

# *FRIENDS OF GIDEONS*

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Newsletter | Winter 2026

“... that I may know him and the **power** of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his **death** ...”

**Philippians 3:10 ESV**

**FRIENDS OF GIDEONS  
NEWSLETTER  
WINTER 2026**

**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



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South Africa



@thegideonsinternationalins4130



**The Gideons  
International**  
IN SOUTH AFRICA  
THE GOSPEL IS OUR MISSION

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— ISB 2026 —

## 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 to the Winter edition of the *Friends of Gideons* Newsletter

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The second **International Scripture blitz (ISB)** took place in May, and we praise the Lord for the **546 501 Bibles** that were placed!

Read more on **page 18**, along with three testimonies. In the next edition, we will share additional testimonies from the ISB.

On **page 11**, Ralph Rabie also shares his experience at the ISB in Colombia. The Gideons is truly an international ministry.

The rest of this edition is filled with joyful and inspiring testimonies of how God uses ordinary people to change lives. Thank you for YOUR part in preparing the harvest for eternity!

**Soli Deo Gloria!**

**Blessings**  
**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**.

# EACH OF US CAN CHANGE THE WORLD OF ONE PERSON



## TESTIMONY GIVEN DURING THE 2025 NATIONAL CONVENTION

I am 48 years old, and for 32 years, I was trapped in almost every addiction imaginable. I often say, “People who hurt, hurt people,” and my life was proof of that. I was born into addiction. My biological father was a violent alcoholic, and although my parents were good people, they were lost. Today I can say with certainty: the absence of God is the absence of love, life, and anything good.

If you look at the numbers, addiction is a global crisis: more than 400 million people struggle with alcohol dependence, over 300 million with drugs, and millions die each year because of it. Mental illness often follows because addiction damages the mind. Only about 11% of addicts ever recover long-term. Humanly speaking, the odds were not in my favour.

My own life reflected the damage. I suffered physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. My mother attempted suicide in front of me when I was still young.

I was diagnosed with manic depression and placed on psychiatric medication early in my young life.

I was an introvert, terrified of rejection, and although I excelled at sports and academics, I drifted toward the wrong crowds and made disastrous choices.

Addiction eventually took everything. I spent time in psychiatric wards, rehabilitation centres, and prisons – more than once. At one point, I weighed 30kg less than I do today, had no teeth, and wore a prison overall – sometimes green, yellow, or orange, depending on which prison I was placed in. It wasn’t for lack of help; I was incapable of stopping.

In 2022, after losing my son, my brother, and my niece within six months, I attempted suicide. When I woke up, I was in a drug house. I was homeless, living off rubbish bins. But next to me was a red Gideon Testament. I still don’t know how it got there. I held it to my chest that night, and that was the last night I ever used drugs.

I started going to church and met a Gideon, Uncle Jurgen Fourie. He fed me, clothed me, mentored me, and helped nurse me back to health. At that time, I was suffering from drug-induced psychosis – I often didn’t know what day it was, or even where I was.

If it weren't for a Gideon, I would have died. I know it for a fact.

Through Uncle Jurgen's love and the power of God's Word, I learnt what Faith in Action really means. That is what you, as Gideons, do: you win souls by putting the Gospel into motion.

We might not all change the whole world, but each of us can change the world of one person. You changed mine. Because my life changed, my wife's life changed, and now the lives of our friends are changing too. Two weeks ago, I married the love of my life, who also gave her heart to the Lord because of what God has done in me.

The small things you do – a Bible placed, a kind word, a moment of encouragement – save lives. Because of what you do, I am standing here today. And from the bottom of my heart, I thank you. I thank the Lord for being His hands and feet to the walking wounded – just as I once was.

DANIÉLE OLIVIER

Danièle now serves full-time in homeless outreach.



**Click here** to watch the full testimony



# GOD'S timing truly is perfect

Being a Gideon has been one of the greatest joys of my life, especially the moments spent handing out Personal Worker Testaments (PWTs). I remember how, after purchasing 20 Chinese PWTs, Peet van der Merwe confided in me, **“It’s one of the hardest languages to place in our country.”**

At first, I was excited, but as the months went by, thirteen in all, and I still had 19 PWTs left, I started to understand the challenge more deeply. It was humbling and, if I’m honest, sometimes a bit discouraging. But I continued to pray and trust that the right opportunity would come.

Over the holidays, I travelled 9,500 kilometres to Bali, seeking both rest and adventure. One day, I set out for the island of Nusa Penida, taking a 45-minute boat ride across bright, rolling waves. After five hours of sightseeing, exhaustion set in, and I decided to take a break. As I sat there, quietly reflecting, a young Chinese woman named Susan noticed my Gospel-themed T-shirt and approached me out of curiosity.

Her openness surprised me, and we quickly struck up a conversation about Jesus. It was a simple, genuine exchange, and in that moment, I realised the importance of always being prepared to share my faith.

With gratitude, I offered her five Chinese PWTs, one for her and each member of her family. She received them warmly, and we exchanged numbers to stay in touch. Since then, we have continued our conversations, and I have been deeply encouraged by her interest and openness to the message of hope.

This experience touched me in ways I hadn’t expected. It was a powerful reminder that God’s timing truly is perfect. What felt like a long period of waiting and uncertainty became a moment of divine opportunity. I would encourage everyone: keep a PWT with you, wherever you go. You never know when and where God will use you to share His Word and touch a life.

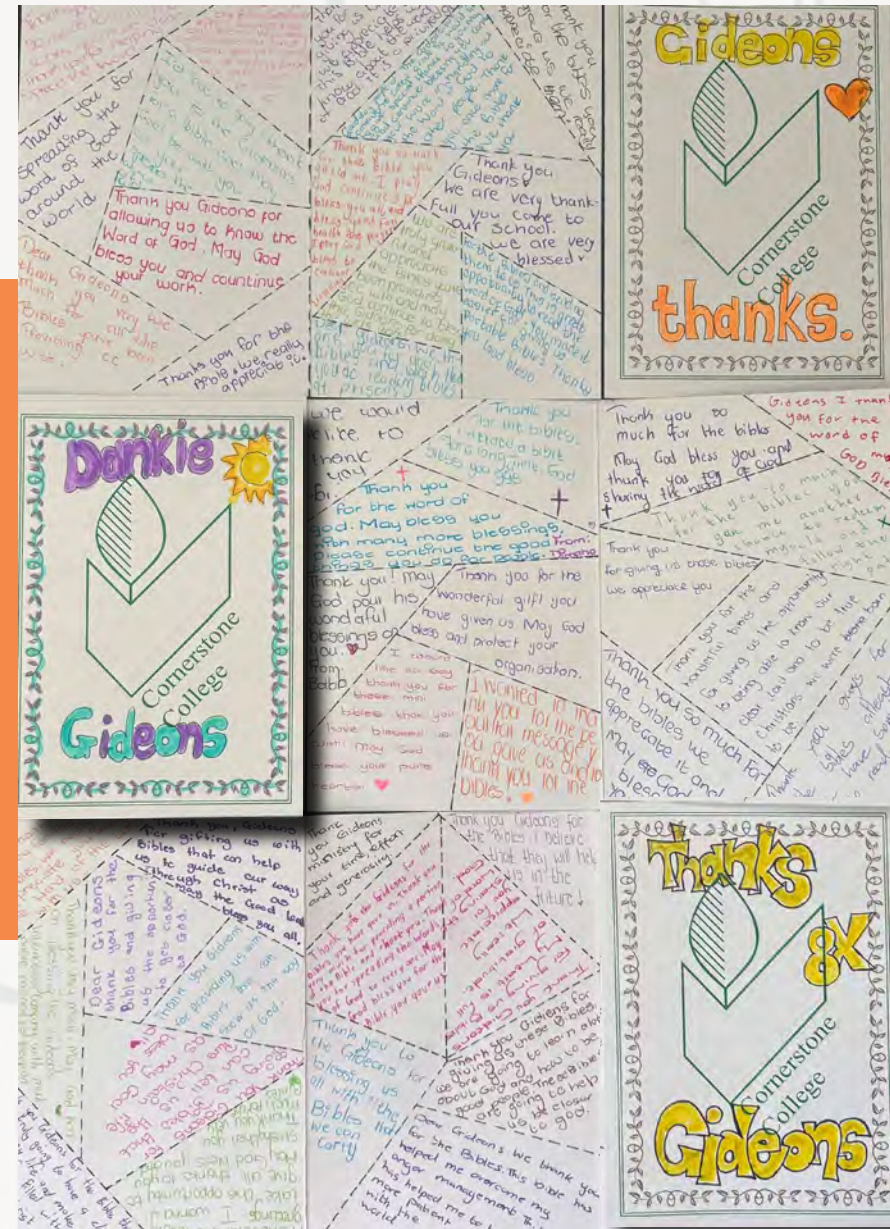
**Kuben Moodley**  
Randburg Branch

# THANK YOU

## Grade 8's of Cornerstone college

Sally Hurlin received a Testament from The Gideons but did not read it for two years. When she started reading it, she gave her heart to the Lord. In 1991 Sally and her husband Rob founded Cornerstone College in response to the education crisis in South Africa.

Earlier this year, members in the East Pretoria branch went to place Testaments at Cornerstone. On the photo is the "thank you" cards they received after the placement.



# A DIVINE APPOINTMENT IN TEL AVIV

## The miracle of the pink Testament

**NEW TESTAMENT,  
PSALMS & PROVERBS**

**Marshelle and  
Dean Pillay**  
Parys Branch



**ENGLISH**

In March 2018, on the final night of our trip to Israel, Dean and I travelled from Ein Gedi to Tel Aviv. We needed to be close to Ben Gurion Airport for our early morning flight back to South Africa. Throughout our journey, we had intentionally carried five blue and five pink Gideon Testaments to give to those the Holy Spirit highlighted. By the time we reached Tel Aviv, we were certain every single one had been handed out.

We walked into a three-star hotel reception near the beach. Immediately, I felt a heavy, cold atmosphere. While Dean went to inspect a room, I waited at the desk and noticed a strange occurrence: men were entering, signing a ledger, and leaving. Curiosity led me to look at the book. The page was filled with coded names and status markers. At the top of the page, the heading read: “Warlock Meeting.”

I was shaken. When Dean returned, I pulled him outside and explained the situation. We sat on the beach, exhausted from travel, and prayed earnestly. Should we stay and face a night of intense spiritual warfare, or drive back to our previous lodging? We knew that staying would require every ounce of our faith and the strength of the Holy Spirit to carry us through.

Dean decided we should return to Jaffa House, but then he asked a surprising question: “Check the bag one more time. Is there a Bible left?”

“No,” I replied, “we used them all.” But I checked anyway. There it was, one little pink Testament. Whether we had miscounted or it had appeared by a miracle, we knew it was there for a reason. We marched back into that heavy atmosphere with bold purpose. I called over the pleasant young receptionist. As I handed her the Testament, I shared a short, punchy Gospel message. In that moment, the spiritual shift was palpable. A stern, elderly woman, covered in tattoos from her neck to her wrists, rushed toward us, her eyes glaring at the Word of God in my hand.

She abruptly summoned the young girl away, but it was too late. The receptionist was beaming, clutching the pink Bible to her chest. She whispered urgently that she would read it before being ushered away.

During “lion’s den,” she needed to hear one truth: that Yeshua loved her so much. He had a Bible intentionally waiting for her. We left that hotel, almost running, not just from the lingering fear, but with immense joy that God had used us as His vessels.

“That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (Philippians 3:10 ESV).

Blessings and Shalom.

# GOD'S WORD NEVER RETURNS VOID

I grew up reading the English-translated Bible. Although I knew other translations existed, I rarely encountered them personally. It was only after joining The Gideons that I truly got to see and handle the different translations. That exposure was something special to me.

During my years as a Gideon, I've taken part in blitzes and handed out several vernacular PWTs. But I never really stopped to think about where those Bibles would end up or how they would be used. My prayer was simply that whoever received one would read it.

Recently, I attended a friend's funeral. At the burial, an elderly man stepped forward to share a word before the body was laid to rest. He took out a Zulu Gideons Bible, something I recognized instantly as he began reading from it in Zulu. That moment struck me deeply. Somewhere in the past, a Gideon, perhaps someone no longer alive

or someone who has long forgotten that moment, placed that Bible into his hands. Yet here it was, being used powerfully and purposefully. God ensured that His Word reached the exact place and moment it was meant for.

I realized how easily I forget that the Bibles we distribute go further than we ever see. They find their way into funerals, weddings, prisons, homes, and countless unexpected moments. People use them in ways we may never witness. And truly, God's Word never returns void.

This experience encouraged me again. It reminded me that while we may get caught up in the routine of what we do, there is incredible power behind it. Each Bible is a seed that travels further than we can imagine, carrying life-changing impact with it.

**Modest Kabeya**  
Randburg Branch



During a recent International Scripture Blitz (ISB) in Bogotá, Colombia, I had the privilege of witnessing a truly moving moment: Alvaro, a street vendor, committed his life to the Lord. Before we began our scheduled school placement, we encountered Alvaro in the park just across the road from the school.

Alvaro told us that he had been told many things by many different churches.... All he ever wanted was the truth.... He asked us what church we were from and what we believed... We said we were not from a church but from God and if he wanted the truth, it was easy. We had Alvaro read John 14 verse 6... He read aloud: “Jesus saith unto him I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh to the father but by me”.

**After reading this we asked him, “Who is the Truth?”  
He responded “JESUS IS...”  
“Would you like the truth in your life”,  
Joe asked...? And Alvaro said “Yes, I would”.**

**Praise the LORD!**



Pictured with me is **Joe du Bois**, a Gideon from the United States, and my translator, **Maria Paulo** as we pray for Alvaro's new life...

# OBEDIENT AND FAITHFUL

**Ralph Rabie**  
Region 2 Area Leader



# THE BOOK OF LIFE

**During our Visit to KZN Branches we visited Ricky Naido alias Kula, in Pheonix in the Mount Edgecombe Branch area. Ricky dropped out of school at a very young age and got involved with Drug dealing.**

He was first sent to prison for 4 years after which he was out of prison for 6 years when he got into trouble with the law again one night and, long story short, shot a policeman in a sugar cane field in cold blood.

He told us about the whole affair in detail and was sent back to prison for 60 years. He was sentence for 60 years of which he had to serve a minimum of 35 years. He eventually served 22 years during which he became a member of the 'Twenty Sixers' prison gang.

He told us as a prison gang, they used the Bible and twisted its contents to suit their gang stories. The 'Twenty Sixers' were Jesus and His disciples and the 'Twenty Niners' were Satan. They used the Bibles pages as material to smoke cigarettes, but mercifully Ricky later came to faith because of a Gideons Bible. Kula, which means little man, studied the Bible frequently and learned the scriptures of by hart, so much so that he knew almost the entire Bible by heart. We could see that he had truly changed his life.

Other Gang members and the community where he grew up could not believe what had happened to his life. He is now working through his testimony to lead others to the Lord. He was going to a church event in Newcastle, the weekend after our visit where he ministered at a men's event. Someone else also wanted to book him in the Durban area for an evangelistic action that same weekend.

The way Rickie shares his testimony with so much detail and passion sometimes made me shudder and the body language he displayed can still be seen in the gang actions he grew up with. Rickie, or Kulla as the community knows him, walks with a severe limp, due to stab wounds received on his body and back. He could not say how many stab wounds he had survived, because it was too many, but when asked how many people he had murdered, he immediately told us that it was 3. He hesitated a bit and then counted quickly in the air and then confirmed that it was 3.

The interview with him was an experience for me personally that I will not forget. The fact that he is still alive, he says unequivocally is due to the Lord who kept him alive so that he can tell others about His Great Grace. Rickie also told Alec that he would help identify people who could be approached as potential members, to start a possible branch in Phoenix.

**Carl Visagie**  
Region 3 Regional Leader



# THE POWER OF ONE

A TESTIMONY OF GROWTH ...

What begins with a single heart on fire can soon become a roaring flame. In one of our local Branches, we witnessed a remarkable transformation that started with just one member's unwavering enthusiasm. For some time, only three Gideons had been gathering regularly for prayer. However, through one individual's consistent passion and proactive invitation, that small circle began to widen. Today, that group has grown to eight committed participants lifting their voices together.

This shift is a powerful reminder that individual initiative is the catalyst for collective growth. When we take ownership of our mission, the spirit of the entire branch is renewed. As we look to strengthen our impact, let's remember the call to share His glory daily:

**“Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.” (1 Chronicles 16:23-25 ESV).**

Let this be our motivation. By getting involved and inspiring those around us, we ensure our Branches don't just function, they thrive.

**Riaan Stoop**

National Membership Program Coordinator



# THE ENCOUNTER WITH RAJ AND MOHAMED

**Cubendren Anamallay**  
Randburg branch

New Haven Secondary School is in the heartland of the township of Chatsworth, just West of Durban in KZN. The immediate area of Croftdene is a place that is steeped in the conservative, and possibly even extremist practice of Hinduism and Islam. The demographic of the school reflects this and has adopted a very carefully sensitive stance to the community in this regard. Accordingly, the Gideons were refused access twice. A spot poll indicated that Christians are extremely rare in this neighbourhood. The initiative was taken to stand outside the gates of the school, to hand out New Testament Bibles, and to have conversations with students. The reputation of the hostility towards Christians proved to be true, and under the extremely disapproving looks and comments from parents, the environment became visibly toxic, and that resulted in the students being very fearful.

Raj and Mohamed were two students that, as they exited through the gate, were presented the Bible as a gift to them. Raj, who wore a red string around his wrist, signifying that he had completed a ritual of dedication to a Hindu goddess, became very enthusiastic and took his Bible with glee and joy, and stated, "I know John 3:16, and now I can read it all!"

Mohamed in the meantime, was ambivalent, one could see and feel fear, desire, confusion and joy on his face, virtually all at the same time. He was offered the Scripture a second time, and he said, "I do want to know more, I know there is more, but I cannot take this, because if I am found with it, my father is going to hurt me and make my life hell, he might even throw me out." We tried to find solutions, to keep it hidden, but he said that his mother would find it and tell his father. It was at this point that Raj said: "Hey Mohamed, this is a great thing, don't worry I will keep your book with me, and whenever you want to read it, just tell me!"

Mohamed's uncertainty cleared up, and he said to Raj, "thanks bru, I think I will worry you all the time." Raj, took Mohamed's Bible, put it in his bag, and both said "thank you" and walked off happily together. The only thing that this servant did, was to joyfully think, look at what the Lord just did, what a blessing it is to have the opportunity to do this.

# SPIRITUAL CARE FOR FUTURE LEADERS

Earlier this year the Parks Branch in Pretoria received the message below after the school placement at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom School. The children are now not allowed on school grounds if they don't have their Gideons Testaments with them.

We really want to thank and appreciate your spiritual contributions to these learners who are the future leaders of this beautiful country, South Africa. Your spiritual gift of this precious Book will not be forgotten. Ever since you distributed these Bibles, our school - especially the Grade 8's - are behaving well because of this Bible and even our schools' Christians Movement is performing well as all learners are now having Bibles. As a school we just want to thank you for this great gift.





# FROM MURDERER TO MISSIONARY

**Years ago, a woman in our city came to me and shared how her daughter, a Bible school student in her thirties, had been stabbed to death.**

What a tragedy! The mother told me how she had gone into deep depression because of her overwhelming grief. She'd soon become bitter towards God and built-up tremendous hatred for the murderer, who, after taking the lives of many more women, had finally been apprehended.

One Saturday night, God spoke to her and said, "If you don't forgive that murderer, I cannot forgive you, because if you don't forgive the trespasses of others, I can't forgive you of yours."

Maybe she felt she had a right to be angry and hurt, but God insisted that she forgive the man.

So, this dear woman reached out to God and, by faith, forgave her daughter's murderer. The next day, God allowed her to act out her faith, and in doing so, she sowed a miracle into the man's life. The Gideons visited her church, where she contributed to the Bible fund.

Afterwards, she asked one of The Gideons to personally present a Bible to the man who had murdered her daughter and was serving time in prison.

Yes, you guessed what happened next – God performed a miracle in the murderer's heart, and he became a victorious Christian. He literally became a missionary in that prison! The woman sowed another miracle into this man's life by paying for his course materials when he enrolled in a correspondence Bible school.

One day, she said to me, "Marilyn, the devil murdered my daughter, who was going to be a missionary, but God, in His great mercy, took my daughter's murderer and made him a missionary in a place where my daughter could never go!" This was a miracle!

How did it happen?

This woman certainly had the right to be angry and hurt. That man had brutally murdered her daughter! Whether knowingly or unknowingly, he had allowed himself to be used by the devil and had harmed many people.

But did she allow Satan to turn her anger into hate? No! She sowed a miracle into that man's life and reaped a tremendous miracle in her own life – the peace that passes all understanding, which brought her comfort about her daughter's death.

That was extraordinary, and it certainly surpassed all human powers! She took authority over any evil effort that the devil wanted to exert on her emotions. By faith, she stepped out of the realm of her emotions and into the realm of the supernatural – the miraculous! By doing so, she became a conduit for God's authority and miracle-working power to flow into the murderer's life.

These miracles probably would not have happened if the woman had allowed her emotions to guide her actions. She sowed a miracle, and miracles continue to multiply each time another prisoner gets saved.

We all need to Satan-proof our emotions. One of the many roadblocks the devil will use to hinder you from receiving God's miracles is to keep you operating in your emotions – your old nature. However, through Christ Jesus, you have been given God's authority to step out of the realm of your emotions and into the realm of the supernatural – your new nature.

In your new nature, you will sow blessings and miracles into the lives of others, even your enemies. After all, your enemies (the human ones) are just victims who knowingly or unknowingly have allowed the devil to manipulate them into hurting you. When you begin to bless these people and sow miracles in their lives, then you will begin to walk in the miraculous on a more consistent basis in your own life.

## Marilyn Hickey

Marilyn was an American Christian televangelist, Pastor, Bible teacher, motivational speaker, and author, who taught Bible studies internationally.





# INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE BLITZ

2 - 9 May 2026



Total amount of  
Bibles placed:

**546 501**

as well as 290 PWTs

**230**

Clinics

**421**

Police Stations

**946**

Secondary/High Schools



## PEACE IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM: RECONCILING HEARTS

When we arrived at Cunningmoore Clinic, the atmosphere was thick with tension. An industrial dispute had broken out between two groups of workers over job placements, and a strike was in full effect. It seemed an unlikely place for a breakthrough, but we were reminded of Matthew 5:9: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.”

The scene shifted the moment the striking nurses realized we were there to offer the Word of God. The anger and frustration seemed to melt away as they came running toward us, eager for a source of hope. Because the gates were locked due to the dispute, we stood at the threshold and made a presentation to both groups of workers simultaneously. Even the attending police officer, tasked with keeping the peace, stood by to listen to the message of the Gospel.

In that moment of division, we spoke of the greatest reconciliation of all: man’s peace with God.

We shared 2 Corinthians 5:18: “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

Standing together under the open sky, we led the group in prayer, asking the Lord for a spirit of reconciliation not only between the workers but between each individual and their Creator. We left the clinic confident that while man strives for earthly work, God is doing a much deeper work in the heart. As it says in Philippians 4:7, we prayed that “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

**Werner Pretorius – ISB 2026**

# THE BEST FOR LAST: A SOUL WON IN HAZYVIEW



As we reached our very last school in the Hazyview region, we felt the weariness of the journey, but God quickly showed us He had saved the best for last. It was a divine appointment that reminded us of Luke 15:7: **“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance....”**

Just as we were preparing to leave, a young man named Samukelo approached our car. He didn't just want a book; he wanted a connection with the Creator. He looked at us and simply asked for prayer. Taking the opportunity, we opened the Word and walked through the plan of salvation in detail. We shared the truth of Romans 10:9: **“because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”**

Right there by the car, the Holy Spirit moved. Samukelo prayed the sinner's prayer, surrendering his life to Christ. With a steady hand, he pulled out a pen and signed his New Testament right there with us, a permanent inscription of the day his name was written in the Book of Life.

Praise the Lord for His perfect timing and for the one soul that made the entire journey worth it!

As Psalm 126:6 says, **“He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.”**

Simon Hunter (Gideon Australia) – ISB 2026

# A GLOBAL HARVEST

## Equipping The Next Generation Of Shepherds

Chris Shelly (USA Gideon) - ISB 2026



It was a profound privilege to stand before the students of “Back to the Bible” College and share the heart of this ministry. As I looked out at these future leaders, I was reminded of 2 Timothy 2:2: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” These young men and women are the future of the Church, yet I soon realized that many were lacking the very tool they needed most to lead.

Following the service, we had the joy of distributing 103 New Testaments to the student body. It was a humbling revelation to find that several of these future pastors did not even own their own Bible. As they received their copies, I thought of Psalm 119:105: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” We weren’t just handing out books; we were providing the lamps they would use to guide their future congregations.

One young man approached me, his face glowing as he pulled a well-worn French Testament from his pocket. He had received it years ago in Congo. Holding it up, he showed me the tangible evidence of the worldwide reach God has given this ministry. It was a beautiful reminder of Matthew 24:14, that the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world.

Whether in the heart of the Congo or a college campus in South Africa, the Word of God remains the same. As Isaiah 40:8 declares: “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” We left the college confident that 103 more lights had been lit to serve the Kingdom.



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)