



The UPDATE

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Building Bridges

As we travel through Russia, what is striking is the amount of youth without direction and often without hope for the future. For those thirty years of age and under, there is little personal memory of the Soviet era. While the economy has somewhat stabilized in the last years, the revival of the early nineties did not affect them and they are spiritually unreached.



Building bridges with University Students

Yet due to common technologies, such as the internet, and the modern pop culture, this younger generation has much in common with their counterparts around the world. One of our themes as we coach ministry teams has been to call the “forty/fifty-something” generation to mentor this younger generation. Many of the next generation are very desirous to have someone come alongside of them. Yet this middle aged generation has not had this modeled for them and so find it hard to know how to offer this gift of mentoring to them. While we teach on mentoring and provide materials to help in the process, we have also discovered that this is something that they must see modeled. This is why we always try to work into our schedule some time to spend with the younger generation and make connection to the current leadership.

Yet due to common technologies, such as the internet, and the modern pop culture, this younger generation



Rebecca (R) building bridges with Svetlana

Over the last few trips into the Caucasus, our various teams have been invited into the local university to speak to the students studying English. Due to the type of visa we travel with, we have been careful to frame this as a sort of “cultural exchange” visit, while building



Phil teaching in Russia

relationships in the process. The “in” was the desire of the department head (Svetlana) to have her students interact with native English speakers. Lets just say the region is not exactly on the tourists’ beaten path – as westerners we are still quite a novelty!



The team overlooking a city in the Caucasus, S. Russia (largest Mt.in Europe in distance)

We have been thinking about what we could do to accelerate the conversations with these Russian youth, using the leverage of their interest to interact with English speakers. On our last trip, this resulted in us renting a room at a local club and providing pizza and coke for anyone who would come. Well as it turned out, over 30 students showed up, as well as a few teachers and the department head, Svetlana. The concept was pretty simple. Get the students on neutral turf, where our team would be free to engage in conversations (not quite so easy at the University) and see what would happen. David and Rhonda played some music and then we did what youth do best everywhere – talk.

There were also several students who were Christians from the church and this also helped to elevate their influence among their peers and model for them a casual, yet intentional, way for them to share their faith. Throughout the evening our team had many meaningful conversations which focused on values and faith. Over the years Svetlana had been the motivating force to allow us into the university (not necessary a given in Russia) and so we had begun to build a rapport with her. Rebecca shares part of the conversation she had with Svetlana that night:

Svetlana (pictured on left) asked me if we had had to learn any Latin. I said, “No” and then she shared how in elementary school they had to memorize 200 Latin proverbs. I asked her if she could remember any of them and she quoted one in Latin without missing a beat. I asked her what it meant and she said that it was something about not removing a speck of dust from another’s eye when you have a log in your own. “Had I heard of such a proverb?” she asked.

20 Years of Ministry 1989-2009

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The "Order of the Towel"



The following report was filed by Myron Goodwin (one of the founders of ICM USA and colleague with the Jeske's in Kenya in the early 1990's), who participated in the 2009 Graduation Ceremonies of ICM's ATS (Africa Theological Seminary) in Kitale, Kenya. This reflects our heart of training – one that is not focused just on degrees earned, but on the discipling and mentoring of a life:

"One of ICM's traditions at graduation, since the inception of our Africa Theological Seminary in 1993, is to 'award' each graduate with a white towel before they receive their diploma. The 'Order of the Towel' is intended as a symbol of the call to service that is on each pastor and church leader. The presentation of the towel is also a reminder that their theological training was never just about acquiring knowledge, but rather having their hearts transformed for Christlike service.



Bishop Deo Mwamba (ICM Dir., Dem. Rep. of Congo) praying for the grads

This past April, after ICM Kenya's 14th graduation at our main ATS campus in Kitale where 98 graduates received their respective degrees, diplomas, and certificates, I traveled two hours to cross the Kenya/Uganda border to ICM Uganda's ATS campus



Graduate Pastors & Family/friends after the ceremony



Dr. Omalla (Uganda Dir.) with grad (Phil W. & Myron G. in background)

in Tororo, Uganda. There I participated in ICM Uganda's 3rd grad. ceremony. What a joy to be able to present a towel and diploma to 35 pastors and leaders, all of whom have been in fulltime ministry for at least three years. (One of ICM's distinctive at ATS is that we don't train people for the ministry, rather we focus our training on those already in the ministry.) It was very rewarding and encouraging to listen to the testimonies of the graduates as they described how their studies at ATS Uganda impacted their life, family, church, and community."



Visit to Kenya

John and Elizabeth Anonby (retired professor TWU/ nurse, & ICM Cdn Board member) were in Kitale, Kenya, the birthplace of ICM in Africa some twenty plus years ago (Phil and Nancy first went to Kenya in 1990 as the ministry was being initiated). While teaching at another university in Kenya, the Anonby's visited ICM's ATS (Africa Theological Seminary) in Kitale. This was the first of our inservice training campuses for leaders in Africa. Since then we have ATS campuses in Uganda, Tanzania, and Nigeria, with Congo coming online. Pastors and church leaders can be trained in the Word while continuing in the ministry (actually a prerequisite). These centers also become the hub for our many conferences and seminars within the country and in surrounding countries.

Around the Corner

International Council

In September, Phil Jeske and Doug Friesen will be attending the annual meeting of ICM Intl. Country Directors in Minnesota. Thank you for your prayers for wisdom and renewed vision as the directors provide oversight to the ICM ministries worldwide.

Russia

God has indeed given us an open door of ministry into Russia, even though it is becoming more difficult to enter the country and there are increased restrictions. Through our conferences and the materials we have developed in Russian, we continue to invest in the emerging leaders of the country. Thank you for your prayers as we consider which invitations to respond to. It's a big place and we can't do it all (though we might want to try!), but we are committed to being faithful to fulfill our part of the task.

Cuba

Continue to pray for open doors into the country. As reported last time, the national leadership want us to return and expand our training throughout the country. We need favor to obtain religious visas, as well as financial partnership in preparation for ongoing translation and the printing of our materials in this country.

As we reported early this year after our last visit, it is estimated that the church has grown at an average of 1000 churches per year for over 15 years. Those on the ground believe that there are at least 18,000 churches in Cuba today. We believe this is a critical window of opportunity that God is opening up for us to be involved in training leadership and provide them the tools through our materials to mentor many more leaders.

Coaching Ministry Teams

One of our highlights every time we are in the Caucasus is to spend a day with the leadership team of the mother church (in total there are about 40 churches in this fellowship). This often occurs a day before the conference and we introduce new material and help them evaluate what they have implemented from our last trip in and what particular challenges they may still be having.

These leadership teams have requested that we keep them accountable to follow through with the changes that they want to implement. We are not there to tell them what to do or even be the "experts." We are there to keep them on track and help them achieve their goals – at times providing an outside perspective, at other times encouraging them to do what they said they want to do....in a word: coaching.

This level of accountability and trust does not occur with every group we work with, as it typically takes years for this level of rapport and trust to develop. Yet where we have these level of relationships we have seen the most progress. It is our privilege to be a part of what God is doing in this region of Russia. Your partnership makes this possible.

Coaching Worship Leaders

It was also great to have David and Rhonda join us to teach on worship on our trip to the Caucasus earlier this year. This particular church has several worship teams and music is a key part of the ministry. Most of these are young adults and so last year in preparation we thought it would be good to have a training track for musicians and worship leaders. Well about 25-30 young adults attended the two



^ Doug leading a discussion with the leadership team



^ The ICM team together with the Russian team



Our Conferences also include times of spiritual refreshing and renewal

day workshop as the Herrod's shared from their life as worship pastors and musicians. They taught on varied subjects, such as the heart of a worshiper, some voice & instrumental training, as well as helping the participants begin to write their own worship songs.



David and Rhonda Leading a Worship Workshop



You may remember Pastor Misha (2nd from R) from previous newsletters. He continues to plant a church in a Muslim Village in the Caucasus region of Russia

Building Bridges

(cont. from Pg 1)

(Well that is what I call an open door!) "Sure," I said, "Jesus quoted such a proverb in the Bible." She went on to say how she had a Bible but had never read it. This provided me the opportunity to give an overview of the Bible from Creation to man's fall and the redemption through Jesus. It was clear that most of this was all new to her. The conversation ended with her wanting to read more from the Bible and find out what it said.

This conversation indicates the openness that there is once a relationship has been developed, as well as how little is known of the Bible by most and particularly how little they know of the central Gospel message. Many other conversations that night confirmed this and yet the team was able to plant seeds that the Russian Christians will be able to water. There are so many youth in this city and we want to be catalysts to help the few Christian youth that are there provide the hope that this generation needs. The lesson of history is that it only takes a few to make a difference. If one man like a Lenin could impact several generations and a whole nation, imagine what could happen if a few key youth could have a similar impact for Christ. It could easily impact the next 100 years in Russia. It's a big country – so we gotta dream big!

20 ICM Years
of Ministry
1989-2009



Our Mission

To serve the church by discipling & equipping its leaders.

Our Purpose

ICM develops innovative solutions so that Christian ministers can receive affordable on-the-job ministerial training, focussed on molding character, refining skills, as well as imparting knowledge; so that they may be better equipped and the body of Christ built up (Eph 4:11-12).

Accountability

ICM is an interdenominational non-profit charity registered in both Canada and the USA. It also has ministry offices in Africa and Europe. It is a faith mission and supported by free-will donations of those of like vision.

ICM adheres to the WEF & Lausanne Covenants statements of faith and takes an evangelical approach to Scripture.

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From My Desk

Phil Jeske
President

Well I must admit that I am not sure what provided the inspiration for the illustration, but it was a "hit" in any case. For those who have had to regularly communicate cross-culturally, you'll be able to identify with the sense of success that comes with connecting with a group, especially through the barriers of language and culture. Like I said, this story would be even better if I could remember the source of my inspiration, or for that matter, the purpose of the illustration, but alas, sometimes good inspirations should remain like a sunset – something to be admired and not explained!

It happened during one of my teaching sessions in Russia earlier this year. Earlier that morning I had noticed the potato plants beginning to grow in the yard of the compound where we were staying on the outskirts of town. I am not sure what made me notice the potato plants, perhaps it had been the conversation I had had with my father a few days earlier. My father, currently in his mid nineties and very active, was telling me that he did not want to plant as many potatoes this year. It was not just that he could not eat all of them, the reason had to do with something else. It came in the form of many tiny eating machines. The real reason was that he was tired of picking the pesky potato bugs off the plants everyday (for the uninitiated, a potato bug looks like a ladybug, is ten times the size and has been known to carry away small pets).

Now I understand that I have probably already lost those of you who have never picked potato bugs off the leaves of potato plants! But I am sure that there are other *damaged* individuals out there like myself who were also forced into potato bug duty while growing up. I am sure that when I saw those potato plants on that morning in Russia, I reverted back to those hot summer afternoons of my childhood picking potato bugs – while thinking of the thousands of things I'd rather be doing (say, like going to the dentist!).

Well back to my teaching session in Russia. As these things happen, something within me accessed all these random potato bug thoughts and I heard myself asking the audience if there were also "Russian potato bugs" and if others had suffered my same plight in their youth. Well I make no claims to be a master teacher, but lets just say the response to the 'ol potato bug illustration was quite overwhelming. It was clear that I had struck a cord. Days later I had people coming up to me telling me about their potato bug horror stories. I even learned ancient remedies such as burying pine needles in the dirt to ward off the little monsters (I had always wondered where they come from after they have been so cleanly picked off the day before). It was clear that there were Russian potato bugs and they were as hated as Canadian ones.

Well I am sure there was some profound spiritual truth that my potato bug story was illustrating – but for the life of me I can't remember what it was. But I do remember the connection with the people and how important this is as we communicate truth (okay bugs might be a stretch here) and apply it in ways that those from another culture and place can relate to and then be able to implement in their own lives. We all do this to some degree, I just happened to use what has become known on our team as the now infamous "potato bug" illustration! *Its going to be tough to live this one down.*

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