



The Update

Brandenburg Gate, Berlin

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Ministry in the former East Germany

Since being part of one of Phil's first mentoring cohorts in Berlin some twenty years ago, much has happened in Karl's life. He and Claudia (who grew up in East Germany) now have four children and have been pastoring a church in the eastern part of Germany (Magdeburg) for the past seventeen years.

Magdeburg (pop. 200,000) is about an hour west of Berlin. Being in the former East Germany, it had few minority immigrants, but in recent years this has changed as there has

been an influx of asylum seekers from countries such as

use the ICM MCNet materials as he guides and coaches these church planters.

Throughout his ministry, missions beyond his own church has been Karl's passion. He has travelled extensively with Phil, most recently to Ukraine before the outbreak of the war. He will soon be in



Karl & Claudia and Family

Egypt as his mission board is refocusing their efforts into this region of the Africa. Plans are being made to host a ICM retreat with them and Maxym/Anya (from Ukraine) in Germany later this year.



Karl's Church, Magdeburg, Germany

Afghanistan, Iran, and now Ukraine. Being multi-lingual (English, German, Spanish, French) Karl is perfectly suited to lead what has become a multi-ethnic church. They have members from India, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Cuba and conduct services in English and German.



As Karl's ministry has developed, he has had the opportunity to mentor several church planters from different denominations in Germany as well as provide leadership to church planters in his own denomination. He continues to



Karl & Phil with Maxym in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine 2021

From All Nations to All Nations

You'll likely remember Rafik from his ministry to leaders in East Africa that has been highlighted in previous issues of the Update. When not teaching in Tanzania, his country of birth, he is a chaplain for the Salvation Army House in downtown Vancouver, BC Canada. as well as involved in ministry among the south Asian people of the Metro Vancouver area.



Rafik shares, *"I have been able to teach as well as share at several of their evangelistic outreaches. I have also been able to share at their family retreats, ministering on the values and principles of a Christian family. Last year I was also able to train their leaders on how to reach their Hindu neighbors."*

As a result of his ministry with this group, one of the leaders of the ETF that he had been mentoring has felt the call to plant a church. The church is now growing in Maple Ridge (a city near Vancouver) and Rafik continues to have the opportunity to serve this new fellowship.

Most recently, Rafik reports, *"I just had a meeting with the leaders of ETF and they are now taking steps to transition this*



monthly fellowship into a church plant, as many have accepted the Lord as their Savior and need a more regular place to worship and grow. While the ETF meeting will continue, they will also now plant another church focused on the south Asian community in the Vancouver area of BC (Canada)."

As a ministry we believe that "missions" is truly 'from all nations to all nations' – it is just not something to be done by getting on a plane and flying across an ocean. Rafik and Safia's lives continue to illustrate this as they use a lifetime of ministry and life experience in serving others wherever God has led them over the years.



For the last few years Rafik has been ministering with the Evangelical Telegu Fellowship (ETF). It began in 2006 to reach the Telegu people of BC. and is now also

Modern Day Tax Collector Story

As a result of Rafik and Phil's last ministry trip to Tanzania, a mentoring cohort from Africa was established that now meets online twice a month. Phil and Rafik hosts this video meeting which discusses the leadership materials based upon the new ICM/MCNet's competency based ministerial training (MCNet Christian Leadership Institute).

Pastor Fovo is one of the participants and is a pastor of a church in the Dar es Salaam area. He came to Christ when he was in his late forties and now some twenty years later is still hungry to grow in his personal life as well as a leader.

He was first employed in the civil service of Tanzania as a teacher and then in the tax department. Particularly at this time of year, not too many of us like the tax collector but from his testimony it is clear he was the exception to the stereotypical tax collector. In a discussion focussing on God's leading in our calling and character development as a leader he shared the following:

"I had my share of taking kickbacks. I know the sweet and bitter parts of it, in particular the moral guilty consciousness. I was not on the most notorious side of the list, we had real crooked tax collector colleagues who made lots of money through corrupt means. But when I received the Lord everything changed. Corrupt colleagues would not want to work with me, neither propose me for positions of leadership. However, I was given a managerial post and had to bear untrue accusations, because my subordinates regarded me as a stumbling block to their evil schemes. Conspiring with officials of higher levels they tried to remove me from that position but failed. It is from this background that I am passionate to learn methodical and structured ways of becoming a tool of molding others while am myself being molded through mentor – mentoree relationships"

It is such a privilege to share the journey with quality leaders such as Pastor Fovo. Thank you for your partnership with us enabling us to provide these materials to leaders throughout the world who desire to grow and then pass on what they have learned to others.



Eyes (still) on the Prize

Over the course of church history, world events have always had an impact upon the mission of the church. While God's mission to reach all people groups with the Good News is never thwarted, God's mission happens within the context of the "messy-ness" of life and global realities.

The war in Ukraine is a current case in point, one more in a long list of global events influencing the mission of the church. While we know that ultimately God will fulfill his purposes on this earth, us mere mortals can easily get caught up in the messy-ness of it all. This usually happens as we take our eyes off the big picture of what God is up to and focus on what the "kingdoms of this world," are up to – be that globally or in our own society.



Mentoring young couples

Through our colleagues in Ukraine, we know God is still at work in a country under fire.

This illustrates the incredible resilience of the Mission and the Church. At the same time, the mission is alive and well in spite of increasing restrictions on the church in Russia. The mission may be impacted but never thwarted by political, economic and any other messy-ness. God continues to build his church on both sides of the conflict and throughout a broken and dysfunctional world.

As a reader of past newsletters, Valera and Narina will not be strangers. As a ministry, we first connected with them in the Caucasus (southern Russia) over fifteen years ago. Their two sons have now grown and they still have two teenage daughters at home (St. Petersburg). It has been such a blessing to have Narina translate all of our materials into Russian. She has also been a faithful interpreter at our seminars and conferences.

Due to the war, the international school in which she teaches has declined in enrollment and so her and her husband have taken on several part time jobs to make ends meet. Valera (and Narina) continue to serve in the church plant they are part of, which has grown to about 200. Their passion continues to be to mentor and

invest in the next generation. Using our Mentoring Guides they continue to mentor young men and women, as well as provide leadership coaching through our "Church Health Assessments."

In a recent video call they shared how many of the young people they mentored in the Caucasus are now pastors and church planters throughout the fellowship. They continue this focus on the next generation, *"Here in St. Petersburg we are helping the youth group build a core team rather than seeing the ministry as just one leader running the show, as is typically the case here. Often the parents of teenagers are curious as to the "club" that their children are attending and through that begin to attend the church."*

Over the years they have also had quite a significant impact in helping struggling marriages as well as preparing young couples for marriage. Since those early days in the Caucasus when Phil and Nancy shared their seminar, "The First Team," they continue to prepare couples for marriage and are also helping couples throughout Russia via video conferencing. Recently they were in Thailand to mentor a couple as well as expand the ministry there through contacts from their church.



Narina and Valera



Teaching new believers



Worship Teams Workshop

To say that they are busy would be an understatement! As mentioned in our last newsletter, they also used our materials (*Worship Teams*) to conduct a seminar with thirty members of the worship teams in their church, *"The first day we taught on worship and then on building a team. We will continue to meet with this group every few months. It was encouraging to get the feedback that participants realized that being on the worship team is more than just being on stage on Sunday."*

Thank you for your continued prayers for Valera/Narina as well as our friends and colleagues, Alexei/Tatiana, who are in Moscow. While not in a warzone, their lives have also been impacted and yet they desire to continue to serve those in their country with the Good News, being that salt and light where God has placed them.



Discipleship Groups with African Students, St. P. Russia

From My Desk

Phil Jeske, PhD
President

Man makes his plans, but God establishes his way . . .

Well it's another new year, and if you are like many, you have made (or thought of making!) some sort of New Year's resolution. Of course, since it is nearly March, if you are like most, some of these may already be a distant memory! While these usually stem from good intentions, the rub is always in the follow through isn't it? While some of our discarded resolutions are of our own making, the reality is that some of our plans are thwarted due to circumstances beyond our control.

Typical mission newsletters give glowing reports and present aspirational plans for the future. I suppose we are no exception. But as we know, life does not usually fit into our expectations or cooperate with our well laid plans. I recall this time last year when we had plans to meet with our Ukraine and Russian colleagues in person.....plans that had to eventually be cancelled due to the outbreak of war in Ukraine. The reality was that our team members on both sides of the conflict could not leave their country and we could not travel to theirs.

Perhaps you also had plans that had to change unexpectedly last year. Seems the last few years this has become a theme in many of our lives. But even in more typical years, it is our limited vision of the future, that inevitably results in our best laid plans changing. I am not sure if it is just the added perspective of age, or the events of the last few years, but I do find myself spending even more time than usual pausing to evaluate between what are merely my plans and what may be God's plans. I suppose for most of us, youthful ambition and drive eventually transitions into perspective and hopefully the accompanying wisdom.

One thing I have discovered is that God's plans end up happening and mine... well let's just say, not so much. The above proverb comes to mind, "Man makes his plans, but God directs and establishes his way." (Prov. 16:9). Not sure about you, but I have to continually be reminded of this truth. Yes, we make our plans and have goals, personally, and for the ministry, but I have learned to hold them more loosely realizing God may indeed have different ones (spoiler alert: His are always better!).

For those of us with more decades behind us than in front of us, our perspective of God's dealings in our lives has become clearer. With greater hindsight we can now see how God has been directed our steps all along. In this new year we can have confidence that, even if things do not go according to *our* plan, one day looking back our lives will confirm the proverb that He truly did establish our way.

So whatever stage of life we find ourselves, we can have the assurance that as long as we draw breath he has a plan and purpose for our lives. Even though we may not know the details of the way, as long as he is ordering our steps, we can be sure that our future will be secure.

Our Mission

Serving the church by mentoring and coaching ministry teams.

Our Purpose

Our goal is to see another generation equipped so that they may be relevant witnesses in their culture. We accomplish this through mentoring leaders, coaching and consulting with ministry teams, and providing culturally relevant materials that facilitate this process.

Accountability

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