



The Update

Christmas in Europe

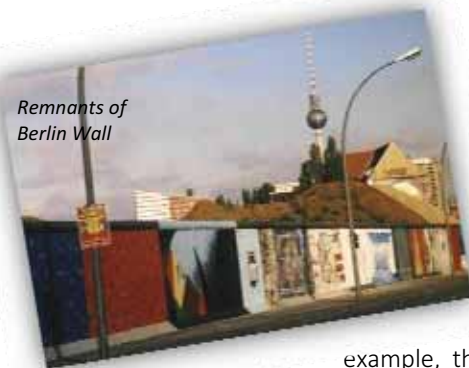
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Accelerated Change

Throughout our thirty plus years of ICM ministry there have been challenges and obstacles to overcome, yet they have often been localized in certain countries or regions. For

example, there was the fall of the

Remnants of Berlin Wall



Berlin Wall in the early nineties and the ramifications for ministry in eastern Europe and Russia. In the last twenty years there has now been a tightening of freedoms in Russia and how all of this has affected the expansion of the Gospel and our ministry.

Yet what is truly unique about 2020, is that each of our fields is dealing with similar issues. Each region we serve in is having to learn what the Church, leadership, and ministry looks like in these times, as well as preparing others for the new future.

While there seems to be no end to the bad news this year, it has been encouraging for us to see the innovations of leadership and ministry training that is taking place in every one of the regions. The level of change and disruption we are all experiencing will inevitably make structural changes in society that will survive past the end of this pandemic. While most of us do not typically like the disruption change brings, for those with a forward vision, change always has the potential to bring about positive innovations.

One such change is the acceleration of the digital transition that was already taking place. Many believe that in only one year many societies have been "forced" to make changes that would have likely taken ten years. This is an unavoidable reality of the global changes we have gone through. Yet as we choose to light a candle instead of cursing the darkness, we can be part of the new thing that God may want to birth through the ashes of this year.

As a ministry, all our materials have already been accessible as PDFs online to our Coaches around the world. They have been using it to either print in their language or provide digitally for participants on computers, tablets, phones and so on. This year propelled us to use other digital innovations such as Apps and Zoom training conferences. While we have been moving this direction, what has occurred is that more leaders are now open to utilizing the materials in this way. This is not only the case in

technologically advanced countries such as Europe and Russia, but also in Latin America and Africa. Accessibility has leveled the digital playing field.

This year has also afforded us the opportunity to develop some new exciting leadership materials, in addition to coming alongside our MCNet leaders to encourage them as they discover what models work in their countries. In

spite of the challenges they have continued to train leaders who will be effective in the body of Christ and their communities.

We will be producing some more training videos for our team as well as hope to minister to them in person next year as this pandemic subsides. We believe the lessons learned from this year will help us be even more effective as we together see to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

[If you are interested in reading how true wisdom differs from just acquiring information and how this affects leadership you can access a two page article that Phil sent to the MCNet team, "Leadership, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom in the Digital Age" by going to www.icmcanada.org/updates].



Discussions of future strategies with MCNet team in Germany 2019.

Year End Donations

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Real Leadership in Caribbean/Latin America. . .

By Carlos, Dominican Rep.



L-R: Raydel, Carlos, Javier (Cuba), Phil

Carlos and Raydel work together in Dominican Rep. (as well as other Latin American countries) providing leadership training and serving the Church. Recently, Carlos sent the following report:

"As with most of the world, we had some rough months, particularly from April-June as the country was shut down and we could only leave our house

for food and essentials. During that time, the churches were also shut down and trying to figure out what to do. In our country, most did not have the access to technology (such as Zoom Video Conferencing) before the pandemic, and some churches even thought such technologies were from the devil. Yet in order to survive, churches had to learn to adapt and innovate.

So churches began to learn to do meetings and prayer services via Zoom Video and staying in contact with others through WhatsApp on their phones. While these were helpful, it was very difficult in our very relational type of culture. In July we had general elections in the country and restrictions were lifted so that people could participate. Since then there has been a bit more freedom so we were able to meet in small groups, though some churches continue to struggle.

In our part of the world, pastors typically think that in order to be a real "pastor" or leader they must have a building (bigger the better). Ironically, in a country like Haiti (on same island as DR) that is even poorer than ours, this is even worse. If a pastor does not have a building then he is not really a pastor. However, with the churches and leaders we work with, we have seen a shift in their mindset. Using the ICM materials over the years we have observed leaders grow in their understanding that their role is one of equipping the saints, not just constructing a building.

One such pastor in the city of Santiago (in the north of the country), was saving money to build a building before the pandemic. Going through the training with us, of what leadership in the body really is and the need to develop others through small groups and equipping leaders, he began to shift his priorities. Once the pandemic hit, he realized that it might be better to take the money that they had already saved and, instead of just focusing on one building, have five separate locations in the city, meeting in houses and other locations. So they began by developing others as leaders to facilitate these smaller groups so that the ministry would not be dependent on just a few "professionals."

So even during the pandemic they have been able to equip the saints through bible studies and other small groups. This has been a huge change in mindset from using their limited funds to just focus on buildings into using it to develop people. So now in the city there are five growing groups rather than just one church. This is going to result in a much greater multiplication effect as more believers will

be able to use their gifts and calling rather than just being focused on a few "special" leaders. Because of this pandemic, some churches have changed their focus of what real success in ministry is. They now realize it is about people not buildings.

Our own training programs continued throughout the pandemic via Zoom meetings as Raydel would interact with those who were able to gain access. This helped to get through the worst months, but we realized we had to get back together in small groups as soon as possible. We are now helping other churches mobilize people in the churches to reconnect with each other (even though churches are open again, about 25-30% of people are not returning).

Currently we have around 2000 participants in one of our training programs and we continue to equip them to train others. For example,



Carlos, Phil teaching Cuban, Haitian, Dominican team in DR (prepandemic)



Esperanza continues to mentor a group of 5-10 leaders and Manny has also started a ministry called "Making Men of Action." We have a huge problem in DR with young men who have no role models and grow up aimless in life. Every week he is mentoring a group of teenagers ages 12-15, training them in character building based on the Word of God as well as providing life-skills so that they can have a vocation to make a living.

In our country, the fear of Covid has forced big churches to rethink how they do ministry. The beauty of small groups, where discipling of believers and mentoring of leaders can take place, is that this type of ministry can function regardless of a pandemic or other such crises. While technology is helpful, and we use it, by itself it is not enough for the church to function as it was intended. We need to continue to train leaders so that their mindset shifts to one of developing others so that we can function as the early church did in Acts 2:42,

"... devoted to teaching, fellowship, communion together and prayer."

Raydel teaching Haitian leaders in Haiti



Innovations from Russian Ministry



Alexey and Tatiana serve as leaders in their church in Moscow as well as directors of

a key evangelical Seminary and Bible School serving the Eurasia region. In the past years they have already been moving most of their courses to an online format in addition to visiting the various regions periodically with in-person training (a challenge in a country that covers nine time zones!).

So even with the restrictions due to the pandemic, they have been positioned to be able to continue training leaders. They also continue to present the ICM "discipleship for believers" and "mentoring for leaders" courses as an on-line program. Our strategy of leadership training is based on a relational model so it is not dependent upon a large gathering of leaders, the benefit of

which is really significant in a pandemic. Our model continues to be one where leaders are equipped to train and mentor others in a one-on-one relationship or small group context.

Recently, Alexei also provided a Zoom workshop for our team regarding some of the innovations that they have used which can be replicated in other regions. They are currently working on making an APP for our *Discipling thru Intentional Relationships* program. These two Guides are designed to help a new believer grow in their faith through a one-on-one relationship.

In these days, new approaches are needed, particularly when spanning great distances. Alexey's team is putting the material in an interactive APP that Russian speakers can go through on their smart phone and interact with others going through the same materials through the APP. This pilot project in Russian will then be evaluated by our team and hopefully implemented in other languages, and potentially with some of our other materials.

These innovations have meant that even in the midst of lockdowns and restrictions each one of our Network Coaches have been able to continue training leaders, who are then equipped to serve others during these challenging times. Thank you for being part of the team that enables us to continue to provide materials and encourage these leaders, even though for a time we will not be able to do that face to face, due to restrictions on international travel.

"The Church in Exile" by Dr. Raydel

[Excerpts from an article to the ICM MCNet team by Raydel, who was a medical doctor and surgeon in Cuba and now a MCNet Ministry Coach in DR/Latin America.]

"The body of Christ seems to have entered a kind of "induced coma" ("a deep state of unconsciousness and inactivity, caused by a controlled dose of a drug"). The organs in the body have been isolated with surgical precision so that they keep working for themselves, but are not working for others (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Thank God the world of technology has allowed us to pay attention individually to each "organ" and ensure that the body is kept "alive." The "Zoom-gregating," the "Youtube-sermons," and the "WhatsApp-devotionals" have provided the minimum nutritional requirements for the patient to stay alive, thank God for these tools! But is that what being the Church and living like the Church should be?

That is why the idea of the people of God in exile – being the faithful remnant, but unable to live the way God designed – is the only biblical example that I can use to explain what happened in the first months of 2020....But at the end of the quarantine days, at the end of the "exile of the church" when our patient leaves the induced coma, what will happen?

There are many questions that we are asking ourselves these days: Will it be difficult to return? Will our meetings and life of worship be the same as before? Will we continue with the same ministerial practices as before? What about the spiritual health, spirit, and faith of those who return? Will it be necessary for us to renew our vows of fidelity to God's Word and mission?"

[To read the rest of Raydel's thoughts, the full two page article is available at www.icmcanada.org/update or you can request a downloadable PDF from office@icmcanada.org]



Have you ever wondered how the five equipping gifts from Ephesians 4 ("So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up. . .") are to

function in the body? Are these positions or functions? Are some no longer needed? Why are some emphasized in some church traditions and others are seemingly ignored?

In his new leadership material, Dr. Phil discusses these and many other issues. Based on a servant-leadership model, a healthy view of these gifts is presented and how they need to operate in balance within the church for effective ministry to take place. Jesus exemplified all five of these gifts in his ministry and so it would seem to follow that the Church that now has his mission would do the same.

Unfortunately, there has been teaching on this subject that has caused much division and imbalance in the body. Based on a biblical approach this material will help leaders integrate these gifts in their own lives and ministry as well as "equip his people for works of service."

Phil will also be making a video series in order to launch this new material with our network of leaders. Thank you for your prayers and support as this important material is implemented in our various regions digitally now and in person next year.

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.

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

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From My Desk



Christmas Provides Hope in the Darkness

Phil Jeske, PhD
President

I am sure many of us will be happy to see the end of 2020! In many ways it has been a dark year as many have been personally touched by the virus, had their livelihood threatened, and have dealt with a range of social issues ranging from disruption of plans to frustration and even depression. I think the real threat during this year was the sense of a lack of hope for the future and that life will be brighter again, or at least return to some semblance of normality. I believe that without hope it is impossible to have the faith required to face our daily lives and challenges; faith is the *evidence of things hoped for*.

Christmas is around the corner and again provides us a glimmer of hope at the end of a dark year. What better expression of hope can there be that God came down in the form of a man to reconcile us to himself! This Christmas I think we all need some measure of hope that can only come from the Prince of Peace. I join Paul in praying for you that, *"...the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Rom. 15:13) Regardless of what 2020 has thrown your way, may you experience his joy and peace during this Christmas Season. As never before, he is a light in our darkness, our one true hope that we can count on even in the face of a pandemic.

Our leadership training has continued through those we have trained. This is actually the benefit of a mentoring model; a reproducing ministry is not based upon one seminar or personality. While innovations are always necessary, at its core, our ministry has always been about one life touching another life. The foundation we have laid over the years with our Network Coaches has resulted in their fruitfulness, even in the midst of a global pandemic.

While the realities this year have temporarily curtailed our travel and ability to encourage and teach our network coaches in person, our strategy ensures that ministry is not just dependent on us. Yet as I was reading 1 Thess. 2:17-20 the other day I could not help identifying with Paul's words, *"But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul [Phil!], did, again and again – but Satan [the pandemic] blocked our way. For what is our HOPE, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, YOU are our glory and joy."*

Those who we have had the privilege to serve around the world over the decades are *our* hope. As Paul expressed, their lives are our glory and joy. Remember Caleb? He spent forty years in desert due to the lack of faith of others and yet at 85 said that he was as strong as he had been at 40 and was ready to fight the battles to gain the same inheritance promised to him decades earlier. In his case, this inheritance was a piece of land, but our inheritance is those relationships that we are contending for the faith with – it is they who are our crowns and those we will one day lay them at His feet, as we gather around the throne.

As partners with us over the years, and particularly during this past year, you also share in the glory and joy that comes from these transformed lives. A newsletter is so inadequate in sharing all the ways these lives are being touched, but in eternity you will meet them and they will thank you in person! They are part of your inheritance. So when you are lacking joy or hope, think on them. The lives we touch are our glory.

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