

MISSIONS TEAM NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024 - INDEX

- 1 Child Voice

- 3 Josiah Venture – Julia Budd

- 7 Hope Builders Ministries – Johan Gauss

- 9 New Hope Correctional Ministry – Danny Croce

- 10 Compassion International - Estrella

- 11 Prison Fellowship - Angel Tree

- 15 Samaritans Purse

- 17 I.S.I. – Ruth Hartunian-Alumbaugh

VOICES

Rising

ChildVoice))
www.childvoice.org

OCTOBER 2023

New Staff Housing at Imvepi

A WELCOME CHANGE

FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, our staff working within the Imvepi Refugee Settlement in northern Uganda have been living in tent housing, with up to four staff members per tent. The tents were uncomfortably hot, and subject to damage from heavy rain. We are incredibly pleased to announce that thanks to very generous funding from some of our key partners, we have completed construction of a new permanent housing facility! It's a welcome change for our Imvepi team.

"Our staff have endured a lot over the years," ChildVoice CEO Nathan Mandsager said while inspecting the new facility and comparing them to the six-year-old canvas tents this month.

OUR STAFF HAVE ENDURED A LOT OVER THE YEARS...

The new structure, constructed of concrete blocks with a steel roof, offers nine separate rooms with lockable doors. Other features include a staff kitchen area, and of course, electrical service. Each room has comfortable beds with frames constructed from steel poles salvaged from the old tents.

"This new building is an achievement," said Richard Kyitarinyeba, Director of ChildVoice Uganda. "And it's a very big motivation to my staff. They are so excited!"

"We are so, so pleased with what you have offered us," added Julius Owor, our Imvepi Program Manager. "We have been battling with the accommodations for the past few years. As of now, we are no longer worried over heat. Our staff are now able to have privacy in their respective rooms. We most appreciate the donors who sacrificed a lot to be sure that we are going to be living this better life."

Immaculate, one of our longest serving staff members at Imvepi, likewise expressed a mixture of excitement and gratitude for the new housing facility. For her, it's a long-awaited relief.



INTERVIEW with Haylie Wright

One of ChildVoice's core tenets is the promotion of research in helping child victims of war and exploitation recover from their trauma. In light of that, we were pleased that Haylie Wright, a master's degree student at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, recently cited ChildVoice as a model nonprofit organization in her master's dissertation (equivalent to a thesis in the US). Haylie's focus was on the therapeutic benefits of sports (and adjacent activities such as art, dance, and drama) as a tool to enhance the efficacy of psychosocial healing for war-affected youth. While she was unable to visit our facilities in Uganda, Haylie interviewed multiple staff members both in the US and Uganda.

We recently spoke with Haylie to discuss her motivations, her research, and her thoughts regarding ChildVoice's work and mission...

I am so grateful to our donors for this new development," Immaculate exclaimed. "I am so excited to enter into my room. I've been in that tent for the last five years!"

We are so very grateful for our partners who donated so generously to fund the construction of this much-needed, permanent staff facility!

AFTERCARE:

Walking Alongside Our Graduates

Aftercare is how ChildVoice provides long-term support to our students after they complete their programs and integrate into their communities. It provides three years of extended support in areas such as job coaching, life skills coaching, supplementary business training, individual and group counseling, and spiritual support. This helps keep students moving forward as they integrate into their communities.

Two of our former Lukome Center students who have benefited greatly from aftercare are Teddy and Ketty. Teddy was abducted by the LRA years ago and forced to be the "bush wife" of an LRA commander. Today, she has a husband and four children, runs two shops, leads her village savings group, and is buying six acres of land for farming. All of her children attend school. Teddy needs guidance from ChildVoice to help her develop her new agriculture venture.

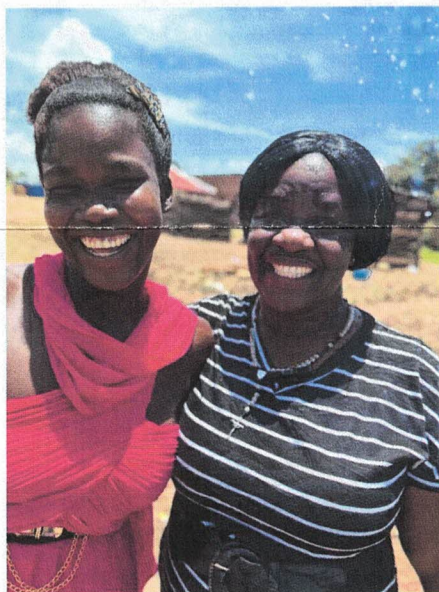
Ketty was likewise forced to be an LRA commander's "bush wife" at a young age. She lived in the bush for 12 years before coming to ChildVoice. Today, she has work that pays well enough for her to send all four of her children to school. Sadly, Ketty's husband was killed earlier this year. ChildVoice provided her with counseling and spiritual support as she worked through her grief.

Both Teddy and Ketty have been doing very well, and have been earning enough income to provide for their families. And through aftercare, they are receiving ongoing support to help them navigate life's challenges.

While in Uganda this month, ChildVoice CEO Nathan Mandsager accompanied three Lukome Center staff members on a trip to check in with two of our former graduates – Teddy and Ketty. The trip was on very rough roads and took just under three hours, underscoring the challenges our aftercare staff members face in continuing to work with former students.

"I'm just very happy to see [Teddy] up to this level." Said Winnie, one of our aftercare team members. "First of all, Teddy is trauma-free. . . I'm also happy for Ketty, because both of them are doing what they have trained to do at ChildVoice."

To see a short YouTube video of our visit with Teddy and Ketty, visit childvoice.org/newsletters.



(cont'd.)

INTERVIEW with Haylie Wright

ChildVoice (CV): Tell us about your background. What were your own personal experiences that formed your worldview and brought you to your academic path?

Haylie Wright (HW): I'm Kiwi-American. I grew up with a kind of awareness of all things international. By the time the "stop Kony" stuff was happening, I was in high school or intermediate years. I was very much just kind of developing as a human and trying to find my voice in a world. But probably since I was about eight or nine years old, I was like, I'm going to move to the continent of Africa. That's all I've ever wanted with my whole life.

And when I got to my gap year [after high school] and I went and taught in Uganda for a few months, in a model that I definitely wouldn't do now. The school needed a teacher and couldn't afford to pay a substitute teacher or an interim teacher for a teacher on maternity leave. Of course, now I would really consider it inappropriate to have a post-high school student just go. So, I went to Uganda and I had a classroom full of South Sudanese refugees.

When I was in Uganda, I experienced acute trauma. There was an accident. . . and having seen bodies, pulling dead bodies off the road, experiencing just kind of like a war-like scene – a fraction of the experience that these people have gone through, and the trauma. Also, I already kind of was aware of child soldiers, and. . . I was just really dissatisfied with the fact that we were not dealing with childhood trauma well.

CV: In your dissertation, you focus on the therapeutic benefit of sports when working with child victims of war. What do you think is the core benefit of sport and related activities that creates an environment that engenders the healing process?

To read the full interview, go to <https://childvoice.org/haylie-wright>

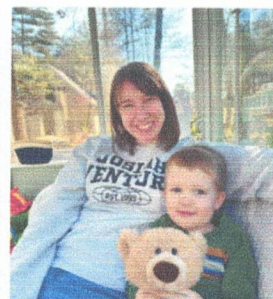
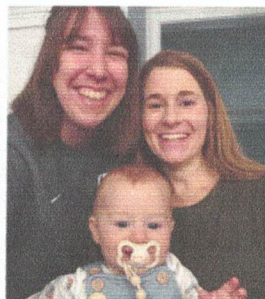
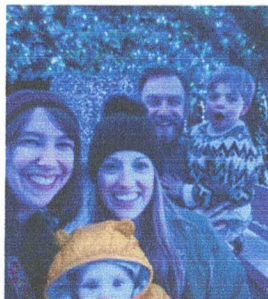
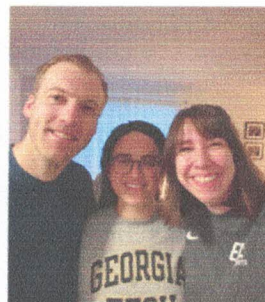
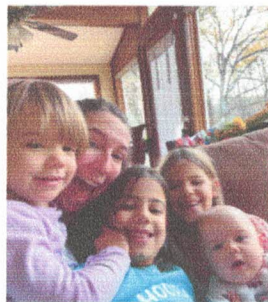




Merry Christmas!

Hello Ross & Gladys!

My first home assignment is quickly blowing by, but I wanted to drop a note to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



I've loved how many of you I've already been able to see! I don't have much time left, but there is still a chance we can get together if you are in the North-East Connecticut area. Or if you aren't local but want to take advantage of being in closer time zones, we can maybe set up a video call!

Worshipping with You!

Since I arrived in November I've been at Woodstock Evangelical Covenant, Eastford Baptist, South Woodstock Baptist, and Hannoverdal Church. I count it as a great privilege to share about what God is doing in Central and Eastern Europe and how churches in Connecticut and Pennsylvania are a part of that movement!



If you didn't get to hear an update at one of those places, I'll also be at:

Sunday, December 31 Congregational Church of Eastford

10:30 a.m. Eastford, CT

Sunday, January 7 First Congregational Church of Pomfret

10:30 a.m. Pomfret, CT

I'll be flying back to the Czech Republic a few days after the new year!

New Prayer Cards!

I've written a letter summarizing some of what God has taught me in the past 2 years and I also have a new prayer card! If you haven't gotten one yet, just reply to this email and say "yes, please!"



[Request a letter & prayer card](#)

Contact Info

While I'm here in the USA you can text me at:

959-210-4933

If you have an iPhone you can also add my email address to your phone contacts and then you should always be able to text me no matter which side of the ocean I'm on: juliagbudd@icloud.com

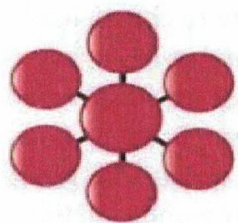
Supporting the Work with End-of-Year Giving

My ministry is fueled by a support network of individuals and churches who partner in my ministry with Josiah Venture here in central and eastern Europe. Thank you for partnering with me!

[Partner with one-time or recurring gifts](#)

Pray with me!

Prayer Summary:



HopeBuilders Ministries

Rapidly Winning Communities for Christ through Indigenous Disciple Makers

With this year drawing to a close, Thank you to all our FAITHFUL PARTNERS, Glory to God! Intercessors, Donors, Staff, Disciple-Makers and Students.

So much has happened this year that we want to share with you:

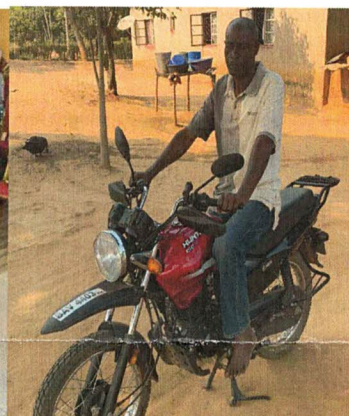
- ♦ Very fruitful Conferences for the top leaders were presented
- ♦ Trainers from the US and South Africa developed local leaders
- ♦ New Believers and Re-commitments to Christ abound
- ♦ Thousands of Bibles (including electronic versions) distributed
- ♦ More than 30 thousand Training Manuals were distributed
- ♦ Bicycles and Motorcycles placed strategically

Students testify to the great benefits they get from their partnership with HBM.

God is giving the GROWTH, we need the SEEDS to plant.

*Distribution of **Bibles** is still bearing much GOOD fruit. NOW, many "bush" students need the Bible in their own tribal languages. To buy and deliver indigenous language Bibles costs \$12 each. The need for **Training Manuals** has grown—an order to print modules will be placed in December for distribution in February 2024. A \$250 Buffalo (heavy duty) bicycle expands the capacity of an Associate to serve deep rural communities by 12 to 20 times.*

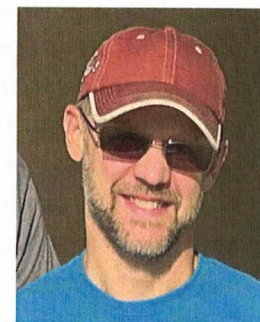
Here's how you can participate in this Year-End drive for support:



\$2,500 provides an off-road motorcycle for District and Regional Leaders. They are the backbone of HBM's oversight & accountability structure.

We currently have a shortfall of 8 motorcycles.

Newsletter # 4, 2023



A Significant Introduction: Br Tobey:

Br Tobey expressed his desire to "do more for the Lord" one morning before our local church service. I found out more about their family—Brandy had been in Africa working in Ghana before their wedding and has had a desire to serve in Africa again. This piqued my interest greatly because we have been praying for a younger couple to assist Lida and me as we have grown older and are plagued with more health issues. Br Tobey accompanied us to Zambia—Please read his testimony: Ever since my visit to the continent of Africa (specifically Ghana) in 1998, I have often dreamed of returning. (continued over page)

By giving to the **"Where Most Needed"** category you allow Hope Builders to apply your donation to areas where shortfalls occur, such as medical emergencies, disaster relief, orphan and widow crises and special projects where Ministry opportunities are enhanced (new areas opened) by Christian compassionate outreaches. Also unexpected breakdowns and repairs to field vehicles, etc can be done to avert lengthy "out of service" delays.

Hope Builders urgently needs your help in serving the most rural believers.

Please participate in doing so by filling out your response over the page.

Johan’s invitation to Zambia in early 2023 was exactly the kind of opportunity I had hoped for. It provided a unique opportunity to spend time on the mission field with my adult son, and I was excited about the four-man team Br Johan put together. Arriving in Lusaka, following a very long day of air travel, we were greeted by Br Matthew, a wonderful servant-hearted brother that made us feel welcome from the first “Hello.” We quickly realized why Br Johan has placed so much faith in this man of God. He epitomizes humility and leadership. He would become not only our host, but our driver, our translator and our “fifth man.” The evening spent with Br Matthew’s family was a wonderful respite and we slept well in their beautiful home. Good thing, as the next day would present us with many rough hours and miles driving across Zambia’s beautiful landscape. The drive included a stretch through the renowned Kafue National Park. We were blessed to see buffalo, boar, gazelle and even a few young bull elephants on our way to Mongu, our destination for a week of ministry.

Mongu is a wonderful community in Zambia’s Western Province and at the heart of the Lozi people. We felt welcomed the moment we arrived. Plans included two days of pastoral/ leadership training, but those plans would quickly change. Our first day among the pastors & leaders was profound, as our Brother Jay shared his teaching on “suffering well.” Engagement in the group was more than we expected, as the questions and discussion seemed inexhaustible.

Our plans for a second day of ministry to church leaders was quickly modified, as we arrived at the newly constructed Mongu conference center and discovered a massive gathering of youth. The team Br Johan had prepared was ready to pivot and we divided the group by age. The day proved to be another wonderful time of question/answer and discussion, as well as gospel outreach into the community with the young people. The following day (Sunday) was spent worshiping with the community and those gathered for the conference. We were treated to local music and dance as Br Jay delivered the message.

As I reflect on time spent with the Mongu community of believers, as well as Br Johan’s wonderful ministry team, my biggest takeaways are: 1) The work there is having a generational impact, as people deploy the “disciples making disciples who make disciples” doctrine. 2) The leadership is both competent and ambitious for the work of the Lord. 3) The hospitality shown by the body of Christ was sincere and humbling. 4) There is much to be done among a hungry people group...they desire as much engagement as we could offer, and more. 5) God is moving upon the youth of Zambia to change their generation I was blessed to be a part of such an impactful trip. I hope to return someday very soon. Tobey Bouch

Please pray with Tobey and Brandy warmly welcoming them into the HBM’s team.

This is an URGENT appeal: (INFLATIONARY pressures and student number GROWTH impact HBM hugely)

- 1. Bibles and Training Manuals** need to be ordered soon for them to be available for delivery directly after the rainy season.
- 2. Transport:** Bicycles and motorcycles for the overseers who travel to ensure that the work is being done effectively is the backbone of ACCOUNTABILITY structure in rural Africa where no public transport exists.
- 3. Where most needed:** In addition to our “normal” Emergency Fund needs, HBM is making a Special Appeal for people who want to help a group of **African Missionaries connected to HBM, to volunteer in ISRAEL** to harvest fruit and vegetables and evangelize on farms where the workers have been called up.



I prefer my gift to Hope Builders Ministries to be used as follows:

\$ _____ Where most needed \$ _____ Transport \$ _____ Bibles/Manuals \$ _____ Israel volunteers

Name: _____ Address: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

All gifts, including preferences, administered by HBM are tax deductible to the full extent of the law

Experience more of the Ministry by going to www.hbmin.org

Daniel Croce, Senior Chaplain

Kim & I want to wish you all a blessed Christmas as we all remember the greatest gift of all that came from our Father to us, His Son Jesus! As we get ready to celebrate the birth of Christ, let the gifts we give and receive remind us always of "the free gift of God (which) is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"!

We thank our God and Father for revealing Himself to us through His Son, and for the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God! We are also very grateful to you for your prayers and support, which have meant so much to us! Your prayers have lifted us up through some very hard and sad times and we are truly thankful! You are a blessing from God to us!

While we and others celebrated Thanksgiving with family, there were memories of loved ones who were not there but we were able to thank the Lord for the time we did share with them. Truly, it is better to have loved and have lost (loved ones), than to have never loved (or even known them) at all. But, thanks be to God for His Son that because of Jesus, we never really say "good by" but rather, "I'll see you later".

Thank you again for being so kind and thoughtful to our family and our ministry! May the Lord bless you, your family and ministry to others, in Jesus' name, amen.

Thank you!! ☺

Thank you for your prayers & support!

Hope you have a blessed Christmas!!

your new photos are here!

**PRAY FOR
ESTRELLA**

As you remember
your sponsored
child in your
prayers, pray for:

A firm spiritual
foundation built
through the
local church.

Age-appropriate
development in
her education.

Life-giving
friendships.

A spirit of joy
and hope.

REMEMBER TO SAY
A SPECIAL PRAYER
FOR ESTRELLA ON
HER BIRTHDAY,
MARCH 26!



**First Cong Church of Pomfret
Jaclyn Booth
PO Box 297
Pomfret Center, CT 06259-0297**

ANGEL TREE PROFILE

How **YOU'RE** making a difference

Taylor's message to you, our compassionate partners:
"You made a big impact on all these kids' lives!"



Taylor: age 13

Taylor's first experience with Angel Tree was a youth basketball camp. She enjoyed it, so when the opportunity came up for her to spend a week at an Angel Tree summer camp, she was excited but also a little nervous.

She worried about people judging her for her background. Taylor's dad is incarcerated.

But she says, "The moment I stepped into the chapel, I got greeted by so many people. It was just the best experience somebody could possibly ever have."

Taylor can't wait to return to camp this coming summer. She is also looking forward to becoming a counselor "to give the next kids that are here the same opportunity that I had."

She says that being at camp helped her grow closer to God because she learned from other

campers and the counselors as she got to see how close of a relationship they each had with Christ.

Taylor believes Angel Tree has helped her have a stronger relationship with her dad. She also says, "Life has been hard for my mom. For her to actually get the experience to bring us here [to camp] is amazing."

HOW YOU CAN PRAY

Please pray for Taylor to continue to grow in her relationship with Jesus, rebuild her relationship with her mom, and have an impact on other kids at Angel Tree camp as a junior leader.



These women—many of them moms—are lonely and struggling. They hunger for love and hope. You and I know Jesus is the answer, and you can offer the opportunity for new life through your support!

I've seen the difference Jesus can make. During a visit to a prison in Alabama, I had the chance to meet five women on death row. Four of them knew the Lord, and their joy was not only evident, but also obvious and contagious!

I asked them, "What gives you hope?" Their answer: Jesus! He who offers hope beyond this life.

What a blessing that you and I get to play a key role in helping women in prison discover that God loves and cares for His lost daughters and wants to restore their lives.

Heather Rice-Minnes

jubilee

PRISON FELLOWSHIP®

THANK YOU for
making transformation
like this possible!

We have shared Jermaine's powerful story with you before—a life redeemed and transformed by God behind bars. But there is more to tell of how God is using Jermaine to impact people for His glory. Your support changes lives in amazing ways!

INSIDE

pg 2 God is using Jermaine to impact lives—thanks to you

pg 3 A conversation between our current and future leaders

pg 4 Your year-end gift will DOUBLE with the Matching Grant

When Jermaine was 12, he and his older brother broke into a house. When they heard sirens, both boys jumped on their bicycles and fled—but the police caught up to them.



It was Jermaine's first arrest, but he was no stranger to flashing blue lights. In his Leavenworth, Kansas, neighborhood, Jermaine often witnessed

violence, drugs, and arrests.

And for a while, his dad struggled with addiction and cycled in and out of prison.

While growing up, Jermaine wanted desperately to be accepted, but other kids made fun of him, calling him "Too short, too fat, too ugly." When he was praised for his crime, Jermaine committed more to command respect.

At 15, he was sentenced to four years in juvenile corrections for robbery. By 19, he was both addicted to drugs and dealing them. He'd also become a father. And then he was arrested again and sentenced to three years in prison.

"For the first time in my life, I felt free!"

Behind bars, Jermaine got sober and the reality of his situation hit hard: *If I don't change my life, I'm either going to spend the rest of my life in prison or end up dead.*

When Jermaine heard about Prison Fellowship Academy, he was curious to see what it offered. When he joined, Jermaine was warmly welcomed and given much-needed support.

Continued inside



Jubilee is the flagship newsletter of Prison Fellowship

P.O. Box 1550, Merrifield, VA 22116-1550
prisonfellowship.org • 877.478.0100

But a few months into the program, separation from his family weighed heavily on Jermaine. In tears, he cried out, "God, if you are truly real, please forgive me of my sins. Give me another chance to be with my family."

FREE FOR THE FIRST TIME

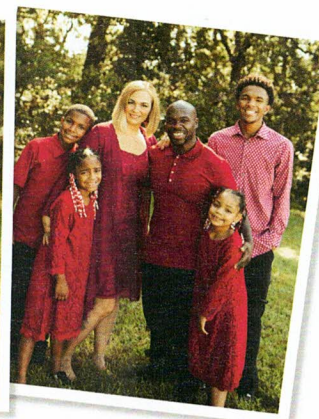
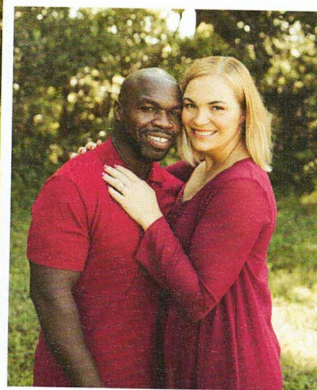
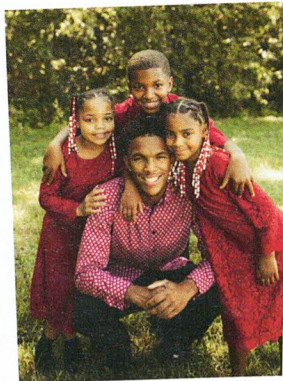
A peace washed over him and he says, "For the first time in my life, I felt free!"

God also used Prison Fellowship Angel Tree to help heal his family. While he was incarcerated, local church volunteers delivered a gift to his young son on Jermaine's behalf.

After his release in 2010, Jermaine struggled to find a job. Eventually, someone gave him a chance. That led to other jobs and promotions. He also married his longtime girlfriend and is now the proud father of five kids.

In 2015, Jermaine founded a nonprofit. He was also able to return to prison as a volunteer to encourage others. And, in 2018, Jermaine got a job helping prisoners find jobs upon their release.

Jermaine became an ordained minister. And then, in response to encouragement from many community members, he ran for office—first becoming the city commissioner and then mayor of his hometown.



Jermaine treasures time with his family, no matter what they are doing together. Thank you for helping make restoration like this possible!

In 2021, Prison Fellowship hired Jermaine to support prison ministry programs in Kansas.

AN AMBASSADOR OF HOPE

In the summer of 2023, Jermaine's role with Prison Fellowship changed to make even better use of his strengths and experience. He is now our

mission ambassador—making sure our supporters know they are transforming lives through their giving. He will also share his story in prisons across the country.

Jermaine wants prisoners to know: "Your current situation is not your final destination. God is going to use you to do great things but hold on because the best is yet to come."

His favorite roles are husband and dad and he loves family time—going to church, playing Uno, watching movies, and coaching his kids' teams.

"I really want to see my kids be who God called them to be," says Jermaine.

Once a man who tried to gain respect by being tough, Jermaine now gains respect by standing tall in his faith. He says, "The moment I became who God called me to be, that's when my life began to take off and when I began to succeed."

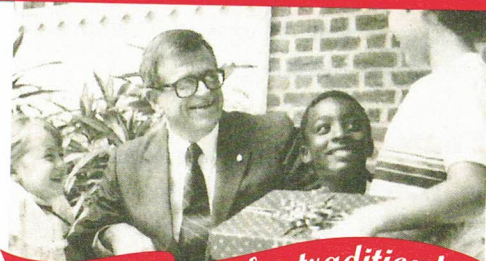
HOW YOU CAN PRAY

Please pray for God's guidance for Jermaine in his new role as well as his roles as a mayor, husband, and father. Thank you for your support!

"Your current situation is not your final destination."

ANGEL TREE

COLSON CORNER



You're part of a tradition!

"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me . . .'" (Matthew 19:14). There's no better time to welcome them into His family than at Christmas.

YOU MAKE CHRISTMAS REAL FOR THE CHILDREN

Back in the early days of Angel Tree, Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, and his wife often personally delivered Christmas presents. One night, they discovered their directions had led them to a housing project in a run-down and poorly lit neighborhood.

The Colsons knocked on the door, and a little boy answered. His father was in prison.

"The boy's eyes brightened when he saw the presents in our arms," Chuck recalled. "The little guy pulled us into his living room. There was nothing but a chair, an old sofa with the stuffing exposed, and a tree leaning haphazardly against the wall."

A conversation between our current and future Prison Fellowship leaders

JAMES: Although my time as president and CEO is coming to a close at the end of this year, I am thrilled that our board of directors unanimously named Heather Rice-Minus to take the helm. She has held leadership roles with Prison Fellowship for the past 10 years. With her robust program, advocacy, and development experience and a tender heart for those in prison, Heather is uniquely positioned to move the ministry forward.

HEATHER: Thank you, James. I am excited to take on this role and lead Prison Fellowship into its next era of transforming lives and redeeming broken systems behind bars and in communities across our country.

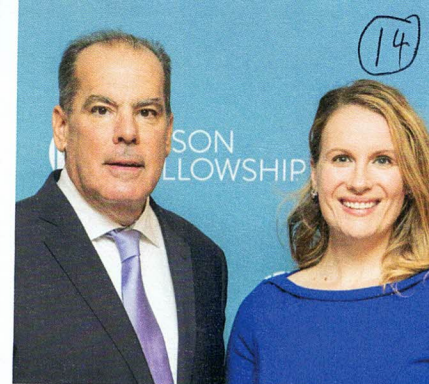
JAMES: Heather, you have all the attributes necessary to lead this vital ministry into its next phase. In particular, your deep spiritual life and sensitivity to the calling of the Holy Spirit are key. I am confident that under your leadership, Prison

Fellowship will remain true to our original calling as a ministry while pivoting to respond boldly to today's opportunities and challenges.

HEATHER: I am blessed to be able to take on this role, and I am so thankful for how you have led us forward over the past seven years and, also, for your many years volunteering with Prison Fellowship and mentoring prisoners and former prisoners.

JAMES: The Lord brought me to Prison Fellowship for a particular season, but I am confident you will now guide the ministry into a future of greater effectiveness and more holistic ministry, awakening the Church to its calling and equipping men and women to emerge from prison as tomorrow's leaders.

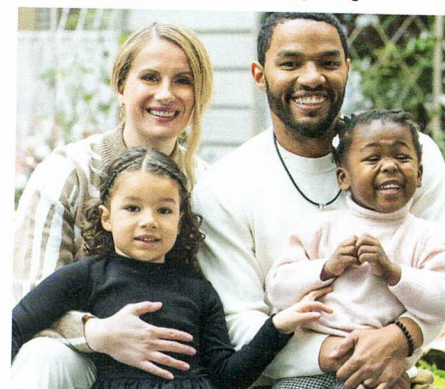
HEATHER: I am ready, and I am looking forward to all that is to come, especially with all of our compassionate friends we are privileged to call partners. What an opportunity we have before us!



Outgoing CEO James Ackerman and incoming CEO Heather Rice-Minus stand together.



New CEO Heather Rice-Minus helps her daughter fill out an Angel Tree gift tag.



It's all smiles for new CEO Heather Rice-Minus and her family.

"What's your name?" Chuck asked. "Emmanuel," he replied.

That night, Chuck opened his Bible to the Gospel of Matthew and said, "Do you know what your name means? It means 'God with us!'"

At that, Emmanuel ran to his mother and hugged her around her

legs. "Mommy, Mommy!" he cried. "God is with us!"

As Chuck later recalled, "Even in that seemingly hopeless, drug-infested housing project, this apartment had become an island of joy and hope. Once again, Jesus had become real."

This Christmas, thousands of

children will hear the story of hope delivered by angels to shepherds that first Christmas many years ago. It was the story Chuck spent his life bringing to families like Emmanuel's.

Your partnership with Angel Tree will help make "God with us" real to precious children who long for hope and a future this Christmas.

SCORCHED EARTH:
Hamas attacked
homes like this
one with guns and
grenades, and then
came waves of looters
and rapists from the
Gaza Strip.

FOR MANY IN THE LAND OF THE BIBLE THIS CHRISTMAS IS TOUGH

DEAR FRIEND,

I was just in Israel where Samaritan's Purse is working to help after the Hamas terrorist attacks that killed 1,200 people on Oct. 7. This is still a dangerous place. The bloodstains are still on the ground, the smell of death is still in the air, Hamas missiles are still being shot over, and fighter jets are still overhead.

As I talked with survivors, family members, and leaders, I was struck by the brazen brutality of Hamas. There is no other word to describe it than evil—pure evil. It was like every demon in Hell was turned loose.

I met a young woman named Lihi who had come back to her village to get a few things from her house. She and her two small children hid in their home and survived the attack. Her husband, Daniel, was a physician who heard the gunfire and ran to the medical clinic where he worked just a few hundred yards away. While he was there treating the injured and trying to save lives, he and everyone else but two people were murdered—and then Hamas threw in hand grenades to wipe out the facility and any survivors. In tears, Lihi told me that he was the love of her life.

I also met the mother of a woman who was one of the first responders who was killed as she took the wounded into a clinic attacked by Hamas. This mother and her other three adult daughters were absolutely heartbroken and devastated, as are so many there. She told me solemnly that she was thankful at least that her daughter had not been taken hostage and exposed to the torture and suffering as so many were.

I prayed for the family members and community leaders that I met. As I shared the Word of God with those I talked with, it brought comfort, like balm to their wounded souls. I also met and prayed with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He expressed appreciation for how Samaritan's Purse is responding. He said, "The fact that you are coming here, standing with Israel—in Israel—is mightily important and gives us a lot of strength, a lot of encouragement." I asked if I could pray for him, and I asked God to protect the nation of Israel, and give him strength and wisdom in the midst of these very difficult days.

When Hamas invaded, they also targeted and destroyed ambulances. Fourteen ambulances of Magen David Adom, the nation's first responder service, were destroyed and 11 of their staff were killed. Samaritan's Purse had already committed to replacing those 14, and while I was there, I saw the great need and told them we would provide seven more armored ambulances to help protect their first responders from sniper fire.

We are also working with church partners in Israel as well as in Gaza and the West Bank to provide thousands of displaced families with food and other assistance.



STANDING WITH ISRAEL: I had the opportunity to pray with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.



15

"Generations to come will remember this help," said Uri Shacham, chief of staff for Magen David Adom, whose ambulance corps is 80 percent staffed by volunteers. It was humbling when they made me an honorary member of their organization.

Hamas has vowed to annihilate Israel, denying the truth that God Almighty promised this land to His chosen people. *"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth"* (Deuteronomy 7:6).

As we pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6), let's also lift up the families in Gaza who are living in desperate conditions, even as Hamas uses them as human shields and their hospitals as camouflage. Humanitarian access in Gaza has been limited, but Samaritan's Purse has long-standing Christian partners there, and we are working hard to equip them to help their neighbors.



As we wrap up this year, I want to thank you for your prayers and support for Samaritan's Purse as we work to save lives, relieve suffering, and share the hope of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God richly bless you this Christmas season.

Sincerely,



Franklin Graham



FIRST RESPONDERS: I had the opportunity to thank ambulance drivers who worked heroically under fire to treat the wounded. We are replacing ambulances destroyed in the attack.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

■ PRAY

Pray for peace in Israel and other hot spots around the world. Lift up the children who are about to receive Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts, that the Lord might use these gifts in powerful ways to demonstrate his love to children around the world. Please pray for our teams who are away from home this Christmas as they work to help others and lift up the cross of Jesus Christ.

■ ISRAEL RESPONSE

Samaritan's Purse is helping meet the physical and spiritual needs of people on both sides of the Israel-Hamas war. Your gift will help us provide medical care, food, and other vital relief in Israel as well as Gaza; as we work with church partners to strengthen their ministry and share the hope we have in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

■ WHERE MOST NEEDED

Samaritan's Purse works in more than 100 nations to save lives, relieve suffering, and share the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your gift to "Where Most Needed" equips us with the resources—including personnel, materials, supporting services, and equipment—to fulfill our mission of relief and evangelism.

■ YEAR-END GIVING

The end of the year is an ideal time to prayerfully consider a tax-wise gift to Samaritan's Purse to help save lives, meet urgent needs, and share the hope of the Gospel. For information about giving appreciated stocks, tax-free IRA rollovers, or charitable gift annuities, please call our Donor Ministries department at 833-345-3422 or visit samaritanaspurse.org/PlannedGiving.



Franklin Graham, President • P.O. Box 3000 • Boone, NC 28607
800-665-2843 • samaritanaspurse.org

All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Contributions are solicited with the understanding that Samaritan's Purse has complete control over the use of all donated funds. Our Board-approved policy is that all gifts designated for a specific project be applied to that project, with up to ten percent used for administrative and fundraising expenses. Occasionally we receive more contributions for a given project than can be wisely applied to that project. When that happens, we use these funds to meet a similar pressing need. It is our policy to meet the needs God lays before us, so that Christ is lifted up and the Gospel advanced. Samaritan's Purse is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

Combined Federal Campaign #10532

03-72-138

© 2023 Samaritan's Purse

I wanted to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you and the decision-makers in your church who have been instrumental in enabling me to serve the Lord through International Students, Inc. Whether it was a one time or on-going kind of support, I am grateful! With every \$\$ provided, I am able to meet the needs of the internationals I serve both here in Connecticut as well as globally. Your dedication to the ministry God has given me makes a BIG difference.

I stand accountable to you at any time so know that I am always ready to connect with you for a conversation, a visit to update your people about the ministry, introduce them to the new things that are happening and being a blessing to the Household of Faith. This is my charge; it is my desire to be transparent in all things. And to be a resource to you, especially in ministering to internationals!

If you would like to START in giving, I welcome that, too! You can do so through this web link: <https://internationalstudents.org/team/alumbaugh/> or by using the QR code below. If regular mail is better for you, you can mail your support to International Students, Inc., PO BOX C, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901. Please include my fund number which is 5141. Tax information will be provided via mail from the HQ. I have faith that the goals I need to meet will be achieved as I am certain of the call. The Lord bless you and your people, make them a mighty force to be reckoned with in Jesus' name and for His glory.



Handwritten signature