

*“For me to live is Christ,  
and to die is gain.”*  
*Philippians 1:21*

**ITMI**  
*Monthly*

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[intouchmission.org](http://intouchmission.org)

## Romanian Bibles for Ukrainians, Gang Members Study the Bible with Moms, and an ITMI Partner is Promoted to Glory

### UKRAINE

Why a Ukrainian pastor's wife was so happy to receive a Bible in Romanian

Her face looks like it can barely contain her smile, doesn't it?

Why is she so happy? It's because of what she's holding; a Bible in Romanian.

She is the wife of a pastor serving in Ukraine. She and her husband were part of the group who were given the gift of participating in the conference in Ukraine hosted by a team from ITMI.

This conference was the result of the pleas from several Ukrainian pastors and their wives who traveled to Romania for a retreat and Biblical encouragement earlier this year. At that conference in February, [Steve Evers](#) shared from the SALT material, and ITMI's [Adi and Ema Ban](#), who organized the retreat, shared on Biblical family life. After the February conference, the participants asked

*(continued on p.2)*

A Ukrainian pastor's wife who attended the conference, smiling in gratitude for her Romanian Bible, provided by an ITMI supporter.



ITMI's Adi and Ema Ban minister in Romania, but also use their proximity to Ukraine to serve their brothers and sisters in Christ during their time of great need and opportunity for Jesus' kingdom.



(continued from p.1)

Steve, Adi and Ema to come to Ukraine and do a second conference because their time at the first retreat had been so effective.

In August, Steve, Adi and Ema crossed the border into Ukraine to provide more of the requested Biblical teaching to encourage and support our brothers and sisters serving Jesus in war-torn Ukraine. They were accompanied by ITMI's **Mark Burritt** and **Stuart Watkins** of **Victorious Christian Living**, the organization responsible for producing the **Seven Areas of Life Training (SALT) material**.

Why does a Ukrainian want a Bible in Romanian?

After World War II, the Soviet Union annexed a slice of Romania as punishment for war-time disloyalty and added it to the part of the Soviet Union which is modern day Ukraine. The people living in that area still speak Romanian to this day, though they have lived as Ukrainians for decades.

This pastor's wife is part of that people group. Her first language is Romanian. Now she has a Bible in her mother tongue! She is also excited that this Bible is a newer translation. She told Steve she understands this Bible much better than ever before and is excited to glean greater clarity and closeness with the Lord as a result.

An ITMI donor provided 60 of these Romanian Bibles for Steve and his team to give to the retreat participants and had them shipped from the Netherlands. The care, encouragement and ministry from the ITMI family, "sure meant a lot to them," Steve commented.

### Face to face with a dark reality

While en route to the conference location in Ukraine, our team visited the prison in Romania where Richard Wurmbrand was held, now a museum honoring and remembering those who suffered



Young leaders of the refugee church helped with rent for one year by ITMI supporters with some of the ITMI team.



60 Romanian Bibles were sponsored by an ITMI supporter.



Wounded military veteran who cancelled his hospital consultation to visit with our team.

there. For the Americans, it brought to life the trauma-filled past that looms in the back of every Eastern European's mind, affecting every decision and reaction. These horrific things happened to real people just like them, and now, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine the terrible past threatens to become their future.

Mark reflected,

"As you pass through the halls, hundreds of pictures of the faces of prisoners cover the walls and many of the cells contain displays or recorded video interviews telling

the horror stories of that terrible period of history. I couldn't help but think about the ministries of so many courageous believers, including ITMI founder, **Bill Bathman**, who spent 22 years working behind the Iron Curtain. I thought of our Eastern European partners who were raised during the Communist years and now enjoy freedoms we take for granted. Over the next two weeks, I would have the privilege of worshipping and fellowshiping with Ukrainian refugees who saw their churches burn to the ground, had lost their jobs, homes, possessions, and

family members. Yet they remain thankful and faithful in serving the Lord where he has placed them. God often does his greatest work during difficult times. This trip gave me a better perspective of how He brings blessings, even during tragic events such as the current war in Ukraine.”

After the week-long conference, our team traveled through Ukraine, stopping to fellowship with small churches each night.

Most of these groups of Ukrainian believers were people who fled their homes with little or nothing. They’ve started over in new cities, and come together to live as God’s people.

They shared their stories - the terrible realities they experienced as they fled, some escaping narrowly with their lives.

Hearing about the Lord’s faithfulness to them during the most harrowing of times was incredibly encouraging. Their commitment and drive to live faithfully in their new locations, to be the Lord’s hands and feet to other refugees around them and to serve Him faithfully while bombs explode around them was inspiring for our ITMI team. But it was also incredibly meaningful for those receiving the visit.

**This story illustrates just how valuable our team’s visits were to Ukrainian believers.**

One night our team had dinner with a group of young leaders of a church of refugees. One of the leaders was a young man who’d been discharged from the Ukrainian army with an injured leg. The military wouldn’t be paying for his medical treatment. This young man so didn’t want to miss the visit from our team that he rescheduled his consultation at the hospital, delaying his operation.

In wartime, this probably wasn’t an easy appointment to get. But as

Steve later reflected that apparently, “encouragement was more important to him than walking.”

During this meeting, Steve and the team learned that this church had a rent payment due soon and they didn’t know where the funds would come from. The landlord had already cut the rent in half but they still hadn’t come up with the \$300 USD needed. ITMI supporters often generously donate before Steve’s trips and ask him to use it as the Lord leads if he comes across needs or ways to expand God’s Kingdom while he travels. Steve writes, “The Lord laid on my heart to take some of the funds and use them to lighten their load,” by covering the rent for the church for one year.

Steve continues, “I saw firsthand on their faces and shoulders the encouragement to these faithful refugees. It was clearly a heavy burden that had just been lifted.”

## POLAND

Long-time ITMI partner, [Piotr Zaremba](#) is the pastor of a Baptist church in Poznan, Poland. The **K5N Church** is large for a Baptist church in Poland, in fact, it’s one of the four largest Baptist churches in the predominantly Catholic country.

After the conference in Ukraine, Steve and his travel companion, Stuart, journeyed to Poland for a second conference, where they also taught the [SALT material](#). Seventeen English-speaking believers from K5N attended. These 17 were hand-picked because they were already in positions to immediately implement and re-teach the Biblical truths laid out in the SALT material to others. This discipleship component is one reason ITMI has found the SALT material to be so effective for Jesus’s kingdom.

Part of the first SALT lessons were taught in the youth ministry the following Sunday, and the leaders



Steve teaches from SALT material at K5N conference in Poland.



Conference participants engaged with the teaching.

reported fruitful conversations with the students around these matters of the heart and its tendency to put one’s own self in the place of God.

“I think this SALT workshop was excellent,” Piotr reported. He continued to say that he has already received a number of emails with questions about the material and is pleased that his leaders are engaging with the Biblical principles and are now equipped to teach them to others.

Thank you for your support of our ITMI team and the discipleship they were able to accomplish through this visit to Ukraine and Poland. Your support of ITMI in general helps us accomplish these kingdom building opportunities.

*-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers*



# ITMI'S Gary Howell

## HAS GONE TO BE WITH THE LORD



On Friday, September 15, 2023, ITMI staff member Gary Howell went home to be with Jesus.

Gary is survived by his wife, Candie, their three grown children, Kristi, Megan, and Devin, as well as their spouses and children. A husband, father, grandfather, friend and much, much, more, Gary brought a sense of kindness and safety to his relationships and conversations that was deeply appreciated.

Gary had a way of telling it like it is without being offensive or hurtful. His insightful wisdom, unique perspective, compassion, and dry humor will be deeply missed by many.

Gary served the Lord in many capacities during his lifetime. He served as a youth pastor, pastor, church elder, counselor, ITMI partner, and author. He was passionate about extending the compassion of Jesus to the hurting.

Gary once said, "When I see people hurt, I can't stand it." Gary knew what it was like to feel pain, and he shares about his journey in his book *A Little White Casket* with the intent of helping others work through real pain and create a healthy way forward.

*A Little White Casket* tells the Howells' story of burying two of their daughters when they were both very

young. In the book, Gary uses his gifts as a counselor to offer his readers a path forward to healing from wounds they may have.

Alongside his supporters, he made many personal sacrifices to make Gospel-centered counseling available to many hurting individuals, offering them gentle kindness, truth, and the healing balm of the compassion of Christ.

One of his daughters wrote, "My dad was a man who loved everyone and everyone loved him. His legacy will live on. He touched so many lives."

He helped as many people as he could. At one point, he was counseling 25 couples and about 50 individuals. That dedication to the Lord and to loving others is part of the richness of Gary's legacy.

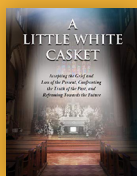
Please continue to lift up the Howell family as they grieve the loss of Gary's life. At press time, this was quite fresh, and as of now, we aren't sure exactly what Candie and the family's financial needs will be. We have set up the Gary Howell Memorial Fund in his honor. Donations to this fund will go to Gary's widow.

Gary's family and friends are collecting written stories and testimonials to compile into a book. If you'd like to contribute, the link is below.

HONOR GARY  
AND SUPPORT  
CANDIE WITH A  
GIFT



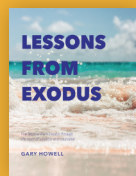
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A  
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By Gary  
Howell



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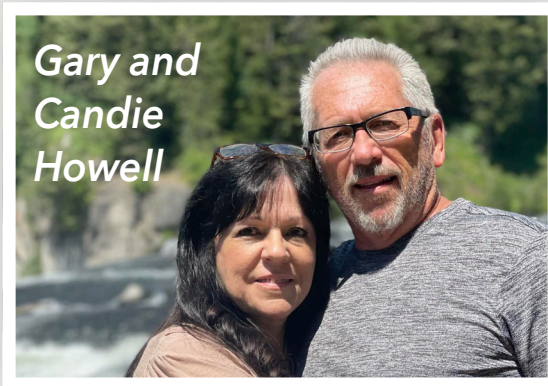
# From the Director



DEAR TEAM: I Lost a Dear Friend Last Month

*“All their life in this world and all their adventures had only been the cover and the title page: now, at last, they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”*

- C.S. Lewis



Gary and  
Candie  
Howell

I lost a dear friend and partner this last month. We had 30+ years of serving, mentoring, and teaching together, whether under the same roof or on different paths that God so wonderfully directed. Gary Howell was one unique Ambassador of Christ. His quick wit and instantaneous yet good-natured sarcasm were always drenched with a twinkle in his eye, a controlled smile, or an even quicker follow-up to ensure you knew he was messing with you.

Gary was always learning to be more beneficial to the next person who needed his wisdom and insight on a difficult life subject. Gary underlined and marked up books passionately, which made

borrowing his books all the more enjoyable and valuable. Gary pre-digested and extracted the valued nuggets of many godly men and women's wisdom, experience, and Biblical perspective as presented in his vast and inclusive library of truth, in order to better walk people through their hurts and brokenness.

It was always fun to watch Gary squirm when you introduced him to a new author or new book that tweaked his attention. He would always say that his Amazon account and its ability to quickly get him his next book, which would go on his personal stack of books queued to be read, was causing Candie to restrict him from buying more books until he reduced the size of his to-be-read-stack. Gary loved to keep his mental closet full of items and pieces of truth shared through the experiences of the many who had already been led through dark and hurtful places and come out on the other side. Gary wanted to help others progress so deeply that continuing education was Gary's favorite and most practiced life hobby.

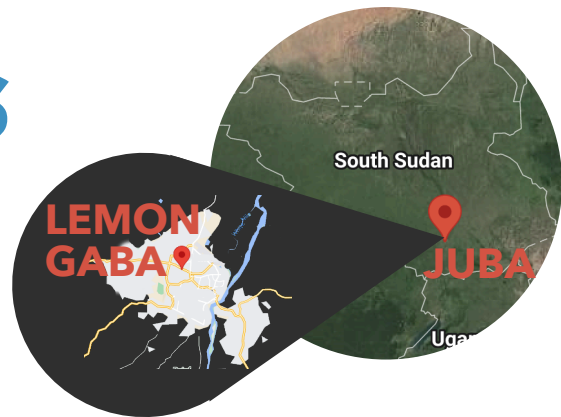
Everyone reacts differently to that heavy emptiness that comes when someone we value dearly is no longer accessible. Gary would tell us to accept the reality of our hurt and loss and then gently nudge us to always “reframe” it into something that draws us closer to God's intent for our lives and health.

I find great comfort in the Psalmist's reminder, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” (Psalm 116:15) We can rest assured that there was a lot of precious sighting when Gary stepped into glory. Our hearts are heavy with the understanding that we will not again hear Gary's wisdom or ribbing, but to the Lord, Gary's graduation brought a sense of great value and sweetness as Gary was finally made whole. Gary would want you and me to make sure that we “reframe” this hurt and sorrow into an amazing celebration that one more of God's dear ones is now home, where we all want to be. Let us remember what John Taylor said, “While we are mourning the loss of our friend, others are rejoicing to meet him behind the veil.”

In His Service,

# Gang Members and Moms

## Study the Bible Together



The sports outreach to South Sudanese gang members operated by ITMI's [Lazarus Yezinai](#) continues to yield exciting fruit.

In the Lemon Gaba area of the city of Juba, South Sudan's capitol, there are now 3 Bible study groups of about 15-20 people each.

Lazarus ministers to both gang members and women in poverty in the Lemon Gaba area. Eventually, he realized these two groups needed one another. In Christ, they have unity despite their different places in the community.

Lazarus reports that spiritual maturity is nurtured well in these Bible study groups.

Lazarus notices that some of the gang members have stopped doing drugs and dress differently. They can now pray for other people and lead singing. The community leaders notice a difference as well. They

notice youth who once used the safety of their gang to steal from local businesses and families have now become day-laborers and bring home food for their families at the end of the day.

These important advances of God's Kingdom into the Lemon Gaba community and the lives of those who are part of these Bible studies are the fruit of your partnership with Lazarus.

These advances began with outreaches: Project Joseph outreaches, Hand Washing Kit outreaches and Lazarus's sports ministry. The Lord used these opportunities, your gifts, and Lazarus' work to build on what was started through these outreaches. Many of you helped Lazarus with funds for these outreaches, and this is what you've come alongside the Lord to be part of!

There's still many ways to [partner with Lazarus](#) to reach this poverty-stricken area with the hope they can have in Jesus Christ.

*-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers*

## FOR PRAISE

1. Pakistan - Evers, Abid - Three pairs of goats are already pregnant and the community is watching every step.
2. Romania - Ban - Couples at a recent weekend retreat with the Bans shared they learned a lot and left seriously considering mentoring other couples.
3. India - Paul and Molly - Gargantuan challenges overcome by the Lord, now 15 of their girls are enrolled in college or junior college!
4. Ukraine/Poland - Evers - The expansion of Jesus' Kingdom through two SALT conferences and visits with partners.

## FOR PRAYER

1. Romania - Pop - Viorel's continued recovery from spinal surgery.
2. South Sudan - Vicky - Continued health and eye problems, a lot of death around family members.
3. South Sudan - Lazarus - Death of another family member.
4. Pakistan - Abid - Brothers and sisters in Christ who were recently attacked by extremist Islamic groups.
5. USA - Pray for the Howell family as they grieve the loss of Gary's life.



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