

Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

# IN TOUCH MISSION

i n t e r n a t i o n a l

Monthly

1 May 2016

*"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling." Psalm 68:5*

## THE TRUTH

*About Growing Old in Romania*



*The images were forever branded in her memory...*

*The images were forever branded into her memory. Elderly women, abandoned by their children in icy, un-heated homes. Soiled sheets and meager blankets, their only defense against a bitter winter. Bedsores and other ailments unattended to. Limp legs and arms, frail with age and hunger. Disorganized medications and expired half-finished bottles of pills telling of weeks of missed medication. There is a clear need for someone to care for those who cannot care for themselves. Daria's compassionate nurse's heart was inspired to action.*

These conditions are not uncommon for the elderly in Romania. With little social or moral value on the care of the elderly, they are often left to their

own care. After losing a spouse, half a household's pensioned income is swept away. But the burden of keeping a household functioning - heat, electricity and rent - remains the same. Many can't afford to keep the heat on. Others can't care for themselves and have no one who will. The further away from the cities you go, the more rustic and "old world" things are. Life there is tough, especially for the elderly.

Retirement in Eastern Europe is something many fear, not think of as "golden."

Some, swimming in a culture from which the Communists attempted to scrub all the good Jesus' life and

ministry brought into the world, might view the care of the elderly as an unnecessary burden. ITMI's **Viorel and Daria Pop** do not.

The Pops, disabled and aging themselves, have carried the load to fund manage and care for 6 elderly Romanian widows. They "adopted" the ladies into their family. Tangibles such as food, heat and care are supplied. The intangible needs of dignity, community and significance are provided, also.

The couple could fill a list with reasons to focus on caring for themselves. They both face the limitations of physical disabilities.

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They aren't "well-off"; they are an ordinary family in a struggling post-Communist economy.

The particular six women living with them at **Bethesda Home** - Lia, Ani, Moni, Ileana, Elaine and Florita - currently face significant physical challenges. Four of them cannot walk, and one is bedridden. Another is blind and deaf, unable even to chew solid food. One is on oxygen for respiratory failure. They all rely heavily on a staff of 6 nurses who take shifts 2 at a time.

The few homes where the elderly can receive care in rural Arad, Romania, are unaffordable to some. One of the widows at Bethesda Home has a pension too small for any other home. They are also hotbeds of abuse, disrespect and filth.

There are many more in dire need, so the Pops were slowly constructing a new building to come between a few more widows and their deplorable conditions.

A large percentage of the costs for Bethesda Home have been carried by one donor for the past few years.

Last month, the Pops received word that this support would be coming to an end.

They may have to sell the expansion property and building just to cover expenses. They won't be able to get what they paid for it, and that would be a tragic loss. The proceeds from that sale would only carry them for a year or two.

Not to worry, though! We know from scripture that the widowed are close to His heart. This vacancy in the Pops partner list is an opportunity for God to move on their behalf. It's an opportunity for Him to bless more of His people as they join Him in His work!

Two-thousand years ago, a tradesman from Galilee lit up the world with his revolutionary life-valuing ideas. Then He

died a sacrificial death, liberating the world held helpless in the ironclad vice of sin and death. To seal the deal, He endowed His once-powerless followers with His own Spirit, who empowered them to embody His teaching.

This beautiful community the Pops have created is a breath-taking demonstration of what Jesus did for His people.

While we were helpless, He valued us. While we were without a family, He adopted us. While we had nothing to offer Him, He saved us.

Since Jesus defeated sin and death on the cross, the compassionate work of easing the effects of sin and death on those, like these Romanian widows, at the end of their lives is an extension of Jesus' work at Calvary.

As ITMI's **Charl van Wyk** said in last month's issue, *"Helping each other grow the Lord's Kingdom on earth is one of our primary responsibilities and taking the Gospel to the sick is a phenomenal opportunity."*

Want to help Viorel and Daria care for Romanian widows? Would you like to unofficially adopt one of these dear ladies?

If you'd like to take this phenomenal opportunity, we'll be glad to put you *in touch!*

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers





## *From the Director*

### **Dear Team,**

It's 3:30am again here at home. This is a time that I have come to know very well the last 11 days. There are some really great benefits from being wide awake at 3:30am – the serenity of 3:30am has donated quite a few new and productive hours of uninterrupted work and ministry that will be hard to let go when my internal clock resets.

My date with 3:30am the last week and a half has given me a much deeper appreciation for **Piotr Zaremba's** sixteen-year project of giving the Polish speaking world of 40 million a quality, fundamental, understandable Bible to read. Piotr and his team have translated the whole Bible from the original languages to Polish. The 2000 plus pages of God's truth and desire for His holy people have now been sent to the printer in Belarus for a projected mid-June 2016 delivery of the first modern Polish Bibles!

My wakefulness at 3:30 am reminds me of Piotr because for over 1000 days - Piotr would wake himself up at 4am and not go to bed until he had finished translating a chapter a day into both a literal and literary form. That is dedication. Many of you will smile with us because you partnered with ITMI on this massive quest to obey God's leading him to, "...translate the Bible for revival."

Why am I wide awake at 3:30am? I just returned from my first trip to Thailand and Cambodia. I was joined in Thailand by ITMI's African partners - **Kelly and Wyatt Smith** (Zulus, South Africa), **Timothy Keller** (Zambia), **Jahim Buli** (South Sudan), **Charl van Wyk** (South Africa, Zimbabwe, DRC-Congo, Zambia) and **Mark Parris** (South Africa), and **Abraham Warren** a friend and missionary from South Africa to Cambodia. We attended a somewhat secret ministry conference created and managed by a ministry arm of the Wycliffe Bible translators. We were there to learn how we can commandeer the explosion of simple technology for getting God's redeeming message to at-risk people groups who can't read a Bible or would risk their life by owning one.

As far as I know, ITMI has never collectively participated in a conference like this. I wish I had pictures of what we saw, what we were taught, the connections we made and the times of corporate worship we shared with over 450 ministers of Christ mostly from the 10/40 window during the 8 day conference. The highly sensitive nature of this conference meant there was a strictly enforced "no photography" rule. To not be snapping photos felt unnatural for me...but I was happy to comply to protect those who could be jailed or worse.

In future issues of the In Touch Mission Monthly, we will be sharing some of the uses of technology our ITMI partners are now enabled to bring the gospel to people that they would never have been able to minister to. If the world can use technology and media to invade the lives of almost every people, then we can too.

Many of you have your fingerprints all over the ITMI team and this trip to Thailand, allowing us to be better equipped and reinforced in the battle to reach the hearts and souls of the blinded, distracted, hurting and dying souls of this world. Please know, we believe that your partnership has empowered us to do infinitely more than what we could have done. We praise God for your participation, and we regularly pray that you will be blessed, rewarded and encouraged in the understanding of how God is using...us. Blessings!

In His Service,





# NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH SUDAN

Amid yet another report of political rumblings in South Sudan, ITMI partner, **Jahim Buli**, is working relentlessly and selflessly on behalf of his people.

Jahim, a former refugee himself, has been advocating and working for the benefit of people in South Sudanese camps. With ITMI's partnership, he's provided food, Christmas gifts and encouragement.

Jahim's visits to the camp are a result of our desire for God's creation to flourish in knowledge and obedience to Him as their Savior.

The people in South Sudanese refugee camps do not have it easy.

Their needs are great. Food is the most dire physical need at the moment. Aid organizations just can't keep up with the massive amounts of people who are displaced and can't raise their own food by farming.



Jahim is earnest about working for the good of his people. He has refused to abandon them even though he has the opportunity to ensure the comfort and safety of his own family by leaving.

We'd like to help Jahim feed some of the people in a refugee camp near his home. He'll make sure they hear about God's love for them!



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*Did you know?*

We post new stories every week on our website!

Get them in your inbox every Saturday morning here:

<http://bit.ly/ITMIEmailList>

or

Scan this with your smartphone's QR reader.



## For Praise

1. Zambia – Excellence Christian Academy - Providing Christian Education to children who can't afford it for 19 years.
2. Poland – Gospel Joy – Offered a workshop for the first time in Tarnobrzeg after training local leaders to disciple new believers and seekers.
3. All over - Connections built and ministry tools gained by ITMI partners at the conference in Thailand last month.

## For Prayer

1. South Africa – Le Roux Family – An on-track recovery from major surgery for Elmane le Roux.
2. Poland - New Life Center - Richard Nungesser and NLC Director, Marcin Fredyk are sharing stories in the US this month.
3. Eastern Europe/US - Travel mercies for Steve Evers in Poland and Romania visiting ITMI partners.
4. South Sudan - Peace and wisdom for leaders as political tensions mount.
5. Romania - Bethesda Home - Provision for the cost of caring for elderly widows in need.

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