

An aerial photograph of a misty autumn landscape. In the center, a small wooden cabin sits on a grassy slope. A fence runs diagonally across the middle ground. The foreground is filled with dense trees showing vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and brown. The background is shrouded in mist, creating a serene and atmospheric scene.

FRIENDS *OF GIDEONS*

Newsletter | Autumn 2024

“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 ESV

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The Gideons
International
IN SOUTH AFRICA

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 autumn edition of the *Friends of Gideons* newsletter

"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 ESV).

We share wonderful testimonies of salvation, protection and forgiveness in this edition.

Despite the changing season and the world's state, we know that the Lord is in control and can still create anew. Easter reminds us of the eternal change that only Jesus can bring to people's lives and we are so grateful! And we know, our *Friends* are grateful too, which is why they share the Good News.

Please also share your testimonies and inspiring stories of the Lord's presence in your lives, so that we can share them with other *Friends*. You can send it to friends@gideonssa.org.

We pray that all our *Friends* will have a blessed Easter.

The Editorial team



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 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 and click on **GET INVOLVED** and then on **ADOPT A SCHOOL**.



FIRST BIBLE

I can still recall the day I received a Bible for the very first time! A Gideon worker gave it to me during a school assembly in Ladysmith, KZN. I was 13 years old, in grade 8 and came from a fully-fledged Hindu home. I immediately slipped the Bible into the inner pocket of my blazer and felt strangely comforted just having this little Bible.

Although I did not read it until 8 years later, I knew that this was a special treasure. I kept this Bible until I was married and opened it after my first child was born. Using the beginning as a guide, I would open it at the appropriate Scripture, read it and immediately experience God's comfort, peace, and strength. Whenever I opened the Bible at random, it would always open at Acts 2:38-39: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call."

The first Psalm I read was Ps. 121. I now carried the Bible in my handbag and took it with me everywhere I went! Although my life was uprooted and I was relocated many times, the Bible did not get misplaced. I took it to work every day and when I fell ill and was hospitalised for weeks, I took it with me. Every evening I would read to all the other patients. I was in a private clinic and the patients were White, Black, Coloured, Greek, Portuguese, Italian and Jewish. Everyone in the ward would listen when I read to one of the other patients. One evening I did not go to read to them; the next day they were angry and upset! The Portuguese lady even cried when she told me that she waited... People really need Jesus Christ more than we realise!

My friend, Vanessa from Dundee also kept her Bible in her handbag. One day she was mugged, and her handbag stolen.

She was badly shaken and crying uncontrollably because her small Bible was now gone...

To comfort her, I gave her my Gideon Bible. By then I had my Bible for 11 years and my heart ached to have it back, but Vanessa was only 19 years old and a new believer.

Ten years later, now 34, my daughter was in grade 8 and came home with a Gideon Bible one day. I wanted it but could see that she would not part with it. The following year the Lord gave me a job at a Secondary School. I started in February 2001. The same month the Gideons from the Florida Camp came to the school, and I finally got another Bible! In January 2002, someone took it from my drawer. I don't mind because the Good News

is for everyone! Now I am almost 36 years old and once again I received a small, precious blue Bible. I received it for the first time as a grade 8 pupil and now as a grade 8 educator!

I have been a Christian for many years now. The Bible played a vital role in my salvation and in my walk with Jesus Christ. Reading the Bible carried me through the most difficult times in my life - even now. I thank God for all the Gideon workers.

You do a remarkable work in handing out Bibles and must never stop! You are sowing seed that will yield a great harvest. Exactly how great, you will only find out one day in heaven where your reward, the crown of life, awaits you together with the praise and approval of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:21; 2 Tim. 4:7-8).

May God bless you and the work of your hands!



Personal Highlight

On Tuesday, 5 December 2023, a *Friend*, Sello, and I had the privilege of sharing 132 PWTs in the centre of Bloemfontein. By the way, the PWTs were way too few!

We started early in the morning and set out on our mission with two backpacks. He asked who we were going to give to, to which I said, we are going to let the Holy Spirit guide us. We shared the Word from seemingly homeless persons to visibly wealthy souls. On each occasion, we asked the question: "Do you have a Bible in your possession?" Whether everyone answered honestly is left to their own conscience.

One little shop had three Indian men. To the question whether they own an "English Bible", they replied vehemently "No". I left one on the counter regardless. In another shop, the Indian man politely said, "Thank you". Many others who appeared to be Muslim were also given an English Bible.

Our motto was: We sow with prayers that Father would bless our effort. We did what was on our hearts. We decided that this outreach will be repeated early in 2024. Consider giving more than one PWT to a person. He/she goes places you will never get to go and connects with souls you will never reach. You therefore immediately place the receiver in a position of being a Missionary instead of a Missionary Field.

Blessings to you.



Diek and Annalize Conradie
Orania camp, Bloemfontein

The joy of an International Bible blitz

From 27 November to 1 December 2023, Rudi Claassen from the Durbanville camp, attended the International Bible Blitz in Togo. He shares his experience with us.

On November 24, I left via Johannesburg and Addis Ababa for Lomé, the capital of Togo in West Africa. Arriving there and after some difficulties with the customs officers, I joined the rest of the international team. We were eight Gideons: one from Norway, one from Chile, me and five Americans. After we met that evening, the activities were planned for the next week and we concluded with prayers.

The next morning, a Sunday, we performed at several churches where the language of instruction is French and Ewe (a local dialect). I had two services at one church. My first speech was interpreted to French in the first service and the second to Ewe. The Gideon from Chile is Spanish-speaking, and we were actually surprised to find an interpreter for him.

On Monday morning, we got up at 04:00, as we did every day afterwards, and at 05:00 we gathered for the morning devotional so that we could leave at 05:30 with the local Gideons' transport to the schools where the children begin to arrive from 06:00. Our breakfast was packed in Fomolite holders because we don't eat again until the evening.

At most schools, we went from classroom to classroom. The schools usually have between 1 200 – 1 600 learners. It is extremely hot, starting at 34°C / 35°C for nine months of the year and the humidity is overwhelming, causing you to sweat litres every day. We took a lot of water with us in the vehicles, but unfortunately, it became warm soon.

Quite a few Muslim learners were also present in the schools and almost all of them took Testaments. In the end, only one Muslim student at the University of 60 000 students politely brought back his Testament.

We were kindly received everywhere and witnessed how some wrote their names in the back of their Testaments. A timid young girl came to tell us that she had accepted Jesus as her Saviour and showed us where she had written her name in the back.

At the schools, most of them government schools, where we were not allowed, we waited at the entrances since early in the day. The children were often very excited to take a Testament.

At the massive University, we had to stand in the sun for a whole day to reach the students at the different entrances and when a bus full of students stopped, we had to rush to give everyone a Testament.



There are thousands of motorcycles. Some also serve as taxis. The children are transported to school by these taxis. Some of these taxi drivers often came to ask us if they could get a Testament too. Although there are so many students in the University, there are not really job opportunities for the vast majority and many of them end up as taxi drivers after graduation.

The Gideons' Wives supported us well and would also sometimes pick up supplies for us on their motorcycles. They were indeed an inspiration and participated very actively.

Over the week, a few of the vehicles broke down which sometimes hampered our plans. On the last day, we picked up a problem as the roads were even worse than in South Africa. We stopped at a dubious mechanic who found that our car's wheel was loose. At the time, we had just placed 1 600 Testaments and picked up 1 200 from storage again to end the day, but then our vehicle finally broke down.

The roads took their toll and we then had to give up the fight because we had to be back at the hotel before 12:00 to prepare for the evening's Ministers Event. Every day, we kept working until 16:00. If there wasn't another school, we would visit hotels, police stations, and the military which also sometimes produced interesting interactions. We had a long conversation with one hotel owner about questions he had concerning Christianity, especially about people who, as spiritual teachers, are clearly only trying to enrich themselves.

The goal for the week was to distribute 100 000 Testaments in Lomè and eventually, we distributed 110 414.

At the Pastors Event, which was attended by 60 people, we built new connections with pastors who experienced the occasion as very positive. We even got names for potential Gideons from them.

Over the week, we built new friendships around the world. It was a great blessing to be part of the blitz, truly a very special event that one will always remember.

Rudi Claassen
Durbanville camp





IN THE AMAZON

In his book, “Three Rivers of the Amazon: The only man to have kayaked the three major tributaries of the Amazon”, Tim Biggs of the Cape Town South camp tells the following testimony of an encounter in an extremely remote part of the world during his adventures:

“The following day, I decided to explore and found a steep footpath that led up the canyon sidewall. Tucked into the mountainside, I came across a small mud dwelling with a faded red Coca-Cola sign above the rickety doorway. An elderly Quechan woman greeted me and ushered me into her gloomy tienda (shop). She had been reading from a small, blue book, which I immediately recognised as an identical match to my own small Bible (The Gideons International). Asking permission to see it, I opened it to find a Gideons International stamp dated 1983. I took off my backpack and showed her my edition. She carefully examined it in amazement.

‘English!’ she exclaimed excitedly.

‘Si, senora, English,’ I replied.

An immediate bond was forged between us in the humble Andean shop that morning. Although unable to communicate with words, we both understood that we shared a common love for our Lord and King. Having been involved with the spreading of Bibles to rural areas in South Africa, I wondered who had delivered this Bible to these remote parts.”

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Madonsela Cain

2h · 🌐

In 1993 I fell in love with Jesus of the Bible. It started in 1992 when I found the small New Testament that [The Gideons International in South Africa](#) used to distribute in schools. I started from Matthew 1 verse 1. When I got in chapter 8, I was convinced that Jesus was a good man. In 1993 I decided to go back to church and 1994 I was baptized and in the same year I started preaching about the goodness of God. 30 years later I'm still saying, "Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before".

👍👍👍 You and 20 others

2 comments



DREAM CAME TRUE

On Friday, 2 February 2024, we had an outreach for farmworkers for our neighbouring farms. It was a dream of mine to show the Jesus film to the workers for many years.

I had a conversation with one of our neighbours about The Gideons and how they could get Bibles for their workers. I explained that one way for me and Corné is to give them PWTs, or they could join as Friends of Gideons and buy Testaments for their workers. We then discussed the possibility of showing the Jesus film, doing a gospel presentation and handing out PWTs. We also decided to host an event on our farm. We prayed for the outreach and planned well in advance after which we sent invitations to all our neighbours. We baked cakes to spoil the workers a bit and served them with cool drinks as well.

53 People attended the film event. They sat and watched attentively for more than two hours. Corné, my husband, shared how they can use the Testament and the verses in the back of the Bible with the help of a translator. We then had the privilege to hand out 53 Testaments.

The people were very happy to receive the Testaments in South Sotho. We are planning a follow-up in a few months. Please pray that the Lord will use the Testaments and work in the hearts of all who were present to accept Him as Saviour.

Anita de Jager
Bethlehem camp





Wonderful tears

Ganyesa is a poor residential area, about 74 km from Vryburg. We usually place Bibles at their schools every year.

This morning, I placed Bibles in the holding cells at Ganyesa's courthouse. When I came out of the cells, the staff and the police officers present were standing outside waiting, in a queue. There I placed 37 Testaments.

One fairly senior official's eyes filled with tears. He said that the interpreter, whom I have known for years, prayed the previous days and asked where he would be able to find a Bible. The next morning a Gideon walked in...

Wonderful. Wonderful tears.

David van Zyl
Vryburg camp

Speechless about **GOD'S GRACE**

My name is Ruben Lluwellen Jantjies. I am originally from George, on the Pacaltstown side where I live with both my parents. I also have a younger sister whom I love dearly. Thank you, it is a great privilege for me to share my story.

I was born on 28 June 1999. As I grew up, I wanted to create a good life for myself. I don't know if my birth was a mistake, but my parents didn't treat me with love.

As I grew older, I was told, "Your father is in prison" and "Your mother is not here". At that time, my mother went to work in the Boland area, so I seldom saw her.

A few years later, my father was discharged from prison and came to visit me at my great-grandmother's house. He was drunk and under the influence that day, but wanted to spend time with me.

While riding on his bike with him, he promised me the world, but not once told me that he loved me.

The day went wonderfully, but later that day we got into an accident. I suffered a serious wound to my head and from that day on, I never trusted my father again.

Since then, I made my own decisions, but was still very young at 14 years old. I also made friends with two girls older than me but didn't realise at that point that they were a bad influence.

For a long time, I had cherished a secret: I actually wanted to be a woman but was afraid that my family would turn against me if they knew. I then asked my friends why I felt this way. They told me that's how gay people feel. I thought then that I probably must be a homosexual.

Soon after, my friends introduced me to a bunch of young boys, all older than me. That day changed my whole life. I was forced to have sex with three of the boys. It felt to me that my life was over. My heart ached and I was humiliated.



I cried and cried. My friends kept telling me not to worry because I would get used to it. That's the way it is.

I couldn't tell anyone since I didn't want to break off my friendship with the girls – they were the only people at that stage who accepted me. My family would probably stop me from being friends with the girls if they knew. Also, I did not want to have a bad name in the community. Then my grandmother is going to say she didn't raise me that way. So, I had to live with my secret.

A few days later I accepted the fact that I was gay. I then went from man to man and didn't tell anyone about it. Even though I knew it was wrong, I kept doing it. I was embittered but at the same time, I was enjoying myself. During that time, I desperately needed my parents' love. Maybe I wouldn't have made such stupid decisions. Meanwhile, I lived life the way I wanted. I didn't realise that I was busy wasting my life.

Then I became addicted to drugs. I could no longer focus on my schoolwork and left school to commit home burglaries and crimes for a living. My mother then returned from the Boland. We had to move and stay with my father, but the circumstances at my father's house were not good.

My mother was the only breadwinner and my father sold drugs for a living. Then luck turned against me and I was caught by the police. They sent me to House Outeniqua.

There I had regular sex with young boys. I no longer cared about myself or what others thought of me. My life was messed up. I had a lot of problems and struggled with anger, sadness, and constant pain.

My parents were absent in my life when I needed them most. They forgot about me. I was so caught up in the things of the world that I started ruining my body. Eventually, I ended up in Mossel Bay's Youth Centre prison. There I was also exposed to homosexuality and was eventually diagnosed with HIV, but despite my condition, I carried on as always.

At that point, the Lord knocked on my heart's door several times, but I didn't want to obey. A lot of people have said to me, "Ruben, you need to stop living like this. You must give your heart to the Lord. He will help you with your problems and forgive your sins. Only He can do it." I thought, oh well, people like to preach.

On 20 September 2022, I received a calling that I will never forget. I told myself enough is enough, I can't live so promiscuously.

So I went to talk to Pastor Boshoff and that day he led me to the Lord.

From then on, my whole life changed. My way of thinking has changed. I stopped smoking the stuff to which I was addicted. The Lord washed me clean and freed me from sin. I felt free. I could laugh and face life again.

I thought my life was over because I had committed many bad things in my life. But then the Lord came and saved me. The first two months were tough, but I stuck around. Through my change in the Mossel Bay Youth Centre, I encouraged many young boys to accept Jesus. I also told them that it is only the Lord who can change their lives.

Giving the Lord a chance in your life means that your life will never be the same. I was in a very dark place and marvelled at how the Lord came to save me from it – the Lord gave me back my human dignity. He also used me to bring other young boys to repentance. That is how powerfully the Lord worked through me. Today, I am speechless about God's grace and am full of joy and love. I can't describe it.

The Lord says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that a person who belongs to Christ is a new creation. The old has passed, and the new has come. I thank God for changing my life. I love Him with all my heart. I was nothing, but now I am everything in the eyes of the Lord.

Ruben Lluwellen Jantjies

***Ruben has since been released on parole and is currently going through a difficult time. Please pray that the Lord will help him to stand.**

FRIENDS OF GIDEONS

How can you be a *Friend* to The Gideons?

- Pray for The Gideons
- Leave a Gideons Legacy through a bequest in your will - <https://gideons.co.za/leave-a-legacy/>
- Donate towards specific initiatives



ALL FRIENDS CAN PURCHASE FRIENDS TESTAMENTS

Friends Testaments only available in English and Afrikaans.

From 1 June 2024: *Friends* Testaments will cost R30 each (currently R25)

Friends are responsible for Courier Costs of their order (specific costs will be made available in April/ May 2024).



FRIENDS MONTH

April 2024 is *Friends* Month!

Be on the lookout for an invitation to a *Friends of Gideons* event in your area.

Should you not receive any communication regarding an event please contact us: friends@gideonssa.org or send a WhatsApp to 082 334 5348.



HELMKAAR



What an awesome privilege I had this morning, 12 February 2024, to hand a Gideons' Testament to my grandson, Fernando, in his grade 8 year at Helpmekaar College. Piet, my husband, and I were invited to join the Emerentia camp with their school placement at Helpmekaar College. It was so good to experience the godly input that the College is investing in its students. Their foundation is solidly built on Jesus Christ.

The devotion was done by a young male teacher giving his testimony of how he was delivered from drugs on the very night he gave his heart to the Lord. He encouraged the students to not seek their identity in acceptance from social media or peer groups but in Jesus Christ alone. The College have a standing arrangement to contact The Gideons of Emerentia and grant them a date in February every year to visit the College. What made it more special is that both me and Piet were past pupils of Helpmekaar. We give God all the glory.

Monica Grové | National Chaplain: Gideons' Wives



CALLED TO SERVE

Tuesday, at 09:00, I dropped off my husband, Johan, at the prison where he works as a spiritual worker and converses with young men in the Mossel Bay Youth Prison who are between the ages of sixteen and twenty-six. I then usually head out to shop for the upcoming week. I entered Checkers after greeting the motor guard.

As soon as I exited the building and loaded my purchases in the car, the Lord told me, “Give the man a New Testament”.

“Do you know the Lord?” I asked.

The response was instantaneous.

“Yes Ma’am, I know and serve the Lord.”

He also said that they each go to their respective area in the parking lot after praying first thing in the morning.

Wow! I pulled out a PWT for him and managed to put a smile on his face. He expressed his gratitude repeatedly for the Testament, saying he would carry it with him always and use it to nourish his spirit with the words of God whenever the occasion presented itself. Thus, before I departed, we exchanged the gospel.

We must understand the importance of carrying PWTs with us. We must be at our posts as His representatives since there is a big need for His love. Later, when I put diesel in the car, the woman who was serving me was singing and smiling.

“Do you know Jesus?” I asked.

“Yes Ma’am, without Jesus in my life, I cannot survive. I would like to read the Bible during my lunch break, but my Bible is at home.”

Being able to offer her a PWT allowed me to also bring joy to her heart. She was positively ecstatic about the compact PWT, thrilled at the thought of having it perpetually tucked into her pocket, ready for perusal whenever she found a moment to spare. We also had a pleasant conversation until someone behind me needed her help.

Proclaim the Word:

- “... preach the word; be ready in season and out of season...” (2 Tim. 4:2 ESV)
- “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom.10:14 ESV).
- “And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (Rom.10:15 ESV).

Marietjie Boshoff | Mossel Bay camp

JUST *ask*

I would like to testify about my daughter, Ané, who went to a school camp in January. The week before the camp she hurt her thigh muscle during her school athletic event which caused her a lot of pain and discomfort. During the camp, they invited the children to come forward and ask God for help or assistance in anything in which they needed prayer. She went forward and they prayed for her leg to heal so that she could compete the following week in the athletic event.

She testified to us, in tears and very emotional, how she could feel how her leg was feeling better after the prayer. She was able to compete in the next athletic event. Her words to us were, "God truly is there. We just need to ask Him to help us". For me as a mother, this was so heart-warming to know that God was a reality in her life. We should never underestimate the power of prayer.

Esta Putter
Regional President: Gideons' Wives
Region 2





**The Gideons
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