



TCM  
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

# EXPAND

**TCM REPORT: Summer 2020**

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## THANK YOU, DEBBIE POER

by David Wright



There have been many changes in the world during the last 20 years. For Debbie and Jim Poer change has been constant, yet gradual. As they look back, each would likely say, "Oh my, how these 20 years have flown."

Debbie and Jim Poer's journey with TCM began in 2001 as they volunteered as Short-term Workers at Haus Edelweiss in Heiligenkreuz, Austria. It was then, as Debbie assisted the campus manager with a variety of chores and Jim drew alongside the facilities coordinator, that God called them to a different Kingdom service. Jim was ready to say "yes," but Debbie was not quite there. She explains, "I had a wonderful church family in Indianapolis where we were active. I had a job that I loved. I was not ready to give all of that up. But I agreed to pray about it. And during those deep times in prayer and in the Word as well as in silence and solitude I sought God's direction for me. And as I asked Him "Why?" He continued to respond, "Why not?" Once I embraced the "Why not?" my heart felt a sense of purpose and passion for God's call for Jim and me. Together we told TCM, "Yes, we are in!"

Thus began a new journey in the life of Debbie and Jim Poer. They served at Haus Edelweiss for nine years. Jim served as the Facilities Coordinator, while Debbie took on the role of European Director of Operations. Together, they established individual reputations of excellence in their service to students, faculty, fellow staff, graduates, and volunteers through which they glorified God.

In 2010, Debbie and Jim made the difficult decision to return to the United States. Although Jim returned to develop his own construction business, he has been a frequent volunteer for TCM both in Indianapolis as well as making many return trips to serve at Haus Edelweiss. Debbie returned to a newly created position at TCM's Indianapolis headquarters. In her role as Director of International Services, she deepened TCM relationships with TCM students and graduates, supporting churches, and individuals. In addition, since her return to Indianapolis, Debbie has effectively coordinated all of TCM's events.

This spring Debbie humbly informed TCM's leadership that she would retire from TCM effective June 30, 2020. Much like her start with TCM in 2001, Debbie prayed deeply for her Lord's guidance in this decision and life's next chapter.

We will miss her presence in the office and the excellence she brought to her every task. Will you please join the entire TCM Team in celebrating the work of love that both Jim and Debbie have accomplished at TCM to bring glory to God?

We are so very grateful for serving our Lord alongside Jim and Debbie Poer. We pray God's peace, love, strength, and comfort for them always.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28 NIV).

## MY HEART WAS CHANGED:

### A Short-Term Worker Story

Kami Duncan served as an STW during a Session in October 2019. Here is her story.

My grandma had been to Haus Edelweiss before, and I remember her talking about how amazing it was, and when she said she was going back, I chimed in that I wanted to go, not thinking it could actually happen (I'm a single mom to two boys). My family stepped in and said they would help watch my kids so I could take the trip with my grandma and go experience Vienna. I was so excited, but not for the opportunity to serve, for the opportunity to go to Europe. My heart had been bitter and angry, and I honestly barely had any relationship with Christ going into this trip. I left my ex-husband three years ago, bought my own home, and started my life over and never made Christ a priority in my life. I was selfish, I hated my job, my relationships kept failing when I started dating again, and I was SO unhappy.

On my way to Vienna, I started praying that this would be an opportunity to connect with God again, have him open my heart to learn and serve, and WOW, did God come through. The other short-term workers I met are some of the most amazing people I've ever met in my life. I could relate to every single person in some way, and honestly learned something from everyone I talked to – whether it was some motherly advice from the older ladies, or my 22-year-old roommate, Brianna, pointing out to me the absolute most important thing in life is to make Christ number one in your life.

Hearing the students' stories about what they have gone through to follow Christ was humbling. I have never felt so blessed to live in America where we can worship freely. I was moved by God and reminded how big His kingdom is. My heart was changed.

I told my fellow kitchen worker, Laura, that I had been revived. I told her I was in need of a good home church, and she told me about this great church back in Indianapolis where she knew the preacher and his wife and would connect me to them when we went back home. Turns out it's a church right down the road from me called "The Creek" and they also support TCM. Long story short, I started attending this church and really focused on God being first in my life. Since doing that, I have a new, wonderful home church, and have made some great new Christian friends.

I was determined to get out of the toxic work environment I was in, and after a month of interviews and phone calls, I was offered a job that was a promotion and offered endless growth opportunities. My relationship with God is growing each day, and I can honestly say it would have never happened if I had not gone to Haus Edelweiss and served on the short-term staff. My life has changed because of my time spent there, and I'm forever grateful.



The TCM Executive Leadership Team and Board of Directors want to express their appreciation to all of the Long-term Workers and Short-term Workers and other volunteers who had planned to serve at Haus Edelweiss this year. The COVID-19 pandemic changed these plans for over 160 individuals.

To those for whom it would have been the first time going to Haus Edelweiss, thank you for your willingness to serve. To those who have made prior trips to the Haus, we are grateful that you recognize the importance of TCM's mission to equip international disciple makers. And we hope it will soon be possible for all of you to make that trip!

We want you to know that we are grateful for your servant hearts, and appreciate so much your flexibility and understanding as plans were changed. We are praying that 2021 will have different results and that Haus Edelweiss will once again have LTWs and STWs who provide such a wonderful example of servant leadership for our students who come there to study. We thank God for you!



## TCMII CLASSES: SUMMER IN-COUNTRY

### July

Christian Ethics Meego Rimmel, Albania

### August

Theology and Practice of Prayer Tony Twist, Moldova  
Mission Theology Mihai Malancea, Ukraine

### September

Mission in the Old Testament Jozsef Steiner, Hungary  
Introduction to Old Testament Studies George Bistrow, Turkey  
Christian Ethics Meego Rimmel, Russia  
Mission Theology Jozsef Steiner, Belarus  
Transforming Leadership Timotei Rusu  
History of Christian Theology 1 Sorin Badragan, Kazakhstan

### October

Homiletics Leonid Mikhovich

### ONLINE

Greek 2 Dumitru Sevastian  
Discipleship Myron Williams  
Hebrew 1 Sara Fudge  
Systematic Theology Sorin Badragan

### HAUS EDELWEISS:

#### Face-to-face classes changed to Online

#### Session 6 (Online)

Old Testament Theology	Konstantin Nazarov
New Testament Theology	Dumitru Sevastian
History of Christian Theology 2	Oti Bunaciu
Pastoral Ethics	Sorin Badragan

#### Session 7 (Online)

Theology and Practice of Worship	Dennis Martin
Servant Leadership	Myron Williams
The Missional Church	Evgeniy Siney
M. Div. Thesis/Project	Audrey Puzynin

#### Session 8 (Online)

Mission in the New Testament	Jozsef Steiner
Theology and Practice of Ministry	Chuck Sackett
Research Methods	Andrey Puzynin
Graduate Seminar – “Leaders Who Make Disciples”	Scott Walt

### U.S. COHORTS:

#### Indianapolis and Arizona – Now Online

History of Christian Theology	Oti Bunaciu
Introduction to New Testament Studies	Fred Hansen
Research Methods	J.K. Stevens

### TCM International Institute

6337 Hollister Drive  
PO Box 24560  
Indianapolis IN 46224

Phone: (317)299-0333

Email: [tcm@tcmi.org](mailto:tcm@tcmi.org)

Website: [www.tcmi.org](http://www.tcmi.org)

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A current financial report or a full audit  
report is available upon request.

## THE DISTRACTED STUDENT

by Rick Justice

The faculty and staff at TCM have taken pause to consider how we are expanding the ways we meet the needs of our students. One way to meet the students' needs is to consider the way they prefer to learn.

But none of the familiar learning styles were included in what I “discovered” recently in discussions with students.

The type of student I am referring to is the DISTRACTED student. Granted, this is not a learning style, but it is a reality. TCM's students are distracted by life's situations, just as you and I have been. They have had to address illness, death, and loss of income in their own lives as well as in the lives of church families they serve.

As I prepared to deliver a class recently, I asked the students about ways to proceed with the online class. I was particularly interested in the use of videoconference for real-time interaction with the students. The students' responses were interesting and formed around three issues:

1. “We don't have the technology in my country to videoconference. I can do email and I can log onto your daily lessons, but I cannot do videoconferences.”

2. “We have the technology to do videoconferences, but it isn't very stable. The images and sounds are distorted and are very distracting.”

3. “We have the technology and bandwidth to do whatever you want to do, BUT . . . I have five kids quarantined at home who want to use the only computer we have!”

TCM professors have expanded their abilities to deliver courses with quality, flexibility, and grace. This focus has propelled us forward to be more student focused.

We are looking to the next generation of leaders to guide us down this path. You met our new Assistant Director of Distance Learning, Kaleb Heitzman, in our Spring TCM Report. Kaleb assists our Director of Distance Learning, Dr. Myron Williams, and collaborates with our Director of Information Technology, Mihai Bojona.

We have multiple reasons to celebrate; for example, the next generation of leaders, the expanded skills and flexibility of faculty, and expanded student focus during these times.

We also set aside the distractions each of us has so that we may “Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling” (Zechariah 2:13, NIV).





## EATING BORSCHT WITH A FORK

by Andrey Puzynin

I have heard it said that listening to a sermon through an interpreter is like eating borscht with a fork. This phrase illustrates my feelings well enough when I realized that the course “Theology and Practice of Prayer” had to be delivered fully online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. How do you transfer such a practical course fully online AND do it in three languages?

When it became clear in March that the course would be taught online, the decision was made to create a series of video lectures with captions in English, Russian and Polish. The students could watch the videos at any convenient time before the “screen-to-screen” livestreams at the conclusion of the course. The St. Georges Lounge in the Big Haus was turned into a video studio. It was interesting to work as the camera man, film director, and the teacher at the same time! I found that I needed to pray even more to prepare for this course on prayer as I was exploring new territory recording and re-recording lecture by lecture. (Special thank you goes to Mihai Bojonca for organizing and setting the studio for me!)

The Lord’s providence and provision became obvious as the process was started. Just a couple of weeks before the quarantine, and before we knew we had to change all courses in 2020 fully online, one of our Moodle assistants, Yevgen, received a more powerful computer to process larger video files (something we didn’t know at the time would become very important). After shooting the videos at Haus Edelweiss, Mihai downloaded the files from the camera and sent the footage to

Yevgen for processing it in Ukraine. He also prepared subtitle files, which were then translated and edited in Russian, English, and Polish: in Moldova (by Peter Abacumov), in Poland (by Emanuel Weremiejewicz), and in Austria (by me).

Students from Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Kenya, Georgia, and the Czech Republic attended the course. During the “screen-to-screen” segment, we held several live-streams, where we had the opportunity to clarify the previously recorded lectures. The students also had an opportunity to work in small groups online in individual virtual rooms doing their prayer exercises.

It was interesting for me to get feedback from the students after the course to find out how successful the experiment was of using three language “forks” for enjoying the prayer “borscht” online. Feedback from Krzysztof from Poland was particularly encouraging.

Krzysztof said, “It will not be an exaggeration to sum up that the course was for me one of the key moments of my Christianity. Long years of work on my spiritual life were burdened with hardships, disappointments, and long periods of silence . . . During this course, the greatest joy for me was daily praying after at least one hour, and also after two or even four hours. It was a great joy for me to continue such prayers . . .”

All the students received positive grades and developed new prayer skills.

Even though borscht is best eaten with a spoon, the blessing of God was clearly manifested in this course. The united work of an international team (Austria, Ukraine, Moldova, Poland) efficiently responded to the challenge of the pandemic and effectively served students from Europe, Asia, and Africa.

## COMMEMORATIVE GIVING

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Victoria Bojonca’s birthday  
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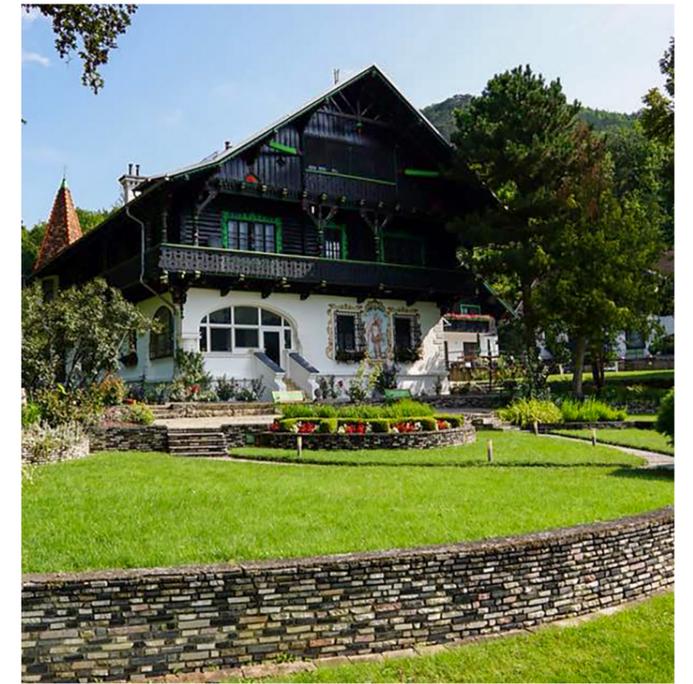
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## A BLESSING RECEIVED AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME

by Megan Herring

God’s timing is always perfect. In mid-April, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, God brought a blessing to TCM – we received a gift from the Estate of William Casler. God chose the timing – TCM received the gift during a time of financial uncertainty, proving once again that God always provides.

Bill and Dottie Casler’s connection to TCM began in the 1970s when they worked as short-term missionaries with TCM during several summers. In the mid-1980s Bill became TCM’s West Coast Representative, visiting churches and individuals in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Nevada. Even when his official role ended, Bill and Dottie continued to support TCM through prayer, financial gifts, and networking.

Bill and Dottie valued the ministry of TCM and made TCM a beneficiary of their estate. They did not know when God would use this estate gift to benefit TCM, but they faithfully designated the gift, trusting Him to work out the details. In God’s perfect timing, He brought their generous gift to TCM when we needed it. Thank you, God, for the Caslers’ generosity!

Will you follow the example of the Caslers, designating a gift to TCM in your estate plan and trusting God to work out the details? Rest assured; God will use the plans you make today to provide for TCM in His perfect timing!

For more information about including TCM in your estate plan, please contact Megan Herring at [megan@tcmi.org](mailto:megan@tcmi.org).



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Institute**  
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PO Box 24560  
Indianapolis, IN 46224  
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## PRESIDENT'S OUTLOOK

Tony Twist, President

### Prayer and Fasting

Since 1957 both have been foundational to TCM's mission, vision, and culture. When

persecutions arose, nations collapsed, diseases killed, or wars divided we were driven to our knees. There was really nowhere else to go for safety.

And now, with all of these growing globally, prayer and fasting are needed more than ever.

Especially given TCM's vision *that every nation will have effective leaders of disciple-making movements impacting their churches, countries, and cultures for Christ.*

Again, I invite you to join the TCM Team in fasting and praying. Why fasting? I believe it is expected of His followers.

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus told His disciples "when you fast," not "if you fast." Reasons for fasting include preparing for ministry, seeking God's wisdom, expressing grief, seeking protection,

seeking forgiveness, and gaining victory. However, it ultimately is a matter of simply trusting and following the example and teaching of Jesus.

Will you join with the staff, the Board, the faculty, and the students of TCM in praying and fasting for the mission and vision we all share? Specifically I ask that you please consider forgoing a meal once or twice a month in order to pray for TCM's vision in the highlighted statement.

Your support in this way would mean the world to us as we march forward together on our knees.

Yours gratefully in Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tony' in a cursive, slightly slanted script.