



The pastor had work clothes on—maybe he was working on his own house, or maybe he has a second job. Whatever the case, he was taking time out of his day to meet with this man. The man never showed up, but that’s not the point. The pastor took the time to be available.

We can learn from that, and how they live. We need to care less of our living arrangements and care more about the Kingdom. For me, it means I need to be content, to move forward with the kingdom. We always think we have to have this and that vacation, this 401k or whatever. We sometimes forget what we are called to do. We are dealing with a transcendent situation; these men seem to truly have a strong calling from God. And they are laser focused on it.

They live modest lives, and they have no complaints. They’re positive, they’re motivated. They love the Lord. They love their people. And they, along with BRTS, have become a gateway to the whole former Soviet Union. God is using them to reach the former countries of the Soviet Union.

Every time I deal with these brothers and sisters, I come home convicted. I think to myself, “*You live in paradise. And you need to be grateful for their work.*”

They lived for decades with communism, which is a philosophy of hopelessness. And then their countries opened up, and they were confronted with the gospel, and now they have a massive territory to serve with the good news. They know the ramifications of decades of communism.

The people they are serving need healing, and the gospel is the only remedy. So these men saw the darkness, and now they stand in the light and they want to share this light.

Their faith and passion are sincere, authentic and real.

Passion in Latvia ‘Never Ceases to Amaze Me’

Sacha Walicord recently traveled to Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary in Riga, Latvia to teach. He spoke with ITEM newsletter editor Matt Crossman about the experience.

The highlight for me always is dealing with local pastors there and seeing their commitment and how much they achieve with so little.

These men live in an expensive city, and they make very little money. But their level of motivation is diametrically the opposite of the means they have to work with.

And that never ceases to amaze me.

They’re constantly at work. For example, during the day, I went to the seminary library. While I was there, I saw a pastor with a brown bag lunch, sitting and waiting ... and waiting and waiting. I asked him, “*What are you doing?*”

And he said, “*Well, I’m waiting for a young man who has psychological problems.*” And I asked him, “*Is he in your church?* He said *No, but he needs help.*”

Check us out on Social Media

Staying informed on what ITEM is doing around the world has never been more important. We encourage you to follow us. ITEM is on **Instagram**: @itemmission, **YouTube** (<https://youtu.be/Mc24JfvgOoA>), Channel: ITEM-Videos,

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Through Tears: 'I Want to Be Sure ITEM Keeps Going'

By Will Hesterberg, ITEM Chairman

We take this opportunity to give thanks for a faithful servant and investor in ITEM who recently went home to be with His Lord. We'll call him simply Gerald because he was a very unassuming person who didn't seek attention for his giving. He preferred to live quietly and give quietly but very generously considering his modest income.

Born in 1936 as a child of the depression into a poor but Godly family, Gerald learned to be careful financially and to live frugally. Working as an electrician, he and his wife put their three children through private Christian school. Work wasn't always steady, but he continued to find jobs, even making a career change late in life to become a technician at a local community college.

Gerald loved the outdoors and had hobbies that took him outside. There was biking (including motor biking), fishing, camping, hiking and walking. His son recalls the times of fishing and camping, saying that Gerald and his wife would very seldom stay in motels on their vacations but rather camped out in nature. They made several trips all the way around the United States. In later years, they made regular trips to their favorite place to stay on the West Coast. Gerald loved gardening with his flowers in an immaculately kept small yard.

Growing up in a Dutch Reformed Church, Gerald learned to tithe. Supporting missions became a way of life and a passion. The end of each year saw Gerald writing out checks for a long list of charities. In the last years of his life, both Gerald and his wife struggled with health issues, and so Gerald's giving seemed to increase all the more as he perhaps sensed he was running out of time to give.

He gave heavily to about eight missions. Though struggling with great pain, Gerald's greater concern was that he wouldn't be able to continue

supporting his favorite missions such as ITEM. During a phone call from Gerald several years ago, I could hear him choke back tears as he said, "I don't know how much longer I have left to give to ITEM but I want to be sure ITEM keeps going." I am quite certain on the day of his homegoing, Gerald heard, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Prayer Requests

Please pray about these issues.

1. Rob Toornstra and Bill Wilton will teach Christ Centered preaching and hermeneutics in Monrovia, Liberia. Pray for safe travel.
2. ITEM has an opportunity to train 50 pastors in Orissa state of India in 2022-2023 by using trainers we have been teaching through our Alternative India Training program. It will cost about \$20,000.
3. Saphira Torrens, the daughter of Alister Torrens, president of Evangelical Reformed Seminary of Ukraine, will have surgery on her hand hopefully next month.
4. Rebecca Cruz, the wife of Gerson Cruz, ITEM's site director in Bolivia, miscarried recently at 3 months. Also, their preschool daughter, Ashley needs speech therapy.
5. Jobje Lammers is battling cancer, and Debbie Richards is fighting Parkinsons. Both are married to ITEM board members.

How to Contribute

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