

# FRIENDS OF GIDEONS

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Newsletter | Autumn 2026



“The Gospel is the  
**power** of God for  
salvation to everyone  
who believes”

**Romans 1:16 ESV**

EDITOR

Johanett Theunissen

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Micheline Hayden

NATIONAL SERVICE  
CENTRE

The Gideons International  
in South Africa

CONTACT

P.O. Box 35689

Menlo Park, 0102

Tel: (012) 460 7241

Fax: (086) 630 8149

email: friends@gideonssa.  
org

BANKING DETAILS

First National Bank, Pretoria

Branch code: 25 14 45 (EFT)

Cheque Account:

510 608 41497



facebook.com/

GideonsinternationalSouthAfrica



The Gideons Intl in SA



The Gideons International in  
South Africa



@thegideonsinternationalins4130



The Gideons  
International  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE GOSPEL IS OUR MISSION



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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**.

# WELCOME

welcome

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

**“The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ...”**

(Romans 1:16 ESV).

The Gospel is our mission – this is our new tagline. Read more on page 8 about its meaning and significance.

In this edition we share testimonies of God’s protection, healing, and saving power. Not only from South Africa, but from across the world.

We honour the Lord that The Gideons are welcome in 200 countries, and we pray for the 23 countries where there are not yet open doors (See page 24). We also thank the Lord for *Friends of Gideons*, like you, who join us in prayer for this.

If you have not yet done so, please download the Daily Prayer Calendar from the homepage of our website, [www.gideons.co.za](http://www.gideons.co.za) to pray with us.

**Blessings until next time,  
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 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.**



# FROM SHOPLIFTER TO FOLLOWER OF JESUS

In April 2025, I visited a school in Port Shepstone to arrange a Bible placement – a request the school had denied for several years. While speaking with the receptionist, I noticed a man wearing a motorcycle helmet and a leather jacket. After the principal agreed to a placement date, I returned to my car, where the motorcyclist, Colin, called me over.

Colin shared that twenty years earlier, he had been arrested in Durban for shoplifting a bottle of wine due to a drinking problem. While he was being held in police cells, the Station Commander gave him a Gideons New Testament, saying, **“You will need this more than I do.”**

What followed was a ten-year struggle of reading the Bible and praying, marked by cycles of failure and renewed effort. Eventually, through the grace of God, he found victory over his addiction. Colin has now been completely sober for ten years.

Today, he serves at the Port Shepstone Baptist Church and earns a living delivering parcels for a local pharmacy. He testified that the Gideon Bible the Station Commander gave him ultimately brought about the transformation in his life.



# WHY THE GOSPEL IS OUR MISSION

When most people think of The Gideons International, the first thing that comes to mind is hotel Bibles. However, Scripture outreach is just one of the three ways in which we help members fulfil their calling to win others for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our purpose is to equip Gideons and their wives to share the Good News by:

1. **Strengthening one another,**
2. **Spreading the Gospel message, and**
3. **Sharing God's Word.**

Hotel rooms may be the most widely recognised place to find a Bible from The Gideons, but our outreach extends far beyond those walls. From schools and hospitals to fairs and other public venues, members place and distribute Scriptures across nearly 200 countries, territories, and possessions. As a result, tens of millions of lives are touched by God's Word every year.

Why does an Association of more than 240 000 Christian business and professional men – together with their wives – devote so much time and energy to sharing God's Word? The answer is simple: the Gospel is our Mission.

The word Gospel means “Good News”. And that Good News is this:

**“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 ESV).**

Scripture also tells us:

**“The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16 ESV).**

This is vital because all have sinned (Romans 3:23), and the wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). How, then, are we saved?

**“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13 ESV).**

## **NOTHING ELSE TRANSFORMS LIVES LIKE THE GOSPEL**

The Gospel matters because it changes everything - it brings hope and transforms lives. In a world filled with anxiety, brokenness, and uncertainty, the Gospel offers an anchor in life's storms. The Gospel found in Scripture is the only message that points all humanity to rescue from sin and eternal separation from God.

For more than a century, people have shared real-life stories of finding freedom from sin and lasting peace through the power of the Gospel. Many of these life-changing moments began when they encountered a copy of God's Word placed or distributed by a Gideon or a Gideons' Wife.

## **STARTING TODAY, YOU CAN HAVE EVERLASTING HOPE**

**“Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2b ESV).**

Whatever your struggle, the Gospel is the answer. If you would like a personal copy of God's Word, we invite you to scan the QR code below and download the Gideon Bible App. It includes audio options for more than 2 200 language translations, verse helps, notes, and much more.

**God loves you. And so do the 240 000 members of The Gideons International.**

## **GIDEON BIBLE APP**



## ALL GLORY TO OUR WONDERFUL HEAVENLY FATHER

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I want to share with you how wonderful God is and what He has done for me, both this year in May and also three years ago.

In 2022, I suffered from a severe stomach ailment and lost 10 kg in just two weeks. I was given the wrong antibiotics, which only made me sicker. After a colonoscopy, I was diagnosed with cancer. Dr. Brink wanted to operate immediately, but I asked to be transferred to Bloemfontein. This was on a Thursday. Dr. Sonja informed me that there were no beds available at Rosepark Hospital.

By Friday, I was growing weaker, and at 14h00, Hester contacted Dr. Fichardt's rooms, where they promised to let us know the moment a bed becomes available.

Then Gerhard Kleynhans phoned me shortly after. He said he had heard that I was very sick and prayed for me, specifically asking God to open a hospital bed for me.

Ten minutes later, the same lady phoned back to say that a bed had just become available. Late Friday afternoon, I was admitted to Rosepark Hospital. There I was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis – not cancer. Twenty days later, I was discharged from the hospital, 16 kg lighter but grateful to be alive.

On 6 May 2025, I was loading cattle on the Welkom Road. I climbed on top of the truck's body to position the cattle correctly, but I suddenly fell between the cattle and, on the way down, received a hard blow to the head. I woke up lying among the cattle, unable to breathe, my head hanging forward. When I lifted my head, I was able to breathe again. The driver and some workers lifted me upright and said they would get me down out of the truck's body. I don't know how they managed it, because the next thing I remember, I was on the ground out. Again, I had to lift my head just to be able to breathe.

With a sweater wrapped around my neck, I was driven, in my bakkie, 50 km to the hospital. I know I should have waited for an ambulance, but at that moment I simply could not think straight.

When I arrived in Kroonstad, X-rays confirmed that my C2 vertebra was broken and had shifted. I was then flown by helicopter to the Zuid Afrikaans Hospital in Pretoria. After surgery, the neurosurgeon, Dr. Nel, told me it was nothing short of a miracle that I was not dead or paralysed. Despite everything I did wrong with my neck, I know the protective hand of God was over me the entire time. That knowledge kept me positive throughout the healing process – the realisation that I should have been paralysed but was spared.

All glory to God, my heavenly Father.

**Joppie Botha**  
Kroonstad Branch



# carried BY PRAYER

I would like to share something from my personal experience during the COVID pandemic in the winter of 2020/21, specifically about prayer, and how it carries us through difficult times.

I fell ill and tested positive for COVID-19. When my oxygen levels began to drop, I was admitted to hospital. After a week in the Medi-Clinic in Thabazimbi, where my lungs were steadily deteriorating, I was airlifted to Welkom, the only place with an available ICU bed and ventilator.

I was sedated before the flight and have no memory of it. In the ICU in Welkom, I remained on a ventilator for a full week. I was seriously ill. The doctor told my wife, Ané, that my chances of survival were one in three. The ICU statistics at that time were grim.

Believers started praying for me and for my family. And we could truly feel it. I never experienced panic or breathing distress, and Ané and the children also felt a deep peace, despite the challenges they faced.

We genuinely felt that God was carrying us, and that believers were lifting us up to Him in earnest prayer.

While I was under sedation, I had a dream: Ané and I were walking through the mall in Thabazimbi. I was wearing an oxygen mask, which I still needed in the dream. When she briefly stepped into another shop, my oxygen ran out. I collapsed to the ground and knew - this was the end. I tried to call for her, but she couldn't hear me because I was unconscious. That's where the dream ended.

After I was discharged from the hospital and started to recover, Ané told me that one night she had a strong, urgent feeling to pray for me, specifically to place her hands on my chest in the spirit and pray for healing. This was unusual for her, as we are members of the Dutch Reformed Church, but she obeyed.

Later, we heard from a friend in Harrismith who had the same experience: one evening, he felt compelled to pray for me and lay hands on me in the spirit. He even said he felt his hands grow warm during the prayer. Still later, we heard from a family member in the Cape who had the exact same experience, at the same time.

I believe it was at that very moment in my dream, when I cried out in the spirit, that the Lord moved people to pray for me.

Prayer makes a difference. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray, listen. Don't delay or doubt. Pray without ceasing.

**Diederik Esterhuizen**

Thabazimbi Branch



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**social media**  
& share the good news!

CLICK HERE





# Answer to Prayer

## **Drakensberg South Blitz: 11-14 March 2012**

On Sunday afternoon at 17:00, thirty-three Gideons gathered at the Kings Grant Country Retreat. Arrangements were finalised, and the two Johan van Niekerks, from the Springs Branch, studied their maps and loaded several schools onto the GPS. The schedule was full, and excitement ran high.

Early on Monday morning, we set off and reached our first school in time for the opening. The Bibles were received with courtesy and deep gratitude. The second school on our list was Nottingham Road College. The Principal agreed to assemble the learners quickly for the placement before they had to start writing exams. I was still preparing the supply of Bibles before addressing the learners when one of the teachers rushed towards me and, in amazement, asked, “Why are you here?”

I explained that we are businessmen with a love for sharing God’s Word.

However, she interrupted me and urgently asked again, “Why are you here, Sir?” I did not understand and wondered why she kept repeating the question.

She then explained that she had started a Bible study group at the school just the previous Wednesday, and she had been the only person with a Bible. The children were eager to have their own Bibles. The small group ended with earnest prayer, asking the Lord to please provide Bibles. When she saw us so soon afterwards with boxes of Bibles, she could hardly believe it.

Our astonishment quickly turned into gratitude, and I realised once again: WE SERVE A GREAT GOD. ALL HONOUR TO HIM WHO IS IN CONTROL OF ALL THINGS!

The final number of Bibles placed by the 33 Gideons was 86 650. May God make that abundant seed to grow.

## **Johan van Niekerk (Jnr)**

Springs Branch

# FROM PRISONER TO PASTOR

I was born in Baltimore, Maryland. Both my parents were heavily involved with drugs and alcohol. When I was younger, my mom took us to church, but that soon ended. So did my parents' marriage.

After they divorced, I stayed with my mom, who constantly changed jobs and boyfriends, moving us from one home to the next. I never felt grounded or secure. I remember being abused and frequently called worthless.

I began smoking and drinking at age 11 and continued abusing substances through school. I was kicked out of high school during Grade 10 and left home at the age of 16. I spent the nights anywhere other than my mom's place. I ended up living in some very bad places, among the worst kind of people.

By my 21st birthday, I was living in Denver, Colorado, and my life had reached a peak of addiction, depression, and violence. I despised myself and resented anyone who seemed to have a better life than mine.

Consumed by hatred and self-loathing, I often picked fights simply to feel something other than the pain of my own existence. I attempted suicide several times, but each attempt failed. I was completely out of control.

At a party one night, I shot a full clip of ammunition into the car of someone I thought had stolen from me. I was duly arrested and prosecuted for two counts of attempted murder.

There I was – 21 years old and facing up to 72 years in prison. I had no hope, no friends, and no family. Yet in my jail cell, I noticed a Bible placed there by The Gideons. I had never read the Bible before. When I opened the Bible to the book of Matthew, I began to learn about Jesus and His love.

**Matthew 5:4 (ESV) says:**

**“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”**

I had never felt comfort, peace, or true love in my life. So, I prayed for the first time, and asked God to let me taste these things before my life was over.

In that moment, I felt the Father's arms wrap around me, and His love burned so intensely within me that I began to weep from the depths of my soul. In an instant, I was forever changed. I vowed to follow God and His love and to give my life to Him, no matter what the rest of my life might bring.

I was incarcerated for nine months. During that time, I attended addiction classes, continued my education, and earned my GED. I awaited sentencing without an attorney – I only had Jesus. By the grace of God, I was sentenced to four years of probation and released the very next day. I was a free man.

After my release, I completed a year-long intensive programme to help me overcome my addictions. I continued to feed my soul with the knowledge of Christ.

Today, I am a licensed pastor in Colorado with Teen Challenge, and I am newly married. In just a few short years, my life has been transformed from one of pain and suffering into a life of joy and service to the King. Each day, I thank God for His unrelenting love – for calling my name in that jail cell and speaking truth to me through His Word.

**Pastor John Krainer**  
**USA**

PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# China



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Yemen



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Somalia



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Tunisia



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Libya



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Morocco



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Turkmenistan



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Mauritania



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Comoros Islands



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Djibouti



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Maldives



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Uzbekistan



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Afghanistan



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Saudi Arabia



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Algeria



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Wallis & Futuna Islands



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Iraq



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Iraq



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# St. Helena



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Monaco



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Liechtenstein



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Iran



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# Eritrea



PRAY WITH US FOR THIS COUNTRY THAT IS STILL CLOSED TO THE GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



# North Korea





# The Gideons International

IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE GOSPEL IS OUR MISSION

## **CONTACT**

P.O. Box 35689,

Menlo Park, 0102

Tel: (012) 460 7241/2

Fax: (012) 460 8552

Email: [friends@gideonssa.org](mailto:friends@gideonssa.org)

[www.gideons.co.za](http://www.gideons.co.za)