



The Update

Mountain Retreat, Dominican Rep.

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A Spiritual Retreat to Remember

Earlier this year Phil was invited to Dominican Republic to facilitate a spiritual retreat for the DR/Latin America team. Carlos and Raydel organized a weekend retreat in the mountains at the home of a church member. Using his new material as a guide, Phil walked the leaders through a self discovery and discussion of steps needed for each participant to finish their race. Here are a few of his reflections from that retreat:

"Well when we think of DR and the Caribbean we usually think of beaches and sun. However earlier this year I (Phil) was able to spend time with our Ministry Coaches and their team in the mountains of Dominican Rep. (DR). It was a great setting for a

reflective time of looking at our lives thus far and what adjustments or changes may need to take place in order to finish the race before us.

Thank you for making ministry to these leaders possible. As a ministry we anticipate being able to help leaders by facilitating this retreat with the rest of MCNet teams as well as other networks of leaders."



The Road to Guatemala . . .

We have had many invitations to train leaders in other Latin American countries, and for the couple years Raydel has been trying to travel from Dominican Rep., but with his Cuban passport this was not possible. What he needed to do was to get his Canadian visa in his passport stamped in Canada in order to be able to transit to other Latin American countries.

Earlier this year he was able to come to Canada for a weekend to



"I personally came out this retreat with a very deep conviction of the importance of daily & regular spiritual disciplines I should observe in my personal walk with the Lord in order to finish well my race and listen to my Lord say "Well done faithful servant". Carlos, Dir. Empower Action/MCNet Regional Coordinator

Of course during

"mid life," or even "the last third" of life, course corrections are a relatively recent phenomena (last couple hundred years) as life expectancies have increased. With longevity inevitably comes various stages of life that need to be navigated. Along the way we inevitably pick up wounds and this baggage if not dealt with can negatively impact how healthy we are emotionally, mentally and even physically towards the latter part of our lives.

During the pandemic as I was dealing with my own losses, I put together this new material (Finishing the Race) which provides the opportunity for a leader to reflect upon their own journey. They are then given time to spend alone with the Lord as well as discuss with others any course corrections they may need to make as they move towards the latter years of their lives and ministry. Even some of the younger participants were able to make application in their lives



accomplish this. He has since been able to respond to the invitation from leaders in Guatemala for an introduction of how they could help train their leaders.

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Return to Africa...



The last time that Phil and Deo were able to be in Africa was their trip to Senegal in the fall of 2019. As we know, much has happened globally in the interim. Not the least of which, Deo has needed a kidney transplant and is now able



Senegal, 2018



to travel again (he is based in the USA). In August Deo and the American mission-ary (who was his kidney donor) went to Deo's native country of Democratic Rep. of Congo (DRC).

As you may recall, some 25 years ago Deo was a leading Imam living in Tanzania, teaching Islamology at a university in Dar es Salaam. After his dramatic conversion (his testimony is on our YouTube channel: MCNet International), he and his family moved back to DRC to serve with ICM there before relocating to the USA several years ago.

In August Deo joined the "Genesis Waters" team (genesishwaters.org) in serving local leaders in DRC with training, as well as distributing audio solar Bibles and water filtration kits. It was been a privilege to partner for years with a man of the caliber of Deo. If you would like to help cover some his costs for this trip you may do so through ICM Canada.

Phil and Rafik have also had a hiatus from travelling to Africa since 2019, partly due to travel restriction and Rafik's major heart surgery. Together they will be returning to Tanzania in September and are looking forward to sharing with these

leaders in person (technology is great but just not quite the same). As mentioned in our last newsletter, they will be following up



Rafik with Pastors, Tanzania 2019



Rafik (far right) & Phil with young leaders, Tanzania, 2019

with several leaders who have continued to mentor others throughout the last few years, and teaching several leadership seminars. Additionally, they will be introducing our new approach to more formal ministerial training, our MCNet CLI (Christian Leadership Institute) Competency Based mentorship which has already begun in Latin America/Caribbean.

Thank you for your continued prayer for the training of leaders in Africa. While ICM Canada has expanded its ministry beyond Africa, it was the continent we first began our ministry on over three decades ago and its people remains close in our hearts.

Road to Guatemala . . .

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Recently Raydel wrote, "...We went to Guatemala a month ago and it was a very good time as we started with the first group of our Network there. Other doors are also opening to us and we will most likely be in Mexico and Nicaragua later this year. As with the Macedonian call to Paul, it seems that Central America is asking us to "Come over and help us!" We are praying for the resources so that we will be able to respond and be available to bring this training in these countries."

While the pandemic put a pause on some of these plans, we are now encouraged about the opportunity to facilitate leadership training in the various countries of Latin America/Caribbean. Carlos, Raydel and their team have established the training in Dom. Rep. as well as Cuba and are now able to expand the Ministry Coaching Network (MCNet) in various countries.

Building God's Kingdom in Russia



In our last newsletter we shared concerning how our various

Recently they sent the following:

"Thank you, Phil and Nancy for your love and support. We came to StP without knowing anybody at all and this July we're going to celebrate three years here. In this short time Valera has been invited to the church eldership meeting with all the elders of StP. Through our work with orphans we also got connected with the governor.

At the American school I'm working as a deputy head, we are teaching children of Japanese and Korean diplomats and consulates, as well children from the heads of Hyundai and

Toyota. The Japanese consular is calling me Narina San! It seems what we accomplished in the Caucasus in 25 years we have achieved in 3 years here. We just came back from Moscow where we met with a small church from our Caucasus Family of Churches where we taught the eldership team. They enjoyed it greatly. In September they are going to visit us.

We baptized 14 people in June, one person from Tuva, two Buryats whose grandparents are witch doctors, one Armenian, two Ukrainians, and one Filipino lady. Amazing. We have also really enjoyed using your materials to prepare three couples for marriage: a Namibian couple, a Tunisian couple, as well as a German and Brazilian couple. Of course, we are in Russia and so there were also two Russian couples!. We

are currently preparing a young man (from Guatemala) and his fiancé (from Russia) for their wedding next year.

Valera is also disciplining two young men (one from Nigeria and the other from Armenia). Like we did in the Caucasus, we are starting a teen club for 13-16 year olds with a team of 10 people: 4 guys 6 girls (South African, Russian, Dagestanians and Armenians). Our heart is overwhelmed with joy and love and thankful worship. Praise God and thank you for your support and input into our lives. We thank our brothers and sisters for their love and care."

While their two older sons are grown, several years ago they adopted twin girls who are now teenagers, so they obviously have a busy life. It is exciting to see the international connections they have and the input they are making on the next



Valera & Narina in St. Petersburg

partners in Ukraine were doing in the midst of the recent conflict. At the same time we have dear Russian friends and colleagues who are serving the Lord in Russia. Following is an update from Valera and Narina who are serving in St. Petersburg (StP). About fifteen years ago, Phil began serving their fellowship of churches in the Caucasus region. At that time they were in their mid thirties and Phil was able to mentor them and provide with materials to help them coach church teams and mentor leaders. Then three years ago they moved to St. P. in order to expand the ministry there. It has been remarkable to see what God has been doing through this faithful (and very energetic) couple.



Serving the Intl Community in St.Petersburg

generation. While all things "Russian" are suspect these days, it's important to be reminded that Russian believers are our brothers and sisters. Let us also remember them as they faithfully serve the Lord in the face of daunting regulations and the strong headwinds they face to minister within their context.



Ukraine Update

Please continue to pray for Maxym and Anya as they continue to serve in their home town of Zaporizhia, a city of one million on the edge of the front lines in the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine. They and the New Hope team, who they have developed over the years, are helping house displaced families coming from further east and then helping them transition to cities in western Ukraine. In order to get supplies to do this, they often have to take risky 20 hour road trips to western Ukraine. They appreciate our prayers for strength and courage.

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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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, PhD
President

This newsletter has highlighted the *Finishing the Race* retreat that I facilitated for leaders in Dominican Rep. earlier this year. This new material is intended to help leaders navigate what Bob Buford has called "Life 2." He refers to Life 1 being the first half where our focus is building a career and paying the bills. Yet those who "finish well" learn to transition during their latter stages of life ("Life 2") to a focus on doing something of significance.

In his book *Finishing Well* he points out that in a study of 100 biblical characters, for whom we have sufficient info to go on, only about one third finished well. Most failed in the last half of their life. Not a great statistic, particularly for biblical characters. Perhaps the Scripture is trying to tell us something?

In our western cultures, a busy work-life is to be rewarded with retirement, often meaning "doing as little as possible." But experts in the field have crunched the numbers and it's pretty clear that without a reason to live, without purpose, those "golden years" of retirement become rather short lived. Without a renewed meaning and purpose most don't last much more than ten years.

While in our latter stages of life this often means adjusting our work load and intensity, it does not have to mean that we spend the last decades of our lives living just for ourselves. Rather, we can continue to fulfill the purpose God has put us on this earth for. This readjustment occurs for some as early as their mid to late thirties, and for some as they are considering retirement in their sixties. Due in part to our greater longevity (earlier generations only lived to 40 and 50!), we at some point need to rethink what a meaningful "second half" or even "retirement" would mean.

Interestingly, there is very little mention in the Bible about retirement. The exception being the priests of the Old Testament who at 50 years of age were to pass on their duties to the younger men. However, they were to continue to mentor them. This was their purpose after a lifetime of service and duty. Perhaps, not a bad model. Focusing on relationships, developing others, and serving them with the extra time we may have due to being freed from other obligations.

So while we as a ministry focus on helping leaders consider how they may continue to impact lives and transition to successfully finish their race, this topic is important for all of us. Even those that are not chronologically there yet, can be benefitted by evaluating their values and priorities in light of the inevitability of this short earthly existence.

The Bible's silence on the topic seems to indicate that God has a purpose for us for as long as he gives us breath. He promises to give us "strength for our days." Not sure about you, but that is my prayer for the rest of my life. Obviously as we age there will be changes as to how we accomplish this, but he will continue to give us meaning and purpose as we seek to fulfill the race he has set before us. Then we can join with the Apostle Paul and say that we have "kept the faith and finished our race."

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