



Ministry to Teens class at UBTC

*to see Mongolians
building and restoring
families, churches,
and communities*



*“Why isn’t
there a book
on teens’
ministry?”*

*Who’s going
to write it?”*

Ministry to Teens

by Simon Monster

In September 2015, I knew my JCS visa would not be renewed that December. I had just decided to apply for a visa to do a Mentoring Project, when, some days later, I was busy cataloguing books for the JCS library. Among them was the Mongolian version of *Feed My Lambs* (a TEE course on children’s ministry). As I was doing this, I happened to glance at the lamb pictured on the cover. Then something extraordinary happened: the lamb seemed to cast a piercing look at me, and, as if it was challenging me, these words flashed through my mind: “Why isn’t there a book on teens’ ministry? Who’s going to write it?” I knew at once that this was from the Lord, and that I had to change my initial decision. So in November 2015, I joined Mongolia TEE: I taught the staff English and began writing the book.

I have experience in working with teens, but knew little about TEE courses! Fortunately, TEE International was about to run three workshops for new coursewriters, each lasting about a week. They helped me avoid several pitfalls and provided many excellent ideas.

At last, in October 2020, six workers with teens started field-testing the final draft: once a week, for nine weeks, they studied a lesson and then met on Tuesday evening, led by a Group Facilitator, to discuss it and the practical assignments they had done. Their feedback benefited the course a lot! My main goal had been to address the Mongolian situation, so I was glad to hear that the book did not come across as ‘foreign.’

One of the group members said, “Often I had no idea what to do with my teens and wanted to quit; now I’m determined to persevere. The book is like an experienced teammate who gives me good advice and useful ideas!” The book covers the main changes during adolescence (in the body, mind, emotions, relationships, and faith) and why it is important to know these: teens should be treated as teens, not as children or young adults! There are also lessons on preparing interesting, interactive programs (preaching at teens is still common here!), and on pastoral care. The final lessons discuss how growing up with an alcohol-dependent person (a huge issue) affects teens, and how they can be helped.

As I prepare to return to the Netherlands, I am thankful that I can leave this coursebook behind. My heartfelt prayer is that it will equip many to minister to Mongolian teens.



“I will remember JCS members with their families and will pray for them.”

“Thank you for supporting me, my project and the ministry.

I always thank God for JCS and all of you.”

To read more information about his experiences, click here and go to page 8:

<https://www.jcsintl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/JCS-Horizons-OctNov-2016.pdf>



Mongolian Volunteers

Dr. Altankhuyag was first employed by JCS in 1999 and worked till 2005. During that time Altankhuyag worked with former JCS staff member Dr. Brad Ihrig in several projects including the Good Acts Society that has become the Mongolian Christian Medical Association. Then he and his wife, Selenge started working for JCS again in 2016, as the first Mongolian Volunteer Staff (MVS). Altankhuyag served as the Partnership Development and Strategies Director, and Selenge as the Language and Culture Coordinator. By the end of May 2021, their volunteering journey with JCS came to an end. However, another door opened for Altankhuyag to serve again in the medical field as Deputy Director at the State Central Second Hospital.

Altankhuyag & Selenge’s services were greatly appreciated by many JCS members. As we had an official farewell at our June IF meeting via Zoom, precious memories and fun times about Altankhuyag’s family were shared.

Selenge’s reflection on her time in JCS

I started to work in JCS as a language and culture coordinator in 2017. I am so thankful to God that I had the opportunity to work in JCS. JCS is a people oriented organization, where people can grow in their faith and in their working fields, and uniting people by God's love. At first it was not easy to communicate with foreigners in English or to write a report in English.

However, with a good orientation and advice from my supervisor, Sam, work became not so difficult. It was a very blessed time to help new JCSers attend language schools and to give them orientation about Mongolian language and cultural. I used my language experiences of learning Russian and Japanese languages, which were very useful in my role.

I will remember JCS members with their families and will pray for them.

AGM Appreciation

During the AGM (Annual General Meeting) in May, the Member Body Representatives took the opportunity to say farewell and stress their appreciation to Dr. Altankhuyag, for being the first Mongolian to fill a Director’s position at JCS. LeAnn, the AGM Chair shared, “It has been an incredibly rich experience for us to see Mongolia through Altankhuyag’s eyes and to hear from him about things that are happening. The Leadership Team many times has expressed how they also appreciate that and him as a person.”

Altankhuyag responded: “Thank you. JCS is very close to my heart. I have been very encouraged and was able to improve my personal and leadership skills and I have been given new experiences and new opportunities to increase my ministry. Thank you for supporting me, my project and the ministry. I always thank God for JCS and all of you.”

“I am thankful for the support JCS has provided over all these years, and for the ‘family’ it has been, especially through the home group meetings. That has been a great blessing!”

Note:

This is June+July combined Horizons issue. August will return to monthly issues.

Would you like to receive the JCS weekly E-prayer?

If so, please write to communications@jcsintl.org



Simon's 60th birthday (2014) with his mentees

My time in Mongolia (1999 - 2021)

by Simon Monster

Speak their heart language

I am so thankful for my initial two years' language study! After that, I was by no means fluent, but it provided a solid foundation, so that some years later, I was able to speak and understand Mongolian well enough to teach, share the Word, and above all, disciple youth in their own language. That has been of tremendous value.

Get out your comfort zone

From 2003-2009, I taught English and Ministry to Teens at UBTC Bible College. For the ministry to teens lessons I had an interpreter; every summer I told myself, "Next semester you *must* teach in Mongolian!" But when it came time to do the lessons, I was too scared. After three years I finally took the plunge: it pushed me way out of my comfort zone, but it did wonders for my fluency!

The Lord works things out for good

Students often shared that those lessons had not only given them insight into the needs of Mongolian teens but had also helped them understand themselves better. In 2009 the UBTC visa could not be renewed. That was a big blow, because UBTC was where I thought I was called to be. After that, I frequently felt like Daniel in Babylon. I know now that I would not have had time to write a book about ministry to teens if I had stayed at UBTC. But such things usually become clear only in hindsight.

Learn by doing

Then JCS provided a Language Coordinator visa: again, I was pushed out of my comfort zone sometimes. But preparing for and especially working in that role taught me much about language learning styles, and about Mongolian culture and worldview.

I enjoyed interacting with new arrivals, sitting in on their language lessons, and learning to pinpoint where they needed encouragement or practical help. In 2015 this visa could not be renewed; then the Lord opened the door to MTEE (see page 1).

JCS has been a blessing

I am thankful for the support JCS has provided over all these years, and for the 'family' it has been, especially through the home group meetings. That has been a great blessing!

The Lord at work

I am grateful that over these 22 years, the Lord gave me the opportunity to disciple/mentor a number of young men. Through over 1100 mentoring talks, discussions and countless meals, it was the Lord who brought about transformation in each of their lives. It was the Lord who often guided a meeting so that a key question was asked, or a problem or fear suddenly came to light. I know my mentees have been blessed but I have been blessed too: by seeing them change, by their willingness to trust me and share personal concerns, but also by their readiness to be my Mongolian eyes and ears, so that they could help me understand whatever was puzzling regarding Mongolian customs or the Mongolian world view.

The Lord is faithful

The Lord has been faithful! Often things did not go as planned, but he always provided new opportunities. As I return to the Netherlands without any clear idea how I can serve him there, I know I can trust him for that, just as I have been able to trust him for the years here in Mongolia.