



# NEWS FROM THE FIELDS

## *Sowing* **GENEROUSLY**

2024 Annual  
Dinner Theme

PP. 2-3



Plowing with  
Prayer

PP. 4-5



A Sower's  
Testimony

P. 6



Witnessing the  
Harvest

P. 7



Tribute to a  
Generous Sower

P. 8



# SOWING GENEROUSLY

If you're like me you want your life to count, to help advance God's kingdom and to bring glory to His name. The Bible is replete with teachings about having an impactful life. One of the more common principles for bearing fruit is to sow generously. For example:

*But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6).*

*Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well (Ecclesiastes 11:6).*

There are different kinds of sowing, of course. For example, James wrote that "Peacemakers who sow

in peace will reap a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:13). In Galatians 6:7-10 Paul equates sowing with good works: "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever you sow, you will also reap. [...] And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:7-9).

In our personal lives and at Evangelism Resources we want to be people who sow generously! In Jesus' Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8), Jesus pointed out that some of what we sow will die but some will reap a generous harvest. ER is sowing generously so we can reap generously!

Will you pray for us and support our ministries so we can continue to sow and reap generously?

**- Paul Braun, President**

## Sowing Generously in New Fields

By Steve Liversedge

In the last eight months I've had the privilege to travel to Turkey twice to present the ER Portable Bible School Teacher Training Seminar (PBSTTS) alongside other members of our teaching team from India, the DRC (Congo), China, Turkey and the USA. I'm impressed that just in our team we are sowing generously by gathering sowers (teachers) from the four corners of the world and casting seed on some of the least reached areas of our globe.

Last August the trainees came mainly from Turkey, while this April's class of 47 included 44 Iranians, some flying in from Iran and others living as refugees in Turkey, along with a number of observers from Egypt.

It is challenging to minister in Turkey, but even more so in Iran. Several of our Iranian trainees have spent time in prison; they all realize that to introduce the PBSEs in Iran is an extremely dangerous proposition which could cost them their lives. It is not a game or a passing fancy, but it is the most important thing in their lives to do, and they need our prayers.

In Luke 8 Jesus shared the Parable of the Sower. He told of seed that fell on the path, the rocks, among thorns, and on good soil. What stands out to me is that the sower scattered seed on all these places, from the poor soil to the good. For centuries, Iran and the Middle East could have been described as poor soil, worn and beaten paths traversed by multiple armies, sandy and rocky expanses crumbled by extreme temperatures and earthquakes, with the thorns of Islam choking the

word. Missionaries might see only one or two people trust in Jesus over their entire careers. But in some places, things are changing. Reports tell of a vibrant Church growing in Iran, but one which lacks leadership. (Of course this is what the PBS does; it fills a leadership gap quickly.) The participants in our most recent training confirmed these reports. It seems, praise God, that Iran is becoming good soil! I like to think that we are seeing the fruit from the labors of sowers who ministered over past centuries. We need to continue to sow generously, scatter seed, and anticipate the harvest in Iran and the surrounding countries, fully realizing that we are hastening the Lord's return (2 Peter 3:11).

The men and women we have trained to lead Portable Bible Schools are excited to sow generously through this program that God has used so effectively in Africa and Asia since the 1980s. We believe that we are on the threshold of an unprecedented outpouring of God's Spirit. Looking into the expectant and glowing eyes of the participants, I would say we are not the only ones who think this way. Michael and Artun, two of our participants, are ready to scatter seed wherever they can, no matter the obstacles.

Michael is an Iranian refugee living in Turkey. A former Muslim, he came to faith in Christ in Iran. Over the next few years, he produced two Christian movies, which were discovered by the government. These things placed Michael in great danger in Iran, where conversion of a Muslim to Christianity is a capital offense. He fled to Turkey, and through his pastor he learned about the upcoming PBSTTS, which he attended earlier this month. On the closing day, with shining eyes he told me, "These have been the best six days of my life!" Michael has been threatened with deportation back to Iran, but we were able to connect him with a Christian lawyer who has agreed to help him seek permanent refugee status in Turkey.

(continue reading on p. 4)





# Plowing with PRAYER



**Above:** Sam leads his congregation in prayer during a Sunday morning service.

By Caleb Pfeifer

In a garden or on a farm, plowing transforms an idle field into a productive seedbed. It takes hard, weed-infested, and seemingly barren land and makes it hospitable for seeds to grow into healthy plants. Just as the ground must be prepared before sowing seeds to harvest physical crops, we can think of reaping a spiritual harvest the same way. Sure, just casting out seeds may yield a meager harvest; but to see a bumper crop, you have to start by preparing the soil.

**O**n the mission field (the soil), there are numerous obstacles to the gospel (the seed) taking root and flourishing. Yet even as different methods are employed to sow, water, and nourish seeds, successful harvests all start with a common factor: plowing the “soil” with prayer.

I was struck by this reality in a fresh way when Sam Francis (ER’s ministry director in central India) visited us in Wilmore in April. As he

shared testimony after testimony of God’s Kingdom growing despite tremendous difficulties, the thread that tied each story together was reliance on God to make a way for their ministries to bear fruit.

From a human perspective, the spiritual “ground” of central India seems impossible to work with. Millenia of worshiping false gods has placed a shroud of darkness over the truth and left many people

influenced or possessed by demonic powers. In some villages, anyone who would consider leaving the traditional religion could face ostracism or violence. And now an increasing number of government officials, motivated by a radical form of Hinduism, are bent on stamping out evangelism.

All of this brings to mind the image of a parched, desolate stretch of land, hospitable to only the most stubborn and unpleasant of weeds. Yet Sam testified of thousands

coming to the Lord, including almost 15,000 people belonging to just *one* UPG in *one* district. In another district, he attended a conference with 4,000 people seeking the Lord. Throughout the ministry field, “power encounters” (miraculous healings and deliverance) are taking place, opening hearts to God’s love. How is this possible? Prayer.

When Sam prays, it’s as if you’re witnessing a face-to-face conversation. He prays with a deep awareness of the Spirit’s presence and with a burden for the lost to experience the same kind of relationship with the Lord. His boldness inspires faith and reveals a confidence that comes from seeing God’s miraculous intervention time and time again. Unsurprisingly, his zeal for prayer overflows into the ministries under his care.

Twice a month Sam and his School of Evangelism (SOE) staff gather the students for nonstop prayer from 9:00 pm to 6:00 am. On top of praying for current needs, these gatherings serve to, through example, impress a model of ministry on the students’ hearts.

“When the [SOE] students go,” Sam said, “there is a spiritual battle that is being fought.” The SOE graduates return to their home villages knowing they must begin—and sustain—their outreach by fighting this battle through prayer. They understand that for the seeds they sow to

grow, God has to go before them to prepare the ground. But it’s not just the SOE staff and students who shoulder this burden of prayer.

“We appreciate the ministry, that you are holding us [in prayer] every day,” Sam said. “You join together, you exchange your views, [...] you are not wasting your time. You are not wasting your energy, but you are putting in effort for His power to be released in nations.”

As we (the home office staff) and the board of directors take care of administrative concerns and provide practical support, you play an equally important role of interceding for us and for our international partners and their students. We are convinced that it is through the ER family’s prayers that God’s

power has been released in Sam’s ministries in central India, uprooting the enemy’s strongholds to make fertile soil for His kingdom.

In John 14:13 (ESV) Jesus says, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” As ER strives to continue sowing generously for the gospel, let’s follow the example of Sam Francis and so many other partners who confidently take Jesus at His word. May we boldly trust in God to create a seedbed in the most unexpected places, so that what we sow will grow into a vibrant garden for His glory. ■

**Below:** Sam travels throughout central India to attend Mobile SOE graduations, like this one for the Chaudhari people.



## Sowing Generously in New Fields

continued from p. 3

Our host, Pastor Artun, leads one of only two registered churches in Turkey. His wife went through the training in Izmir last August. She was chosen to be one of six presenters in the “Model Portable Bible School Day” that concludes the PBSTTS. When Artun saw our online PBSTTS he immediately began to translate it. Staying up into the wee hours of the morning he worked hard,

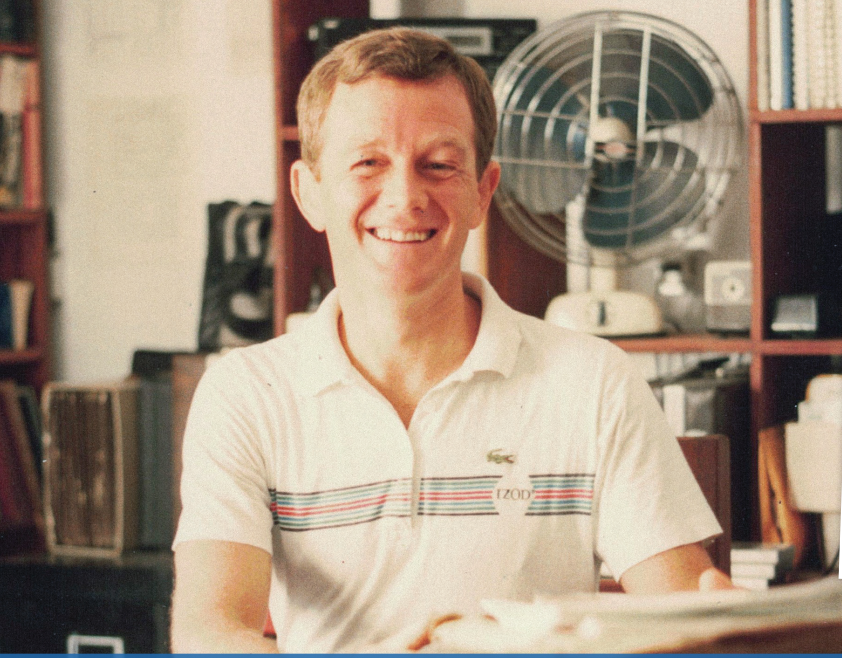
and before the six-day seminar was finished he had translated the whole of the first section of the training into Turkish. Artun and his wife have assembled a team that will study all of the 200 lessons from the textbook, *Called to Shepherd God’s People*, and then begin to organize the eight-week PBSTTS in Turkey.

As for the observers from Egypt, they have invited us

to come and present the PBSTTS training there. We are looking at November and would ask you to pray with us as we make plans.

May God bless you all as you grab a fistful of seed and scatter it with us on all the ground, good and bad, and watch as God turns bad soil into good as He is doing in Iran. ■





**Above and Right:** Dale served as a missionary with ER in the Congo and Nigeria in the '80s and '90s.



## A Sower's Testimony

By Dr. Dale Garside

After receiving God's gift of forgiveness and eternal life at age 16, I saw God as my Creator and the ultimate Giver. However, I had to learn that I was created to give, not merely receive.

In my case, both parents died while I was in college, leaving six dependent siblings at home and an older brother in the Army. God asked me to help care for my family after graduation, and He would guide my steps. My younger siblings had not had the blessing of both parents until age 21, as I had. Further, our family house was in bad shape, with no estate settlement in sight, and bills to pay. I worked 80-hour weeks for a year, with no excess money to show for it. It was humanly frustrating not being able to save myself by saving for myself.

My older brother finished his commitment in the army and married; two of my younger sisters finished high school, and one married. Between the three of them, they took care of the four youngest. I was now free to pursue graduate studies in

France. My self-seeking seed was falling into the ground and dying, but I was not yet a life-giving plant wanting to yield lasting fruit for Him.

After two years in France, God gifted me with a work-study graduate program at the University of Cincinnati; more importantly, He connected me with a biblical church, a godly pastor, and my best friend who would train me in Evangelism Explosion. I was now being discipled to disciple, but I struggled to yield all my resources to God—time, money, talents, education, job, relationships... Our Lord was about to teach me one of my most valuable spiritual lessons.

The Garside estate finally settled, and I received an inheritance which I planned to use as seed money for a future home. At the same time, our small and aging church in Hyde Park decided to purchase land near

Sharonville to plant a new church in a residential area and attract more families to our congregation. I watched our elderly members give generously for this, but I was a student teaching assistant earning little, feeling exempt from sacrificial giving. No one knew of my inheritance but God. I sowed little despite the generosity of my church family.

We were struggling to meet our monthly budget, so our pastor called a special prayer meeting. God asked me to give all of my inheritance to the church while in prayer. I resisted for days, but in the end, I yielded and obeyed. I cannot fully explain how free I felt after letting go of that family resource. I learned the truth of a quote from Albert Schweitzer that day: "If you own something you cannot give away, then you don't own it, it owns you." I wanted God to be my Owner, not just my Savior.

God has repaid me many times over for that small seed I offered Him years ago. When I later went to the mission field, the majority of my supporters came from that small Cincinnati church. My connection with Evangelism Explosion, Asbury University, the Brauns, Evangelism Resources, my future wife, my daughter, Toccoa Falls College... it all began with a seed offering in a small church. Indeed, when I planted my "self," that seed died, and God raised it to new life in Him (John 12:24). ■



## Witnessing the Harvest

By Mindy Groff

The SOE in Abidjan marked its 25th graduation this year, and what a celebration it was! Singing and dancing, banners and photographs, diplomas and prayers, and all for the glory of God. I had the privilege of attending the ceremony with Dr. Dale Garside and my father, Rev. Paul Braun, as representatives of ER. This was the final stop on our two-week trip to the Ivory Coast.

*"I am here to bear witness [...] I am here to see that the Lord is good, and that the work done by those before me was honoring to Him."*

Much of our time was spent visiting churches where graduates of the SOEs are living out their calling. My dad and Dr. Garside led two evangelism conferences, one in Abidjan and one in the city of Bouaké, where we also attended an SOE graduation. Acts 1:8 says that "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The men and women we met in Africa are taking the word of God into neighborhoods and villages, being God's witnesses throughout Africa and the world. And for every graduate I met, there are dozens more doing this work.

I was born in the Ivory Coast when my parents were there as missionaries. All my life I had heard stories of Africa and dreamed of traveling back with my dad. This trip was the fulfillment of that dream. Yet on my first night in Africa, I admit to feeling completely overwhelmed. I was supposedly there on a mission trip, yet I couldn't tell anyone about Jesus because I didn't speak the local language. I felt ill-equipped, unprepared



and out of place. I pulled out my Bible and journal and asked myself why in the world I had come. "I am here to bear witness," I wrote that first night. "I am here to see that the Lord is good, and that the work done by those before me was honoring to Him." And I kept coming back to that purpose, especially when Dr. Garside and our host, Pastor Antoine, both preached on Acts 1:8 during our trip.

While I was in Africa, my words were limited—I could stumble my way through a few basic French phrases, but mostly I communicated with smiles and dance. But now that I am home, it is my turn to speak of all that I saw. One student of the Abidjan SOE reported that before attending the school, he also felt ill-equipped. "God is calling me to tell others about Him—to do the job He commanded us to do—but I do not know how," he said. Thanks to the SOEs, he and countless others are now equipped to be God's witnesses. Countless individuals throughout Africa have salvation through Jesus as a result of the work that ER is doing and is training others to do. And it was my honor to bear witness to that. ■





# Tribute to a Generous Sower

By Dr. John Musick

*Dr. John Musick serves as Chairman of the ER Board of Directors. The following article is a condensed version of a tribute he wrote for Roland Bowman's memorial service. Please contact us if you would like to read the full tribute.*

I first met Roland and Ruth Bowman in 2005 when they joined the staff of Evangelism Resources. We were in great need of two people who were familiar with the work of reaching people for Christ in Africa. So, we were thrilled that the Lord sent Roland and Ruth to serve with ER. They had such amazing experience and had been key to helping fulfill the Great Commission in Gabon.

I was thrilled that Roland also joined the men's life group I was leading. What an amazing gift! As we got to know him better, he became an example of one whose life was totally committed to the service and glory of our Lord. He entered discussions and prayer with much love and wisdom and taught us to pray on levels we had never experienced before. His stories about successes and challenges on the mission field helped us see what perseverance looked like in real life. His love for his family set a great example for us to follow as well.

Then, in 2008 our church sent Roland and me to Africa. We went to help form a partnership between our church and Evangelism Resources to support the training of evangelists and church planters. Roland was right at home and had no trouble adjusting. That Sunday, I asked him where we would worship. He said we'd be visiting some churches he'd planted while in Gabon. On the way I noticed people all walking in the same direction. As we continued, more and more people joined until we arrived at a massive church, which I believe had several thousand

people in attendance. When they saw Roland, there was the most cheering I believe I've ever seen. They strode in line to embrace him.

I later learned that Roland had led the founding pastor of this church to Christ and then disciplined him, along with others. We visited at least two other churches that were filled with life and worship. Later, I remember reflecting on what difference my life was going to make on others during the years that I'm here. Seeing the fruit of Roland's and Ruth's perseverance, faithfulness and love in action was such a great example and encouragement to me!

As a longtime board member of ER, I've seen God's faithfulness in providing leaders who lead from the integrity and purity of their hearts, and who are committed to excellence and virtue in their work and relationships. Certainly, Roland and Ruth Bowman are far up on that list. They served ER and so many others in Africa and beyond, and God used the continual offering of his life and resources, resulting in tremendous fruit.

Roland and Ruth know that ultimately the souls of men and women are what matter most. They are great examples to follow. As their example has encouraged me to reflect on my life, I hope you will reflect on your life, as well as your future direction and priorities. It is so sad from our standpoint to know that Roland has departed this life, but our loss is Heaven's gain. And the example of his life will continue to reap an impact on so many. ■

## MSOE Matching Challenge

### The ER Family Sowing Generously

In our last newsletter, we shared that a generous donor offered to match every gift given toward Mobile Schools of Evangelism (MSOE) dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000. Our goal was to meet this challenge by April 30. How'd we do? Here's a snapshot:

A total of **42 donations** were given toward this challenge, and the final donation brought the amount raised to **\$10,351**. This means, a **total of \$20,351**

**was given**, which will cover the costs for seven of the 34 MSOEs that are currently being funded in 2024.

Thank you! Biblically based missionary training is provided to 10-20 students per MSOE, all of whom may otherwise not have had access to such training. May these students grow in knowledge and zeal, be continually conformed to the image of Christ, and speak loudly of the generous love of our Lord.