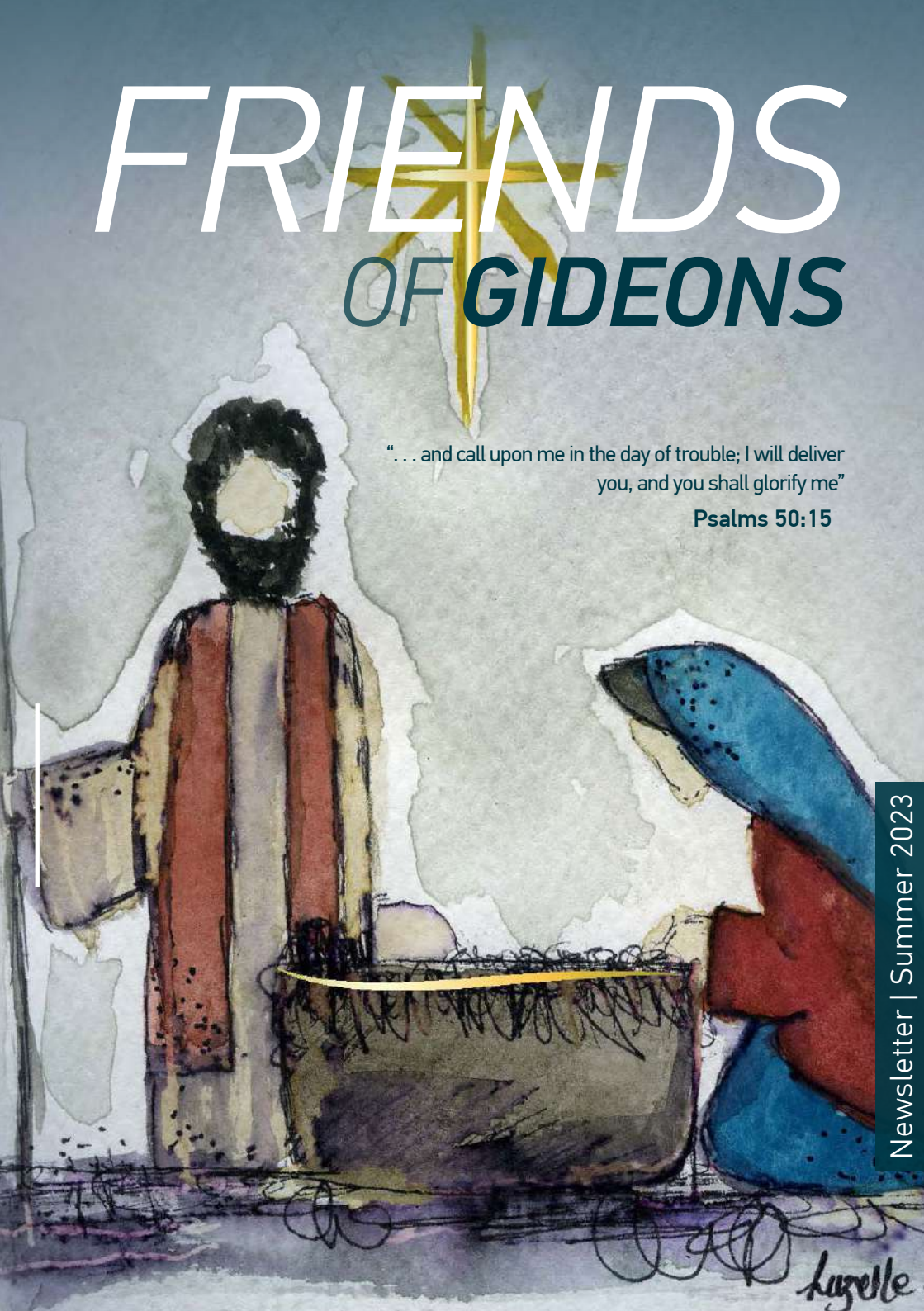


# FRIENDS OF GIDEONS



"... and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver  
you, and you shall glorify me"

Psalms 50:15



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Invitation

If you are a new *Friend* and would like to make a financial contribution, please contact us on **friends@gideonssa.org** or visit our website **www.gideons.co.za** or phone us on **012 460 7241**.

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WELCOME

## Welcome to the Summer edition of the *Friends of Gideons* Newsletter

“... I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

And more than 2 000 years later, The Gideons and the *Friends of Gideons* share the Good News with as many people as possible all over the world.

Read on p. 14 of members who share this news during their holiday in Egypt with the people they met along their journey. We also share testimonies of God's salvation, protection and forgiveness.

We pray that all our *Friends* will have a blessed and Christ-filled festive season. May you rest well after a busy year, but remember God's promise in 2 Chronicles 15:7:

“But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.”



## Some facts about *FRIENDS OF GIDEONS*

### Who are the ***Friends of Gideons***?

Men and women who have joined the ministry to support its activities and who prefer not to become a member or who do not qualify.

### How many ***Friends*** are involved in the ministry?

As of 1 February 2023 there are 9 500 *Friends of Gideons*.

### Which activities do ***Friends*** get involved in?

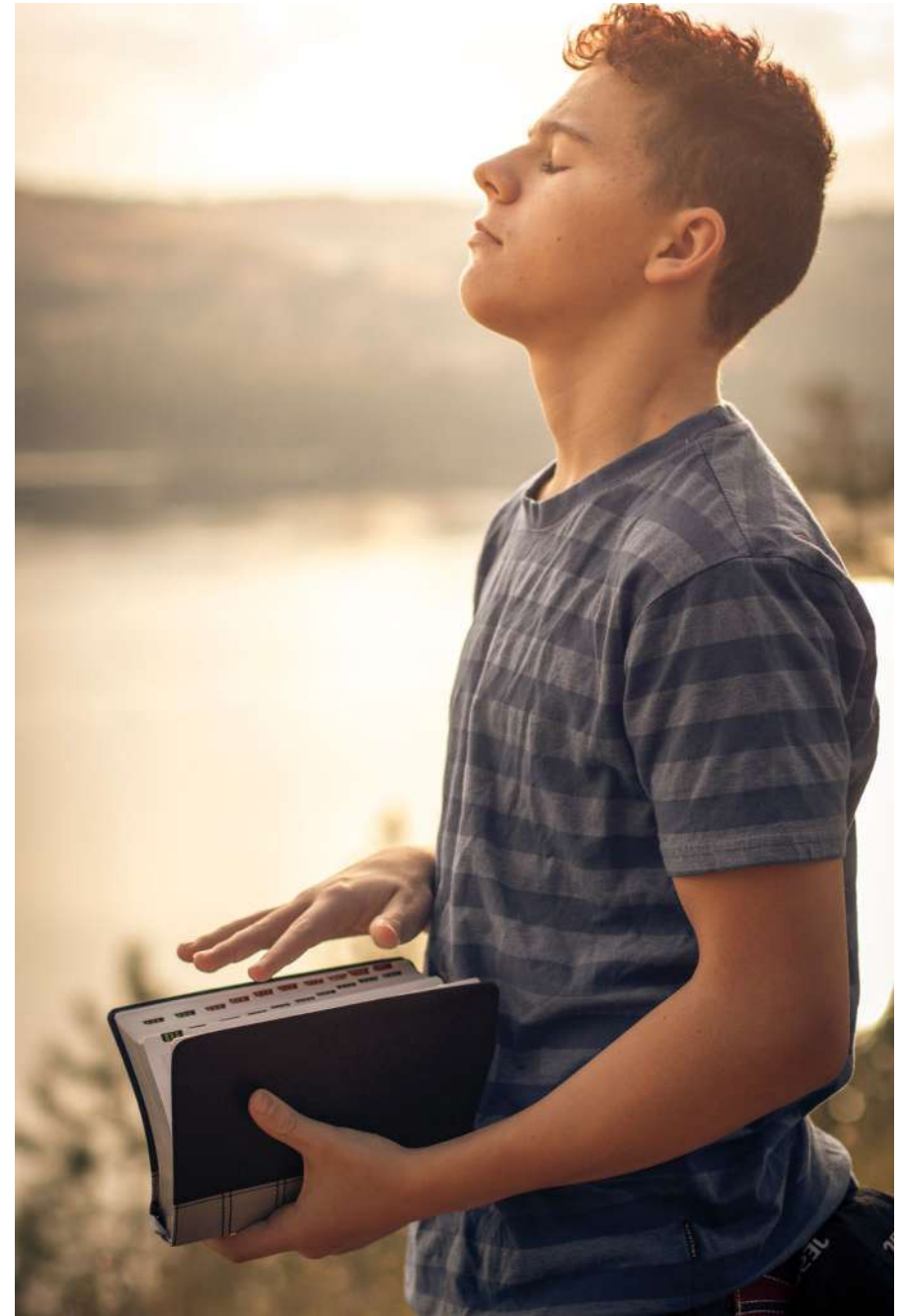
- Prayer;
- Financial contributions to purchase Scriptures.
- Individual placement of Testaments.

### How do you become a ***Friend***?


Go to our web site [www.gideons.co.za](http://www.gideons.co.za) and click on **GET INVOLVED** and then **BECOME A FRIEND**.

### Can a business or a church become a ***Friend***?

Yes. Go to our website [www.gideons.co.za](http://www.gideons.co.za) and click on **GET INVOLVED** and then on **ADOPT A SCHOOL**.





A person wearing a hat stands on the edge of a dark, rocky cliff, looking out over a vast, hazy canyon. The scene is backlit, creating a silhouette effect and a warm, golden glow in the distance.

# Dear *Friends* of *Gideons*

**“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, ...” (Matthew 28:18 and 19).**

Jesus’ last words to His disciples.

It is that time of the year that we start doing all the “lasts” for the year. This too is our last newsletter of 2023 our precious *Friend of Gideons*.

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to you our Friend of Gideons, for your prayers and financial gifts during this year. Your help us by keeping our hands lifted high, just as Aaron and Hur kept Moses’ hands high. Through the grace of our Lord, you make such a huge contribution to carry out Jesus’ last words and instruction.

May each of you radiate Jesus’ peace and love on earth, every day. Together, may we continue to build Abba Father’s Kingdom. May we (Jesus’ Bride), be ready when He comes and may we stand before Him with a great return like the workers and the talents in Matthew 25:21.

Thank you for your continued prayer for the labourers of the harvest (Mathew 9:38) and for striving side with side with us for a rich harvest of souls.

He is coming soon and then we, His bride, need to be ready with oil in our lamps.

Once again our sincere appreciation and thanks to you.

Greetings in Christ

**Nico van Wyk**

**Former National Faith Fund Coordinator (*Friends of Gideons*)**

**The Gideons International in South Africa**



# HELL

## IN BLACK BEACH PRISON

Imagine travelling to Equatorial Guinea, West Africa for a business trip and then ending up in one of the world's worst and most feared prisons for 491 days. This happened to Daniel Janse van Rensburg.



### Cruel intentions

As a businessman from Hoekwil in George, Daniel developed good relationships with the people in Equatorial Guinea over time, especially with the government family, since 2001.

But then, an aviation business deal went awry with an associate of Vice-president Obiang, who committed a contract break. After a judge acquitted Daniel of any charges, the South African Embassy accompanied him to the airport for safety reasons. But, Angabe, the associate, was angry. Angabe contacted his cousin, the President's son, Vice-president Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, who forced the judge to change the verdict to fraud and theft. Daniel was forcefully picked up by elite security and taken to Black Beach prison, described by the United Nations as the most dangerous prison in the world.

It has a reputation for systematically neglecting and brutalising inmates. Medical treatments are usually denied and food rations are meagre.

### Illegally detained

Here he was thrown into a dark hell hole, with too many prisoners sharing a general area with no cell divisions. Daniel describes this jail as extremely humid, stinking and filthy.

The toilets were blocked and only one tap sometimes offered slow-dripping dirty water for 400 prisoners. Meals once a day consisted of rotten meat and rice contaminated with bugs.

The lack of proper food and good hygiene took its toll, causing Daniel to become very sick with cerebral malaria and typhoid. He tried to smuggle messages via the prison drug dealers to the South African Embassy asking for medicine, but they were denied access to Daniel.

### Tortured

People around Daniel was regularly and brutally attacked, tortured, raped and killed. Daniel never knew if he was going to survive a particular night or day, but placed his faith in God, and decided to sleep amongst the murderers awaiting execution. Strangely, he felt safer amongst them. But, being totally cut off from communication with his family, legal representatives and the South African Embassy, was the worst psychological breakdown administered by prison officials.

**"It was only God's mercy that kept me alive," stated Daniel.**

He did lose hope, many times, he said, but then picked up his faith in God again and somehow, survived.

### Pillars of hope

Daniel's family started fighting back to free him. Then, after about a year and a half, Daniel met a Spanish inmate, convicted of crimes for the third time. Daniel realised the man lost hope too and took him under his care. They conversed for many hours and Daniel managed to change this person's mind back to positivity. Soon after, the Spanish inmate found a way to leave prison but returned to thank Daniel, with food and money. He also offered help to get Daniel out of prison and miraculously, succeeded with the help of many other parties. Daniel was finally released in 2015 and could reunite with his family.

### Expose corruption

Vice-president Teodoro Nguema Obiang and the President have long been accused of seeing oil-rich Equatorial Guinea as their personal fiefdom, and of abusing its wealth and resources.

Once back home, Daniel fought the unrighteousness of the corrupt officials who unlawfully put him in jail. The court of South Africa found Vice-president Teodoro Nguema Obiang directly responsible for Daniel's wrongful arrest and torture. The Vice-president was ordered to pay more than R39 million in damages.

Daniel's book, *Black Beach*, exposes corruption and abuse at the highest level of government in the oil-rich country and tells about his ordeal in hell behind bars. His story is one of courage in the face of overwhelming adversity. It demonstrates both the strength of the human spirit and the toll injustice takes on ordinary people who fall victim to the powerful and corrupt.

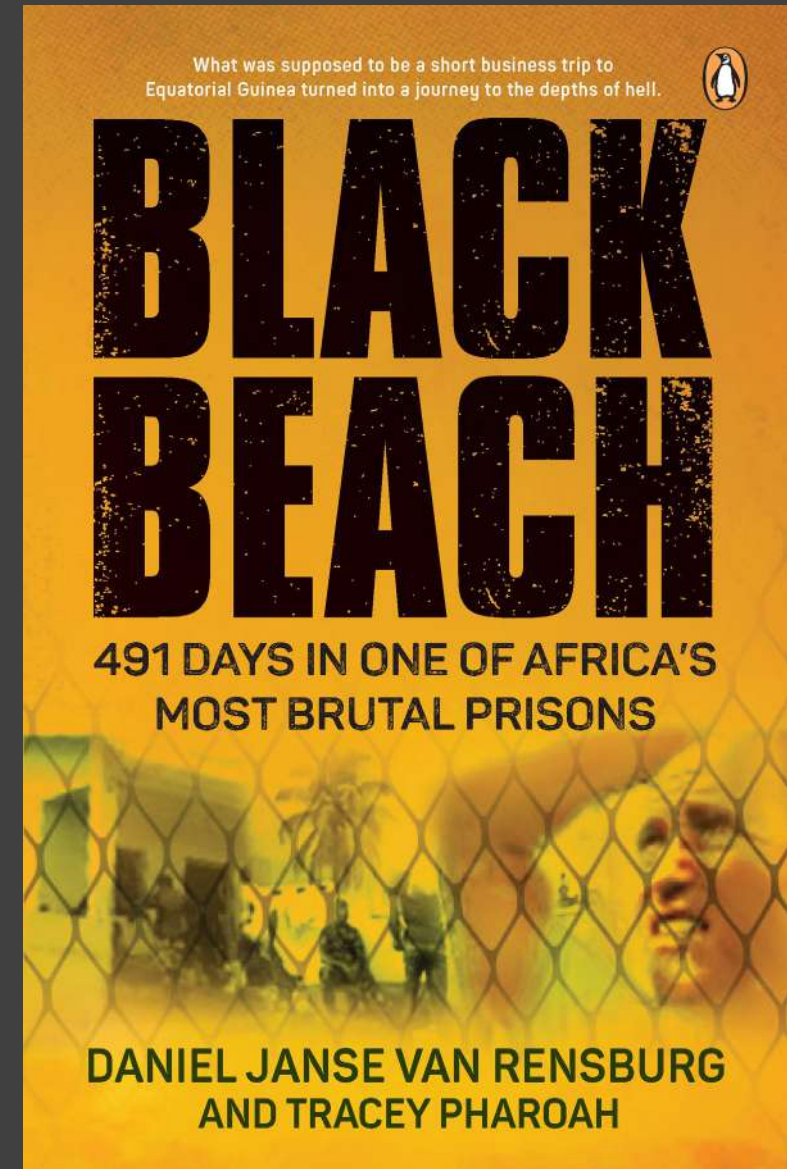
When asked how he survived, Daniel stated it was due to his unwavering faith in God and the humanity of a few fellow inmates.

#### In Daniel's own words:

**"What I have survived . . . has taught me to always have faith in God, in my love for my family and in the will to survive against all odds."**

Click on the link to see Daniel's testimony he gave at the 2023 National Convention:

<https://youtu.be/GdO6kQ300Ro>





# S

## Spreading the message of faith

My wife, Jennifer, and I recently had the wonderful opportunity to visit Egypt. This voyage marked our maiden international journey as Gideons, and we were filled with a mixture of excitement and a touch of apprehension. Armed with unwavering faith in the scripture of Matthew 28:19, which instructs us to “go and make disciples of all nations”, and equipped with Personal Witness Testaments (PWTs), we eagerly embarked on our adventure.

Our journey began with a flight to Abu Dhabi, where we were to catch a connecting flight to Cairo. During our layover, we felt a strong calling to leave behind two Arabic PWTs at the Abu Dhabi Airport library, and we also shared an English Testament with a fellow traveller from South Africa.



Two days into our tour, we had a remarkable revelation: our tour guide was a Christian, and we learned that approximately 20% of the Egyptian population shares our faith. There was a profound sense of connection when we shared a PWT with someone in their own language in their own homeland. I had the privilege of experiencing this threefold, as our guide even called his colleagues to receive Arabic PWTs from me. As the day ended, I conveniently recorded the PWT placements on the GideonsGO App.

Our journey continued as we flew to Luxor, where we boarded a boat to cruise the majestic Nile River for three days. During the cruise, I practised the skills I had acquired from the Gideon Conversations course. I shared an English PWT with an Australian traveller. Later that evening, he introduced me to his French wife and her family, offering another unique opportunity. I shared four French PWTs with them.

The subsequent days in Aswan, Alexandria, Hurghada, and Al Mamurah followed a similar pattern. By the end of our trip, we had placed a total of 47 PWTs, which were available in English, Arabic, French, and even Chinese. We had exhausted our supply of physical PWTs, so we began sharing the Gideon Bible App. Each person who downloaded the app experienced a similar and joyful reaction when they heard the Bible audio in their native language.

We give all praise and glory to God for opening doors and making this a truly rewarding and unforgettable journey, fulfilling the mission of The Gideons and spreading the message of faith across language and cultural barriers.

**Kuben Moodley**  
**Randburg Camp**



# Forgiveness

Patrick, about 40 years old, was one of the awaiting trial members at the Johannesburg Medium Corrcent, a centre at a correctional facility in Gauteng, South Africa. He responded to the invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour on 17 Sept 2019 after listening to a short message from Romans 8:1-2. At this stage, he also received an English Bible.

Patrick then responded to an invitation for personal prayer about a specific problem in his life. The Gideon enquired what he wanted God to do for him. He answered that he wanted God to forgive his sins and make him a new person. The Gideon started to pray for him but experienced a restriction that prevented a breakthrough. The Gideon was prompted by the Holy Spirit to ask Patrick if there were still unconfessed sins in his life. He confirmed that there indeed was. Patrick was then encouraged to repent of that sin, confess it in silent prayer and to open his eyes when done. When he opened his eyes again, The Gideon started to pray and ask God to be faithful, forgive Patrick's sins and cleanse him from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

The Holy Spirit, however, disclosed to The Gideon that there was still a stumbling block to Patrick receiving forgiveness due to him harbouring unforgiveness in his heart. The Gideon stopped praying and explained to Patrick what was disclosed to him as well as the absolute necessity to forgive in order to receive forgiveness. Patrick was then asked to again close his eyes and free himself by forgiving from his heart. When he opened his eyes again, tears were streaming down his cheeks. He responded:

**"I have just forgiven the boxer, Brian Mitchell, for killing my father in the ring in 1985. My father was known as Jacob 'Dancing Shoes' Morake. He is the only boxer to have ever won a professional fight against Brian Mitchell."**

When they prayed again, Patrick could experience forgiveness, receive the Spirit of adoption as a child of his heavenly Father and become part of God's household. He could experience how the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set him free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

After the placement of Bibles and the interview with Patrick, The Gideon shared this testimony with the other team members. One of the team members was a visitor from the Bedfordview Camp, near Johannesburg.

This Gideon was scheduled for a church presentation at a Full Gospel Church the Sunday following the placement at the Medium A Corrcent and he decided to use this testimony as part of his message.

Halfway through the testimony, the Pastor interrupted him, vouching for the validity of the fact that Brian Mitchell gave his testimony in that church some years ago and what had happened in the boxing ring. It was that experience that eventually led to the conversion of Brian becoming a Christian.

During a monthly dinner meeting of the Brackenhurst Camp, the first testimony was shared and The Gideon from the Bedfordview Camp was invited to partake and give his share of the testimony as well. At the dinner meeting, one of the members of the Brackenhurst Camp stood up and announced that his wife was related to Brian Mitchell. She would soon visit with Brian and share with him the fact that he was forgiven by Patrick who suffered financially and otherwise, due to the death of his father.





# THAT'S WHAT CHRISTMAS

*is all about*

During 2022, Tygerberg camp in the Cape Metro area of Region 1 became part of the fraternity in Goodwood with a monthly meeting and a weekly prayer event. The demographics of Goodwood have changed significantly - we are a jumble of cultures, which is very exciting.

The SAPS of Goodwood is also actively involved in these events. The Area Director also serves on the Spiritual Crime Prevention Unit of Goodwood SAPS. The SAPS expressed their need for the local Gideons to come and serve them. They are also looking for people who could undergo a police vetting process to serve at Goodwood Prison.

The highlight of the year could be when Gideons have the opportunity to serve the prisoners at 06:00 on Christmas morning. This is a challenge for Region 1, but more so for all the camps in South Africa. It could be something The Gideons can do all over our country, even if you are on holiday somewhere.

That's what Christmas is all about: God who had compassion on us and gave us His greatest gift. Go live this gratitude in the Christmas season! Let's seize every opportunity to share the Good News of God's love this Christmas, however, and wherever possible



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# The old things have PASSED

"My name is Cheslin Janse. I am originally from George on the side of Eden Park, Rosedale. About 16 years ago, I lived on the side of Pacaltsdorp, which is also in George. There I lived with my godfather and godmother because my biological mother was still too young to take care of me. My foster parents didn't have children. They accepted me as their own. As time went on, I started calling them Mom and Dad. I also walked to the New Dawn Park Primary School every day.

One afternoon when I got home, my godmother was gone. I then asked myself where she could be. My godfather had a drinking problem and it became too much for her. My dad then came home from work and I asked him where she was. He said she wasn't staying there anymore. In my opinion, it was normal because I didn't know much about life at that age. At a later point, my godfather got himself a young girl whom he loved dearly. She always made food for us and looked after me whenever my godfather worked. One afternoon I came out of school and found no one at home.

I also had my own home store. I then went to take off my school clothes and make myself something to eat. At about 17:00, my godfather came home and asked me how my day was. I then said that it was fine, but when I got home there was no one.

My father then told me not to worry, everything would be better. Then my dad put up some wash water for me to bathe me. While bathing, I heard that something was going on. When I finished bathing, I got into bed and heard that there was an argument that lasted about five minutes.

My father was also someone who drank a lot, every weekend. He asked me if I was hungry and I said yes. He then prepared a meal for us, but I could see that he was furious.

What I didn't know, was that this would be the last time I would see him alive. We then ate and enjoyed the meal together. After that, I put on my pyjamas because I liked to lie at his feet and sleep.

The next morning, I woke up and found that my father had committed suicide. After that day, my life was not the same again. I then had to go and stay with my biological mother and stepfather in Harmony Park. I still went to the same school every day. Day after day, I asked myself why life was so unfair. The one person I loved so much is suddenly gone. Not that I didn't love my own mother, but at that age I was just thinking about myself, about the pain I was having.

I went to school until Grade 5 and then left school. I started smoking marijuana and using pills and tik drugs. At the age of 17, I became involved in gangs. All of these were choices I made because of the pain in my life. I started stealing at home and my family became scared of me. Everywhere I went, my family knew who and what I was. I liked lying to them. In particular, I lied about the things I did wrong. Later, when I could no longer manage my crime in the areas where I live, I started robbing schoolchildren in town – so dirty were my thoughts.

I've been to reform school a few times like the 'Bosasa Horizon Child and Youth Care Centre', but as time goes on, I've only committed more crimes such as truck hijackings, human trafficking and house robberies. Then they caught me and I was jailed for eight years. Because I lived in so much pain, I didn't think about what was going to happen to me next because I was in a gang and wouldn't let anyone tell me anything – that's how I was.

What I do want to say is that my thoughts were not the Lord's thoughts, because when I was in room three in prison, I had authority as a gang member. I didn't sleep for months, though, for fear that someone was going to murder me. They then moved us to another room, room one. It was in that room where Uncle Gellie came to call me for an appointment with Uncle Johan Boshoff and on that day something wonderfully happened: a feeling inside me that I cannot describe to anyone, but today I can say with an open heart that it was the Lord my God who spoke to me.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Today I live like a new person, even though I am in prison, because the chains of sin are broken over my life and I say thank you to the Lord and also to Uncle Johan, who was used by the Lord to reach me. The Lord says in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.’

The most amazing thing is that my family is back in touch with me. So, this is for anyone who thinks that there is no hope for them. The Lord wants to give you what the world cannot give you, and that is Eternal Life if you accept Him. That’s my testimony.”

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28).

**Johan Boshoff**  
**Mossel Bay Camp**



# GOD IS ALIVE



**It was resurrection day, 9 April 2023, when the Van der Merwe family sat on top of Piketberg and waited for sunrise – to rejoice in the fact that Jesus saved us through His death on the Cross and His resurrection.**

After this blessing, we decided to go to Piketberg town for fresh bread rolls and to buy sweets for all the children along the way. We wanted to share with them what Resurrection Day means. As we passed the Romona Farm entrance, we saw workers walking in fancy clothes and we assumed that they were on their way to church. We stopped and started to share with them the importance of Resurrection Day.

On the spur of the moment, we decided to join them for church – the first time ever that a white family joined their coloured church.

They really blessed us with their singing and dancing and the way in which they enjoyed Jesus' Resurrection. The lady pastor's sermon concentrated on the fact that Jesus is alive and that we must make Him 100% part of our lives. Funnily, she shared with us that the cake she baked for the Holy Communion was a disaster because she did not involve Jesus in her actions. She also testified that God blessed her with enough ingredients and wood for the fire for the next cake, which was a success. At the end of the sermon, she called on anybody to come and share a testimony.

A 40-year-old woman came forward and testified how she lived a life of drugs, smoking and fornication. Then she continued to share with us an incident that happened about three years ago. Her youngest son got sick and doctors in Piketberg were unable to help her son.

He was then taken to the Cape Town Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital by ambulance where she sat next to his bed for the following three days. Although he was connected to a ventilator and other machines, there was no progress. The morning of the third day she went outside for a smoke. On her return, she wondered if God really existed.

When she entered the ward, she saw a small Bible on the bedside table. She took the Bible and read most of that day and night. The next morning, she was sure Jesus was alive and stopped smoking.

When she arrived back at the hospital, there was still no change in her son's condition. She started to pray and asked God for a miracle. Miraculously, that afternoon at 14:00, they both left to go home and since then, her son's health has been in good condition. Out of the blue, the pastor asked me if I wanted to share something with the congregation. I started to share the core message of The Gideons and why we do it. That lady jumped up and ran to me, crying on my shoulder and hugging me for about three minutes. The rest of the congregation again started to sing and dance – rejoicing in God's mercies.

Just before the end of the service, the pastor came to me with a big yellow plastic bucket and handed the total offering of that morning to me, purposed for printing and distributing of Bibles by The Gideons. The total amount was R321.

God is alive and we must just stick to our core business as Gideons.

**Frans van der Merwe**  
Witrivier Camp



## TO BRING LIGHT WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS

As I was preparing last week for our camp's *Friend of Gideons* event, I started to listen to a few Gideons' testimonies online, trying to decide which one I should share.

As I was listening to the testimony of Jay Lerette and how a Gideons' Bible affected his life and the courage he took to preach the Gospel, I felt inspired to go speak to children at the school about Jesus. That in itself inspired and motivated me again to go to the police cells in Hermanus that Sunday, and hand out small Testaments to the inmates.

The cells were packed that Sunday. There must have been at least 20 people. This Sunday was different for me than the other Sundays: the men all came out of the cells to the inside court. As I was speaking, a few men stood very close to the door whilst most stood at a distance away. I spoke to them about God's Word and His saving power. I could see that all of the men were listening quietly, looking at me. Just after the message, I called them forward to receive the gift of a Testament. An older man on my left asked for prayer just after the Bibles were handed out.

The other men already started to move back to their cells. As I finished praying and opening my eyes, I was amazed that in the meantime, a lot more men joined me in praying. I could truly see that these men had a hunger, a thirst for God's Word.

At this time, the man who requested the prayer was crying.

"Look, Sir, look what you have done," he said. "You made me cry..."

My response was quick to point out that it was not me, but that God's love, His words and prayer touched his heart. I was just the instrument that He used to bring His Word to those in need.

It was such a blessing for me, to see these men and their response to receiving that little Testament. I am truly thankful to God that I can be part of The Gideons and that someone else's testimony inspired me to take courage and to go out and give His Word to those men.

Together, God uses us to make a difference in this world and to bring light where there is darkness. Thank you, to all the men and women, who support The Gideons in His service.

Many blessings to all The Gideons, Gideons' Wives and all the *Friends*.

**Jaco Nell**  
**Overstrand Camp**



The background of the entire image shows a group of children, likely in a school setting, holding up small blue Bibles. The Bibles have gold lettering that reads "New Testament" and "Psalms Proverbs". The children are smiling and appear to be excited. A large orange circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the main text and a link.

# ***Adopt a School***

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

# Power of a Gideons Bible

After I did a Gideons' presentation in a church at Faith and Deeds Ministries in Spruitview, a blind pastor named Johannes stood up. He said he recognised my voice as he had met me previously at a pastors' gathering in Katlehong in 2016. I remember this pastor from 2016 who told me that he started to lose his sight.

Despite the loss of his sight, he was still very active as a preacher. We lost touch since then, but fortunately met up again during the Springview presentation. Here, Johannes invited me to another pastors' gathering in Katlehong.

On arrival, he told the other pastors that I was from The Gideons. Pastor Vincent Phalo, the Chairman, said that I looked familiar to him. On requiring why, he replied that The Gideons came to place Bibles at his school in Venda. He said that two men, one tall and the other shorter, came with a red Datsun pick-up truck in 1993 to give them Bibles and tell them about Jesus' love. Because of this action, Vincent received his Bible and accepted Jesus. He then went to study and became a pastor at the Voice of Fire Ministries in Katlehong for the last 20 years.

**"Thank you, Gideons, for introducing me to Jesus and for giving me my own Bible. I still have it; I still serve Him with joy."**

Relationships with pastors work.

God told Gideon in the Bible to be obedient and He would show him a miracle. I joined The Gideons in 1992. In 1993 there was an outreach in Venda. I drove with a short Gideon gentleman from Benoni in his red Datsun truck to Venda and placed Bibles. Soli Deo Gloria - to God all the Glory!

**Koos van der Merwe**  
**Alberton Camp**





## SAVED FROM SUICIDE

A few weeks ago, a heart-warming chain of events unfolded, demonstrating the incredible impact of a PWT or Personal Workers Testament (New Testament & Psalms), as The Gideons call it. It all began when a grandmother of our church expressed her desire for one of the small Bibles that was distributed to the children during Sunday school. Intrigued, I promised to arrange an Afrikaans Bible for her.

Shortly afterwards, her son-in-law visited our store. I questioned her need for an additional PWT as the grandmother already possessed a big Bible. The young man revealed that the small PWT was not for her, but for his youngest child who did not receive a Bible at Sunday school.

This testimony traces back to a box of Bibles sent to a *Friend of Gideons*, who recognised the opportunity to share God's Word with children. Notably, the grandmother's children usually attended a different church and rarely joined her. However, on that particular Sunday, her eldest grandson, a Grade 7 learner, accompanied her.

Divinely orchestrated, the distribution of the PWTs occurred precisely on that Sunday. The young boy, thrilled with his pocket-sized Bible, carried it daily in his school bag. Providentially, this small PWT would soon play a crucial role in a friend's life.

The young boy's friend confided in him about contemplating suicide. Without hesitation, the young boy retrieved his PWT, recalling advice from the ladies on where to find solace in times of crisis. He found relevant verses and shared them with his friend. These verses made a profound impact on his friend. Miraculously, his friend reconsidered and abandoned any suicide attempts.

The journey of that seemingly insignificant PWT culminated in a moment where its verses held life-altering meaning for someone in desperate need.

We praise the Lord for orchestrating these events, underscoring that, while we may not comprehend the path of a little PWT, God knows exactly who needs it.

**With gratitude**  
**A Gideon**



**The Gideons  
International**  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

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