

KYIV CONNECTIONS



Prayer Letter of George & Sarah de Vuyst

Engaging People. Embracing Christ.

Our Mission

By God's grace and the Spirit's working we help facilitate the transformation of lives, families, churches and communities in Ukraine and around the world.

Three key ministries are our tools to fulfill this mission.

Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations takes people through a Spirit led, cross centered process of healing and reconciliation. As part of the global teaching team George leads events and trainings in Europe, Africa and, recently, North America. Through "schools of reconciliation" we, together with our partners, train others to develop and lead healing and reconciliation ministries in their own contexts.

Timothy Leadership Training Institute equips church leaders to develop healthy congregations and effectively train their own leaders.

In addition to these ministries we are helping facilitate the introduction of **Educational Care** and **Global Coffee Break** to Ukraine and the Russian speaking world.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your faithfulness in prayer and for your generous support. In February and March, I spent a bit over a month in many countries of Europe. God again did amazing things in peoples' lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit. We held the first ever Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations (HHTN) retreat at the Le Rucher ministry center in the greater Geneva area. 17 participants from 11 different nationalities came together for the 4-day retreat.

These are some of the testimonies:

"For the first time I realize the pain of the countries where I have lived as an expatriate."

"The simplicity of this message is that you present Jesus."

"As we mourn with Ukraine today, I found light here and have come to know how to bless my group with the truth of Jesus the pain-bearer."

"As we go through the material, I am wondering if God is calling me to bring healing and reconciliation to the world's pain for the rest of my life."

"Looking at the losses of Ukrainians, I am sure if the Russians were here, they would list the same things" (Ukrainian ex-pat).

"As the wife of expat, I felt my pain validated. I lived with heavy guilt of not being present when my parents needed me most. But here [in Geneva] too life has not been easy, people consider your education as irrelevant, you are considered to be less in everything. The cross workshop has helped me find healing of all my pain (Indian ex-pat).

"Once God told me He wanted to use me among the nations. I said no. I realize all my life I have chosen ignorance. I closed my eyes so that I wouldn't see the pain around me. In this workshop all the pain of nations has been shared. Now I feel ready. I want to be used by God to bring healing to the nations (British ex-pat).

May God bless all of you who prayed. This ministry is not possible without you!



Contact Us

Mailing Address:

5670 S Meadowgrove SE
Kentwood, MI 49512

Cell: 616-290-5478

Email: gdevuyst@crcna.org

Website: www.devuysts.com

Prayer and Praise

Thanksgiving for:

- The launch of HHTN in Western Europe (Geneva)
- Safe travels around Europe in February and March
- Another successful year of learning for our kids and Matthew's upcoming high school graduation from The Potter's House High School

Pray for:

- Ukraine - for peace - and for all the displaced people both inside Ukraine and around the world
- East Africa School of Reconciliation in Nakuru, Kenya from June 5-19
- HHTN event in the Vancouver area from July 30 - August 3
- HHTN event in Toronto with Russian & Ukrainian communities
- Planning of a retreat for our Ukrainian HHTN team who are refugees in Europe
- Healing from the trauma of war
- Summer jobs for our kids

Ministry to Ukrainian Refugees

My time in Bautzen, Germany with Ukrainian refugees was also a great blessing to me and, I hope, to them. I was able to share with the local Ukrainian pastor about our work in healing and reconciliation. I also shared to a German Pentecostal congregation about our work and how it is needed in Europe. Many people were moved to tears hearing the stories of God's healing and the power to forgive, repent and be reconciled. As we move forward my colleague, Gary Timmerman, and I are hoping to plan a Russian language retreat for the coming year in Eastern Europe.



The highlight of my time in Bautzen was visiting the Lashchonov family. Irina and her daughter, Anastasia, are both members of the Ukrainian HHTN team. They are refugees from Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine. For the last nine months their hometown has been the center of the war. Today Russia is trying to completely destroy the city since they cannot defeat the Ukrainian forces that are there. Of course, this family has been deeply traumatized by

everything that has happened. They had to flee their home without their belongings, carrying their children and grandchildren. Irina's younger daughter, Kristina, was studying in Kharkiv when the invasion began. She was pinned down in her apartment by the Russian shelling. She was saved by church members. Eventually the family was reunited in western Ukraine and able to make their way to Germany. They are grateful for all that the Germans have done for them, but the pain and trauma of the war are all still too real. They hear almost daily of neighbors and coworkers who have been killed.

In response to this we are working on organizing a retreat for the Ukrainian HHTN team in Poland this coming November. Joseph Nyamutera, my ministry partner from Rwanda and a refugee camp survivor himself, and I hope to gather the team and minister to them over a few days. We also want to look ahead to how we can begin working with Ukrainian and Russian communities to bring about healing and reconciliation. This will be a long road. The U.N. estimates that it will take 70 years to clear the current land mines from all the territory of Ukraine - Ukraine is now the most mined country in the world. While we can never underestimate God's power, I would say it will take just as long to clear the underlying prejudices and hatred between Ukrainians and Russians, to find healing at the cross, forgive, repent, reconcile, and rebuild communities. The time to start is now.

Another exciting "start" is with the Russian and Ukrainian communities in the Toronto area. A week after returning from Europe I was off again to meet with Gary Timmerman, my colleague from Russia, who is currently working in the greater Toronto area. Together we visited pastors from Russian and Ukrainian evangelical churches. There was great interest in both the Timothy Leadership Training program and the Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations' healing and reconciliation program. We have set the tentative dates of the first week of September to bring HHTN to these churches in the Toronto area. Gary is also doing a great work of connecting these diaspora churches to the CRC's in the area who are interested in helping with the incoming Ukrainian refugees. God is at work in so many amazing ways!