



The Update

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Ministry in 2020 - A Unique Year

It seems hard to believe that it has only been about one year ago that our Intl team of MCNet coaches met together in Wittenberg Germany. Initially, we were going to meet in 2020, but decided on a date in 2019. Little did any of us know at that time what was to become of 2020.

As all of you, we are adapting and adjusting as a ministry to this new reality. International travel has become exceedingly challenging, from airline schedules, differing country restrictions, lack of travel insurance to name a few. We are sure each of you have your own obstacles in these challenging times.

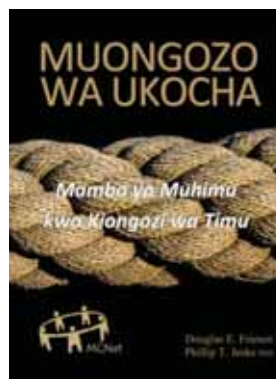
While we continue to be in contact with our team via Zoom meetings as well as the standard Skype, email, WhatsApp etc., we realize that nothing is a sufficient substitute for the personal contact that comes from the fellowship through in person meeting. As soon as possible we hope to resume our in-persons training and coaching activities.

Until then, our Canadian team has been using this year to complete some larger

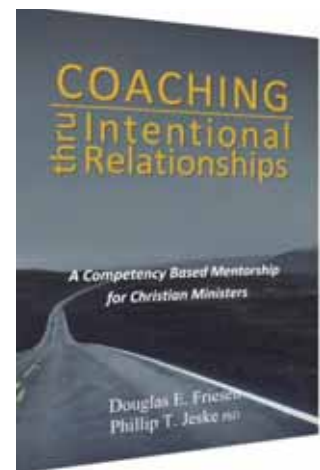
writing projects that will benefit the whole Intl. Network in the years to come. These new training materials (*Coaching thru Intentional Relationships*) will take nearly two years to complete and to date we have nearly completely the first half.

For all the leaders in our network, the first year will provide a MCNet "Certificate in Christian Leadership" and the second year a MCNet "Advanced Certificate in Christian Ministry". In addition, we have now finished translating our *Ministry Guide* and *Coaching Guide* into

Swahili for East Africa (particularly for our work in Tanzania). In addition we have various other translation projects into Spanish and French.



Each of the coaches in the MC Network continues to serve leaders and the church in their country/region in the face of the challenges of these global "new realities." In this edition, Narina and Valera share what has been happening in their new ministry in St. Petersburg and Alexei and Tatiana report on a training trip Alexei had just before things were being locked down in Russia. As you can see from the map on page 3, the training he did in the two cities (Yakutsk and Khabarovsk) are close to



Japan. . . a long way from their home in Moscow.

In the Fourth Qtr Update we will also be sharing excerpts from an article that Raydel passed on to our MCNet team. As you may recall, Raydel was first exposed to our training in Cuba (where he was a practicing medical surgeon). He has more recently joined Carlos as they train leaders and serve the Church in the Dominican Republic. Plans were to respond this year to requests from other Latin American/Caribbean countries wanting leadership training, however we will have to postpone visiting these other countries until 2021.

Thank you for your continued partnership with ICM during these challenging times. We realize that each of you are also being impacted in many ways during this global pandemic. Your support enables us to carry on with the important writing and development of materials and providing teleconferences and coaching as each of the coaches continue to train leaders in these times when leadership is so vital.



Zoom Conference call with Ministry Coaches from Canada, Europe, Latin America, Russia and Ukraine

St. Petersburg, Russia Report

by Valera & Narina

[ed. Valera and Narina are Ministry Coaches in the MCNetwork and first began using the materials to train church leaders in the Caucasus nearly 15 years ago before recently moving to St. Petersburg]

Many of us are beginning to feel some relief as things are calming down after several months of lockdown. We came to St. Petersburg in August 2019. We joined an existing church in our fellowship (based in the Caucasus) called HOPE and soon began working in different spheres of the church life. We started leading marriage courses, preparing young couples for marriage using the MCNet materials.

At the end of June, the lead pastor and Valera started leadership training for home group leaders, because there were no home groups in the church before. Each Monday we also mentor a couple via Zoom and they will be joining us in St. Petersburg in August. Twice a week we are also mentoring two families who are leading church plants in Nizhniy Novgorod and Yaroslavl and every Wednesday we are mentoring three families locally, who are going to lead three home groups in different areas of the city.

There are so many family needs in the city that we are serving many non-Christian families of orphans (once child orphans who have now become adults themselves). One of the reasons why the number of orphans is increasing is because of the high pregnancy rate of young girls between the ages of 16-19. Since they do not have a good role model or support network many of them just abandon their children. Sadly, then their children become the next generation of orphans and the cycle repeats.

This led us to launch our own single mother's program. As we observed orphan graduates we realized that they have no idea how to raise, care, love, nurture their children. In order to break the

orphan cycle, we need to provide further support and training to assure the success of these families. The ages of these mothers have been anywhere from 18 to 30 years old and the ages of the children between 1 month and 16 years old.

Along this journey, it is a privilege to first introduce them to Jesus. Second, we want to provide help to them in various social justice and legal issues, medical care

developmental areas, emotional support and counseling, spiritual growth, employment, and teaching them life, social and professional skills. To further compound their situation, these mothers are constantly facing abuse from their boyfriends, lack of housing, huge utility debt, and constant threat of eviction by the government.

As you can imagine, the challenges often seem endless. Some of these mothers also have children with different medical and developmental issues. Due to a lack of knowledge and support many are forced to relinquish their parental rights because they simply cannot care for, or raise their children. At the moment, we are serving 33 mothers and close to 80 children.



The following is the story of one of these orphans:

We received a phone call from the government office with the plea to help an orphan, Kristina. When I first visited Kristina, I saw a lost, single, 20-year-old mother with a newborn baby, who lived in a tiny dormitory room of 7 sq meters (75 Sq ft), sitting in the corner like a frightened animal, not open for any form of human contact.

We were able to immediately help with several of Kristina's problems, such as food, clothing, and getting documents for the mother and her newborn baby. However, the most pressing problem was Kristina's addiction, something that began when she was just 12 years old. It was at that time that she had been raped by her foster father, after which she was sent back to the orphanage, only to be abandoned again; rejected once again.

The government repeatedly would visit Kristina and threaten to take her son away because of her addiction. We initially found a crisis center on the edge of the city that we were able to convince her to go to. This was a huge answer to prayer! Since then we have seen God begin to work in Kristina's heart. We called Kristina weekly and she would say, "I love being here, I do not mind living by these rules and I even read the Bible and pray daily."

She has spent 8 month there and has just come back this week. We saw a completely different person, someone who had beautifully changed. Kristina now has a happy heart, the desire to live, and she now sees her son with different eyes and is filled with hope and faith. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done, but this is an amazing start and we are thankful to have had a small part in her life.

Valera/Narina

While our focus is leadership training, the goal is not just providing knowledge, but rather to equip leaders like Valera & Narina (and the others in the network) for the ministry to which God has called them. Particularly during these challenging times they continue to

meet the varied needs within their communities. As a partner with ICM you are part of the team who are seeking to be that expression of the church – "the called out ones" – around the world.

Mentoring Leaders in the Far East (of Russia)



Greetings,

Last Friday [ed. March 2020] I returned from the Far East of Russia where I taught the Mentoring course in Yakutsk and Khabarovsk [circled on map]. On the first day we discussed the key principles of mentoring (*Mentoring thru Intentional Relationships*) and then on the last two days the participants spent time in groups of 2-3 people practicing different parts of mentoring - from how to start a mentoring relationship to how to guide a mentoring relationship.

Normally we would have about 45-50 participants, but some decided to not come due to the beginning days of home isolation (though there were no cases at the time). In Yakutsk we had our regular group of about 40 people.

Alexei



Alexei and Tatiana

Mentoring workshop in
Khabarovsk, Russia



Greetings from Senegal!

Sorry for the delay, both my PC and Laptop have crashed so I had to finish the French translation that you sent me from my phone.

I am currently training a group of 18 Christian entrepreneurs with your materials (*Mentoring thru Intentional Relationships*, French), currently focusing on "calling and gifts."

Due to the lock down here in Senegal, the group "meets" on Facebook and the feedback we are getting is really encouraging. We started July 1st and the group is still growing. I'll let you know how it turns out.

Grace

Ukraine Update

Maxym and Anya are the MCNet Ministry Coaches in Ukraine. They continue to provide leadership to New Hope Mission in eastern Ukraine that serves displaced persons/families, as well as a church which they planted with their team.

Phil was scheduled to be in Ukraine to do some teaching in September, but at the time of writing it is unclear if he will be able to make this trip in light of shifting international travel restrictions etc., so a video conference may be scheduled instead.

Thank you for your continued prayers for the work in eastern Ukraine.



Maxym & Anya

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

ICM is an interdenominational non-profit charity registered in both Canada and the USA. It is a faith mission and supported by free-will donations of those of like vision and overseen by a Board of Directors.

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

THE UPDATE is the bi-monthly newsletter of ICM, Canada.

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From My Desk

Phil Jeske, PhD
President

It is likely that we all would agree in principle that the "Church" is much more than just a building, or location, or even one local group of believers. Yet a year like this one has made us consider afresh what the community of believers means for us personally and how to navigate the lack of fellowship and communal worship which we are used to. While this is disrupting, it can also be helpful to be reminded of the durability and resiliency of the Church – his people.

How do we define and describe the Church when we are not able to "go to church"? The reality is that nothing in the last 2000 years (including pandemics and other crises, of which there have been a few) has ever been able to thwart God's plan for his Church. He will fulfill his purposes, in spite of any obstacles or even outright persecution as we still see around the world today.

Of course, over the last 2000 years the expression of the Body of Christ in local churches has continually changed. This year may turn out to be one of those major watershed moments in the history of the Church. Years from now we may look back and marvel at how God used the year 2020 to retool his Church to better fulfill his purposes in this earth for the decades ahead.

In order to have a faith for this type of creative change (which at the time usually seems more *destructive* than *constructive*), I believe we need to have a broader perspective and see the current global situation in the context of God's eternal plan, as difficult as this may be in real time. While we may feel helpless in the face of so many changes, perhaps we can use the time to prepare ourselves for what is around the corner for when this current crisis inevitably comes to end.

I have been reminded lately of Paul's words in 2 Cor. 5:16 ("...we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way..."). He was trying to get the community of believers in Corinth to view their reality from a godly perspective. They were used to viewing each other from a worldly point of view, and actually they also viewed Christ and his work from this limited, temporal perspective. He encourages them to see how they are a completely new creation. In addition to this, they were to then take part in being "ministers of reconciliation." Quite a shift in perspective. From the micro-view of their own lives before knowing Christ, to the macro-view of God's plan for them as his people.

This year I have been trying (I don't always succeed!) to view our global realities and their implications from an eternal, godly perspective, rather than just a "worldly point of view" or having a Christ-like perspective. In light of the realities of 2020, we as a ministry want to be open to what God wants to do through us as we continue to develop leadership materials, equip servant leaders, and coach teams around the world, both in person as well as through various media platforms.

As we reflect on all the disappointments, heartache, and disorientation of 2020, my prayer is that we will look beyond what we see in our present circumstances to see God's bigger perspective. It is specifically in such times of crisis that he calls us to be those ministers of reconciliation. Fortunately, he has promised us his peace and grace so that we will have the strength to do this in the midst of any storms we may face along the way.

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