

# FRIENDS *OF GIDEONS*

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made  
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well"

Psalm 139:14 ESV



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# welcome

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

We praise the Lord that we can mark 75 years of The Gideons International in South Africa this year. And in this issue we share testimonies from the turn of the 21st century, to today - how wonderful it is to know that the Lord is always the same.

***"... to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 1:25 ESV).***

We also thank the Lord for each of our *Friends*, who make it possible to reach more people with the Good News. Our *Friends'* contribution is particularly important in the areas where we do not have branches - the Eastern Cape, large parts of KZN as well as parts of the North of South Africa. See page 20 how you can make an eternal difference - TODAY.

**Blessings till the next edition.  
The Editorial team**

### 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**.



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 March 2025 there are more than **10 400** Friends of Gideons.

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

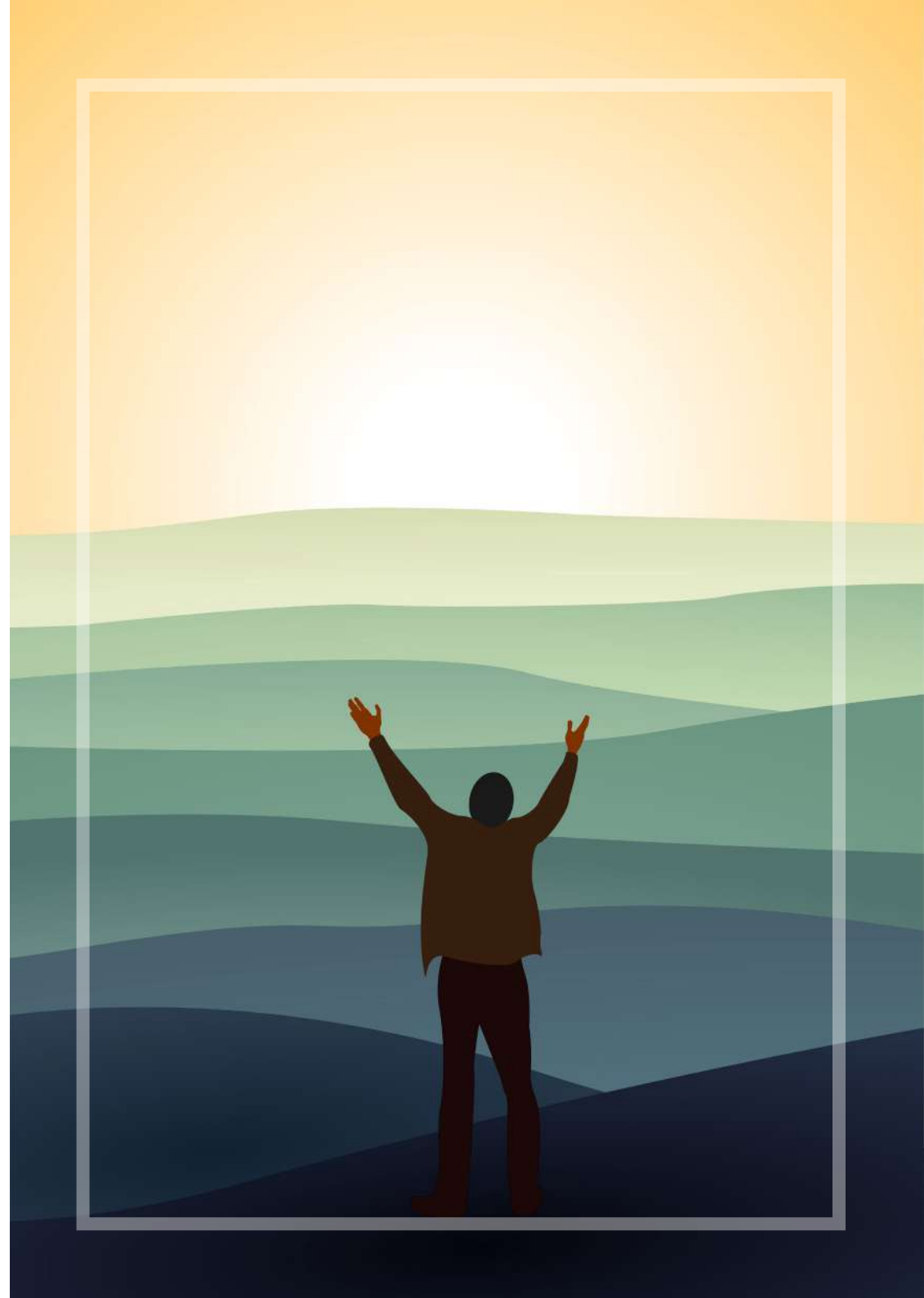
- o Prayer,
- o Financial contributions to purchase Scriptures.
- o Individual placement of Testaments.

**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.**



# FLAGPOLE STORIES

a true story

***A flagpole is used to hoist a flag high and make it flutter in the wind as a symbol of pride. I'd like to share three flagpole moments from my own life. I call them flagpole moments, not only because they stand out as events that had an impact on my life, but also because they happened to me in the square of Brits High School, right next to the flagpole.***

My first flagpole moment was when I received a Testament as a Grade 8 learner from The Gideons after an opening in the square which I still own today. "Gift to: Andreas du Preez – 19 September 1990." I couldn't believe that I had gotten such a little Testament with so many pages, so many words, so much ink – for free. However, it wasn't until about a year later that I truly began using this little Testament.

It was recently Valentine's Day ... And that brings me to flagpole moment number 2. In my 10th grade, I also began to become acutely aware of the beauty of the opposite gender. And in particular, the beauty of a lovely Grade 8 girl, with long, blonde hair, who lingered with her friends in a circle near the flagpole during breaks.

Of course, there weren't cell phones yet, so if I wanted to call her "my girlfriend," it meant I'd have to walk across the square and ask her face-to-face. Yep... terrifying!

After a few days of mustering up courage, I decided during one break that today is the day: "Walk of fame" or "Walk of shame," here I go! My heart was pounding through my chest. It felt like the whole square's eyes were zooming in on me. Finally, I was there, in front of her. I mustered up my last bit of courage and asked her the question. And she said... YES! Look, I was on cloud nine – I floated. I probably read through all of her notes three times. For the first time, I was also able to officially say: This is my girlfriend. I was in love!

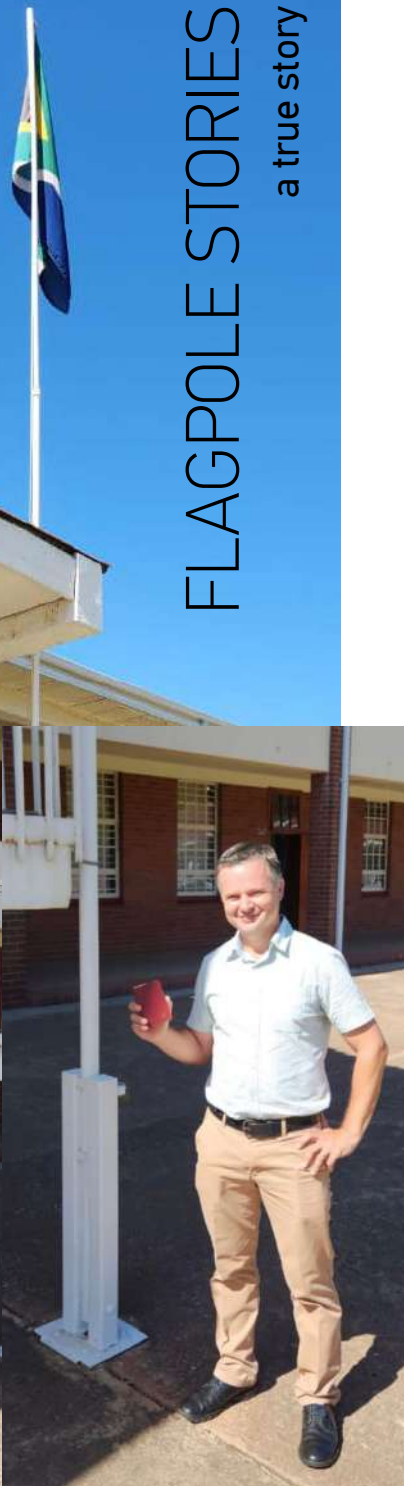
About three months later, I experienced another first, when that beautiful girl unexpectedly told me she didn't think things were working out between us anymore, which I suspect was just a polite way of saying, I'd rather go skiing on the dam with the Harties guy and his parents. Needless to say, I was absolutely devastated!

I understood physical pain – bruises, sprains, and tackles were just part of being rugby-crazy. But nothing could have prepared me for the crushing weight of a heartbreak. It wasn't just an ache; it was a deep, relentless pain that settled in my chest.

But why would I share this second humiliating flagpole moment with you now? Because I believe that many times, in those absolute highs or lows, you sometimes make impulsive decisions that can affect the rest of your life. Therefore, we must be prepared for when such moments come our way.

I was very fortunate, and I say this with great gratitude – in my time of disappointment, I used my little Testament. It has such themes in the front that refer you to specific verses – I've read it. I really went to seek help from the Lord. In my case, it was a love disappointment, but sometimes it's a friend, a family member, or someone else close to you that can hurt you the most. I could have easily chosen to change who I was – to try to be a "cooler" teenager by swearing a little or smoking, just so others would notice me, like the Harties guy. You know, all those lies that the devil wants to tell us about who the "cool" guys actually are. By the way, I don't judge people who swear or smoke, but I suspect many adults who do would gladly give it up if they could.

My final flagpole moment happened in matric, and, interestingly, it occurred quite unconsciously. There was a tradition where all Grade 8 students received a cardboard sheet with the names of certain matrics.





Their task was to find each of these matrices and collect their signatures next to their names.

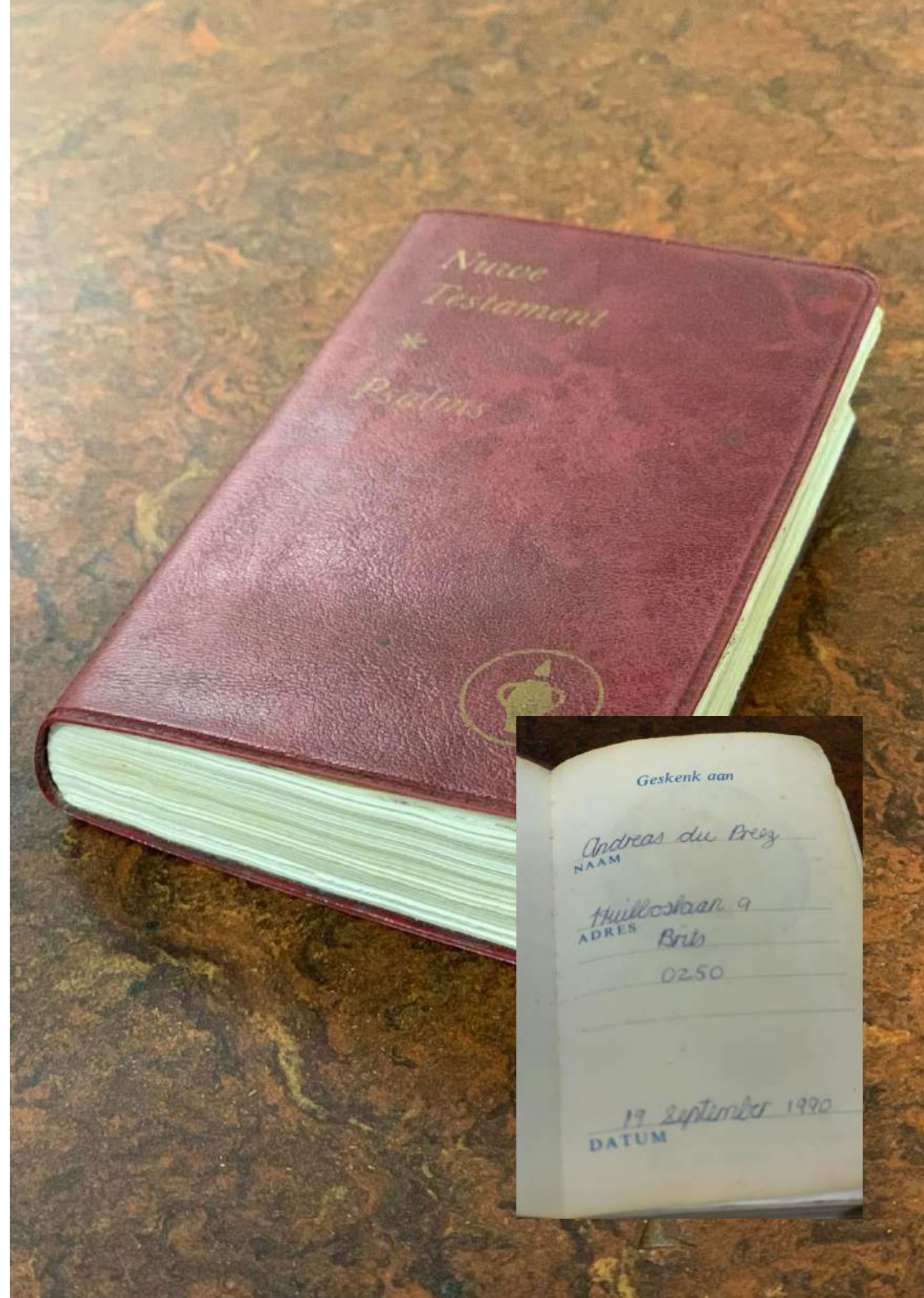
Years later, I would come to realise something incredible - one of the Grade 8 girls who had asked for my signature by the flagpole would one day sign her name alongside mine on our marriage certificate. Jolani du Preez – my beautiful partner for life!

Everything the Lord wants, He executes. He makes all things work together for the good of those who love him.

When a flag hangs limply from a flagpole without any wind, it's nothing more than an unrecognisable piece of cloth. But when the wind comes – and it always does, from the front or the back – that's when your true colours are revealed. Be prepared. Feed yourself daily with the Word that gives LIFE – God's Word.

"For I know that the Lord is great and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouse" (Psalms 135:5 – 7 ESV).

**Andreas du Preez**  
Brits Branch





# Goats do not go to hospitals

Jesus said of the sheep, “...I was sick and you visited me” (Matthew 25:36 ESV).

## What are you? A sheep or a goat?

What matters is not what you or I think, but what the Shepherd knows.

I was a sheep according to my own assessment. I thought “Jesus, I love you”, but through the Word I was convicted and my deceit was removed.

**“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21 ESV).**

## Being a goat

In the Shepherd’s eyes, I was a goat. My first love was not for Him. I obeyed what I wanted. I did not obey all His commands which I knew. It exposed who and what I loved.

Being moved in love to true love through obedience

The Lord has awakened His Word and will in me, to pray for and visit the sick. In fact, He did so many years ago. For a long time, more than a decade in this instance, I was disobedient.

There is no hiding from the fact. Are you obedient in His general will, as revealed to us all in His Word? Are you obedient to His specific will for you, as revealed through His Spirit to you?

I had excuses, good ones, some would even say valid ones. I ignored (my euphemism for disobeying) His whispering through my conscience He placed in me.

**“They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (Romans 2:15-16 ESV).**

I ignored the parts of His word that were uncomfortable to me because I did not fully surrender to Him. I thought or convinced myself to fall for the lies of the devil and that I could do what I chose. I said that I laid down my life, but the evidence proved otherwise. The word ‘obedience’ might make you uncomfortable, cause you to shift in your chair or to itch around your collar. The truth is in the Word:

**“Although He was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Hebrews 5:8-9 ESV).**

Are you more special than the Son of God who learned through obedience when He was fully man while also being fully God on earth? Do not be deceived like I was. The longer you are disobedient, the longer you will miss out on adventure, fulfilment and blessings from God that come through obedience.

## Knocking on the hospital’s door in faith and prayer

I joined The Gideons in 2024. I experienced that He who is true to His Word could fulfil His promises when I act in faith, going beyond mere words. As part of His body, our Gideons Branch has wholeheartedly agreed and committed to supporting the hospital ministry by ensuring that at least two members visit patients every Tuesday evening during visiting hours, sharing the Gospel through meaningful one-on-one conversations.

Gospel through meaningful one-on-one conversations.

The first step was to identify the head of the nearest government hospital. I reached out via phone and email – making numerous attempts. Some went unanswered, others led to referrals or redirections, and some came with promises. Through it all, we continued to pray. We diligently followed up on overdue responses. We waited. And we kept praying.



After many weeks and persistent follow-ups, the hospital CEO finally granted us permission to visit patients, share the Gospel, and distribute Testament. The final requirement was to submit a Gideons' Letter along with copies of our members' IDs. The door had been opened! And so, the hospital ministry for our Gideons Branch began.

### Stepping out of your comfort zone into a ward

Gideons are not just Bible distributors. Distributing Testament is the by-product of how we love. Gideons are Christians, re-born, spirit-filled children of God who share the Gospel, the truth in love.

***"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:38 ESV).***

***"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15 ESV).***

As Gideons we love. We love God and His people. During visiting hours we go into the wards to patients in their beds. We greet and engage, we connect, we share or confirm the Gospel, we gift a Gideons Testament where needed and we pray.

How wonderful it is to leave those with whom we shared the Gospel and committed in prayer, with the precious Word of God, the truth, the living Word that reaches where we cannot. Nothing is impossible for Him.

***"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 ESV).***

### The blessings that came with obedience

Do we obey Him to receive blessings? No. That is the message of a religion or a false doctrine. The truth is that obedience is the evidence of those who love Him. Just like good works can't produce faith - good works are evidence of faith.

As we went, we witnessed time and again how prayers were being answered.

I believe this is because these prayers were not self-centred but kingdom-focused: aligned with the will of the Father.

They are the kind of prayers that He delights and honours Him. We continue to witness and hear testimonies of:

They are the kind of prayers that He delights in and honours. We continue to witness and hear testimonies of:

- *Supernatural healing.*
- *Peace and deep sleep replacing fear and restlessness.*
- *See strength being restored to battered and sick bodies.*
- *Hear sincere words of appreciation for those thanking us for the visit and sharing the Gospel.*
- *Hear the wishes of those asking us to visit them again.*
- *See the joy of people who prayed for a Bible.*
- *Hear the expression of sincere thanks from staff, and how the ward staff said, "It is going to be a good night because you came again."*
- *Hear how people say they experienced a divine appointment when they were visited.*
- *How people are set free by choosing to forgive.*
- *Hear how people responded to the truth of the Gospel and surrender their lives to the Saviour. Many souls that we know of, and some that we don't, have been saved by putting their belief in Jesus as God and Saviour.*



There are too many things to mention about how people are released from various forms of oppression by coming into a relationship with the Creator and being secure in eternity in His presence.

Through all of this, our faith grows, and our love matures and deepens within us. We are growing ever closer to Him as we see Him working in and through us.

I learned that...

- *I learned that spiritual sickness outweighs the physical sickness of patients.*
- *I learned that we are more welcome than we often expect. People are naturally drawn to the light and the fragrance of Christ that we carry as Spirit-filled children of God.*
- *I learned that to love Him is not just a feeling. To love Him is action.*
- *I learned we have to continue to show up. He does the work through us.*

### **Reflection and prayer**

It is my hope and prayer that you will search your own heart and that the truth and His Word will guide you.

I pray that your obedience, which is the evidence of your love for Him, will testify that you live by the power of the Spirit of God.

I pray that any stronghold and deceit of the devil will be removed from you. The experience of trusting and obeying Him is changing lives. I am witnessing how many lives are being transformed, including my own, by the power of the Spirit by just showing up in obedience.

I pray that you will have the same experience as you follow the Shepherd. Now answer for yourself: Am I a goat or am I sheep in the eyes of my Shepherd?

### **Kobus Jacobs**

Cape Town South Branch







## GOD WILL MAKE THE SEED GROW *to bear beautiful fruit*

My husband, André, and I joined The Gideons in 2019. We were warmly welcomed, embraced with love and received unwavering support.

Initially, we struggled to fit in and even considered resigning. However, after praying about it, we chose to trust in God's plan, will, and grace, which kept us part of The Gideons. Our deep love for God and His Word, along with our passion for sharing and spreading it, became our greatest motivation.

We met wonderful people and formed meaningful friendships within The Gideons. These cherished friendships became a source of immense support during a challenging time that laid ahead of us, and I want to share just how much they meant to us.

In 2021, our son, André Junior, and his wife contracted COVID-19 and became seriously ill. Nine months before falling sick, they had adopted a two-month-old baby boy after struggling to have children. When they became ill, little John was just 11 months old. As their condition worsened, we stepped in to support them and brought John to stay with us. It soon became clear that he was also battling COVID-19. Despite the risks, we chose to care for him, placing our trust in God's protection and praying fervently for His hand over us.

Despite our constant close contact with John, God mercifully protected us from illness.

As our son André's health deteriorated, he was admitted to the hospital, sedated, and placed on a ventilator. This was an incredibly challenging time for us, as we were prohibited from visiting or even speaking to him due to strict contact restrictions. In our distress, we turned to fervent prayer and fasting, seeking God's mercy to spare his life. Throughout this ordeal, our cherished friends from The Gideons stood by us, offering unwavering and loving support.

After 12 days on a ventilator, we received an urgent call from the hospital, but sadly, we arrived five minutes too late. André Junior had already passed away. When we saw him, a profound peace was evident on his face, and we knew immediately Who had come to take him home. Upon returning home, we were met with a warm meal and heartfelt comfort from our dear Gideon friends, Piet and Sonja Spies.

As Gideons, we often plant seeds of faith without witnessing their growth, trusting God to nurture them in His timing. However, I was blessed last year to see firsthand the impact of a small Personal Workers Testament (PWT) on a woman's life.

While distributing Testaments to the staff of a restaurant in Gariep, one lady received her copy with both hands, hugged it tightly, and emotionally exclaimed, "Now I also have my own Testaments!" Her profound gratitude deeply moved me, especially considering how many Bibles we have at home collecting dust. During a Bible distribution at a care centre, I felt led to share Psalm 139:14 (ESV) with the staff.

***"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."***

After sharing this message and distributing the Testaments, one of the ladies approached me with tears in her eyes. She expressed gratitude for the timely reminder, explaining that earlier that day, they had all felt unnoticed and unappreciated in their roles. My visit and the Scripture had reassured them of their unique value and divine purpose. Witnessing how God's Word touched their hearts was a profound blessing, underscoring the impact of being available to share His message. Let us therefore not grow weary but continue with eager hearts to spread the Word of God! God will make every seed grow to bear beautiful fruit! God bless The Gideons!

**Wanda Klaassen**



# OUR FATHER'S PERFECT TIMING

**Marguerite Luttig**

Regional Leader, Region 1: Gideons' Wives

I do a lot of solo driving for work, and I often pass women on the road. Sometimes, I stop - especially if they have a baby or a toddler with them. The men always have something to say about it, but I trust that our Father shows me who's safe to help.

Whenever I drive to the Eastern Cape, I always pass through Uniondale and make a quick stop at Henriette du Plessis' quaint coffee shop for a cup of coffee. On one of these trips, as I turned onto the road to Joubertina, I noticed a woman walking briskly along the roadside. She wasn't hitchhiking, but there was a clear urgency in her step. I pulled over and asked where she was headed and if she'd like a ride. Gratefully, she climbed in, and as we drove, her story began to unfold.

She had left Geelhoutboom near George the day before to visit her sister in Misgund. But the ride she managed to catch mistakenly dropped her off on the road to Willowmore, leaving her stranded with no way to get back to the Joubertina road that same day. As night fell, the rain started, and the only shelter she could find was a stormwater pipe - cold, hungry, and without water. She told me she didn't sleep a wink, fearing both the rising water and the threat of evildoers in the dark.

As we drove, I talked with her, shared the Gospel, and assured her that I would take her all the way to her sister's house. We had to drive deep into a residential area to get there, and by then, I could tell she was already thinking about her journey home. So, I told her I'd be passing through again in two weeks - same route, same road. If she waited for me at a specific spot, I'd make sure she got home safely. Gratefully, she agreed.

She got out of the car at her sister's house. I handed her an Afrikaans Testament, sharing it with her as I usually do. She then said she wanted to pray for me, too. With a little money in hand, she ran to her sister's house.

Two weeks later, on my way back, I found her waiting exactly where we had agreed. Just as promised, I drove her straight to her neat little house in Geelhoutboom.

For me, it was yet another powerful reminder of our Father's perfect timing. I spotted her at the exact moment I turned in from Uniondale and was able to pick her up. Had she been there just a minute later, I would have missed her completely.

We praise our Father for His grace and provision!

# How to make an eternal difference

Every R30 you contribute enables The Gideons to place a Testament in the hands of someone who needs encouragement, hope or an answer to prayer.

*today*

## Want to make a financial contribution?

1. To make a regular Financial Contribution – please mail friends@gideonssa.org. We will gladly send you a debit order.

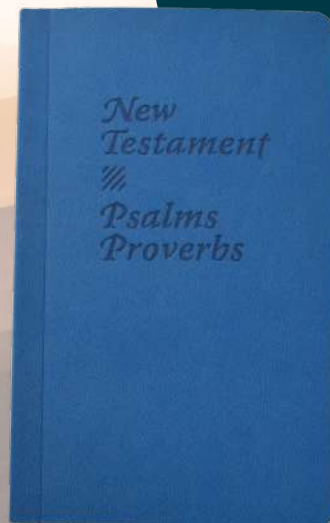
### Or alternatively,

2. You can contribute as you feel led to do so. Please introduce yourself by sending an email to friends@gideonssa.org along with your proof of payment.

### 3. Our banking details are:

The Gideons International  
First National bank (FNB), Pretoria  
Branch code: 25 14 45  
Cheque account: 510 608 41 497  
Reference: Your cell number

**Together, making an eternal impact, one soul at a time.**



## FRIENDS TESTAMENTS

*Friends Testaments* can be purchased by *Friends of Gideons* at R30 each and are available in English and Afrikaans.

### How can you purchase Testaments?

1. You need to ensure **you are registered** as a *Friend of Gideons* on the National *Friends* database. If you are not sure, please send an email to friends@gideonssa.org.
2. If you have not yet signed up on our database, kindly go to our website [www.gideons.co.za](http://www.gideons.co.za) and click on **Get Involved**.
3. **Send an email** to friends@gideonssa.org indicating the language and number of Testaments you want to purchase.
4. We will send you an **invoice** including the courier costs.
5. Then, you send us a **proof of payment**.
6. We courier the order to reach you within **5 to 7 working days** after receiving payment.





# EMPOWER OTHERS TO WIN SOULS

I'd like to share an idea from our Branch: We keep boxes of Testaments in our cars so that wherever we go, we always have Testaments on hand. While keeping a Testament in your handbag is also a great option, it can sometimes be a bit heavy on the shoulder. Having a box of Testaments in the car allows us to carry a variety of Testaments and always be prepared to share God's Word.

I'd also like to share a testimony from when my husband was in the hospital. During the admission process, the lady at reception went out of her way to assist us. I wanted to show my gratitude by offering her a cup of coffee, but she declined. I assumed this might be due to policies that prevent staff from accepting gifts from patients. Then, I thought of giving her a Testament. I went to the box in our car, took out a Testament, and gave it to her. She was genuinely surprised that someone would give her a Testament. Yes, winning souls for Jesus is at our core at The Gideons, but we sometimes forget to give others a tool with which they can work. She sees many patients daily when they are admitted.

I explained to her that at the front of the Testament, she could find prayers and specific verses to offer encouragement in various circumstances. Although she had received a Gideons' Testament in Grade 10, she hadn't realised its true value at the time.

I suggested she could keep a container of small papers on her desk, jot down relevant Testament verses, and share them with patients who needed encouragement. She was amazed to discover that she, too, had a unique opportunity to win souls for Jesus through this simple act. She promised to keep the Testament on her desk where she admits patients every day, ready to share God's Word with those who need it most.

This experience showed me yet another way to win souls for Jesus through our Gideons' Testament. It's not just about me sharing the Word; it's also about empowering others – like the lady behind her desk, who has a genuine passion for Jesus and for helping people. By giving her a Testament, we've created a new platform for sharing God's Word and touching lives.

I hope this story inspires others to think creatively about where they can place Testaments and make a lasting difference in people's lives.

**Sonna Kitching**  
Queenstown Branch



# *In the desert*

In June 2017, a family of three set off on a two-week holiday to Namibia. Among their luggage were several Personal Workers Testaments. As they travelled, they shared the Testaments enthusiastically and with great success. It didn't take long for them to realise they had packed far too few for the opportunities that came their way.

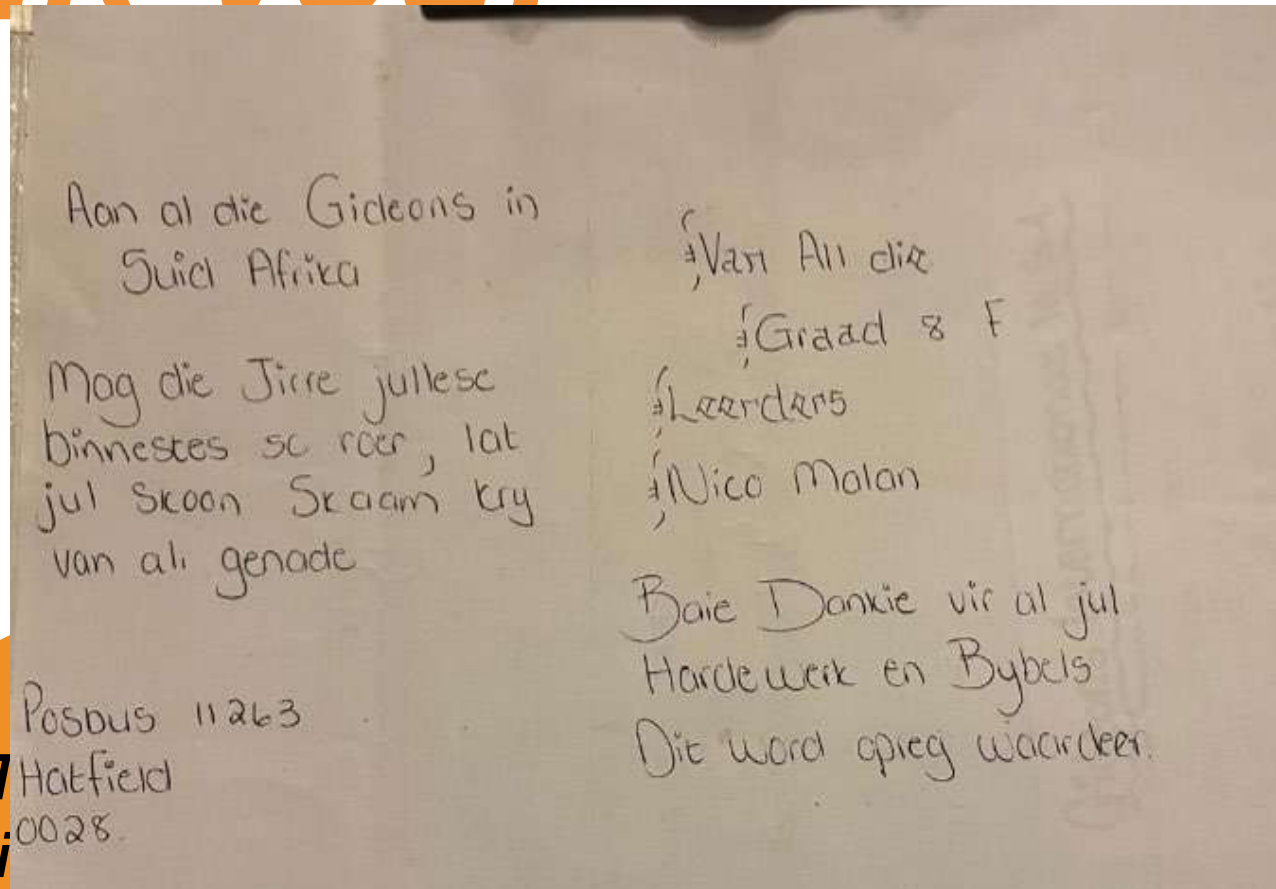
With just one English Personal Workers Testament remaining, the family ventured into the Namib Desert, an experience they would always cherish as the highlight of their trip. Riding over dunes, up and down, their adrenaline surged with each thrilling moment, bonding them even closer. This adventure also deepened their empathy and admiration for the Israelites, who journeyed through a desert for 40 years – a feat they now better understood.

After three hours in the desert, they reached base again. The guide who accompanied the family had never had a Testament. The family was able to gift their guide the final English Personal Workers Testament. The family's willingness to face all the challenges meant that the guide was also able to obtain his own Testament.

May we never tire of winning more souls for Jesus.

**Gideons couple**

# Thank you!



“7  
Gi  
South Africa”

This was a letter sent to the Gideons of the Tsitsikamma branch. I thought it to be special testimony to our members not always knowing how much lives are touched. This was sent to the address that was stamped (chubbed) inside the small Testament. Perhaps it can also be encouraged to keep on marking the inside of the scriptures.



# Salvation Testimony: National Convention 2000



(Peet and his wife, Diana, joined The Gideons in 2000.)



"This happened 30 years and about five hours ago today, on Monday, 20 September 1970. I grew up in the same circumstances as most white Afrikaners in our country. It was a life of regular Sunday school and going to church at least once on a Sunday. As a 13-year-old boy, I got up in the morning in a hostel in Barberton and had no idea what the day would hold for me.

As was the custom, everyone gathered in the school hall every Monday morning for the opening of the week. The Gideons visited the school that day. They asked permission to speak to the standard six pupils. The rest of the school then left the hall.

One of the 'uncles' spoke to us and shared the Gospel. For the first time, I realised that I was born into sin and needed salvation to enter heaven one day. He extended an invitation and those of us who responded prayed the sinner's prayer with him. It was at that moment that I accepted Jesus as my personal Lord and Saviour for the first time in my life.

After we finished praying, they gave each standard six student a Testament, with space at the front to sign our names and the date we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

Today, I am deeply grateful to God for those who were willing to make the time and effort to share the Gospel with lost school children 30 years ago. I also thank everyone who generously finances Testaments and distributes them freely.

Looking back, I realised it was the greatest gift anyone could have given me – eternal life through Jesus, who paid for it with His own life!

Although I later lost my way for a time, I can testify that from that day onward, God has been with me through His Holy Spirit, sustaining and guiding me.

**"... he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5b ESV).**

Today I realise that Jesus has come to pave the way for us to the Father, and it is my greatest desire to stand in a Father/Son relationship with Him."

**Peet van der Merwe**  
Randburg Branch



**The Gideons  
International**  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

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