



# The TELOS Report



... around the World!

The official TELOS International information source for our partners:  
*Helping make the world whole... one person and one relationship at a time!*

Tel•os (tél-os, Gk  
τελο ) – “to achieve  
one’s ultimate aim,  
purpose or goal in life...  
to be complete, mature  
and whole.”

## Culturally competent counselors

By Phyllis Michael

TELOS teams work in different cultures as they bring mental health services to underserved parts of the world, as well as to people here in the U.S. What are some guiding principles that allow them to minister with healing presences in cultures that are very different from their own?



**Phyllis Michael**, celebrating her 62nd birthday in East Asia this summer. Phyllis co-founded TELOS International with her husband, **Rand Michael**, in 1981. Today they are joined by many other partners who share a vision for culturally competent counseling. This summer, because of the generous partnership of so many, TELOS sent clinical teams to Albania, East Asia, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

These are:

1. Having a clear understanding of one’s own “*values and basic assumptions*” (p. 20);
2. Having the ability to welcome, enter into, and prize other worldviews;
3. Being able to be “*sensitive to the effects of racism, economic exploitation, political oppression, historic tragedy, religious prejudice, or the absence of these on the [client’s] personality or interpersonal adjustment*” (p. 20);
4. Being able to transcend theory, principles, and techniques and be effective as a human being;
5. Seeing oneself as a citizen of the

David Augsburg’s book *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (1986, Philadelphia: Westminster Press) provides some insights that form a foundation for what he calls “*a theology of presence*” (p. 17).

Being able to join someone in another culture while fully owning one’s particular culture is the starting point. Augsburg lists five characteristics of what he calls “*culturally capable counselors*” (p. 20).

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## Culturally competent...

world, connected to all other people and yet separate, as well.

Augsburger defines what he calls “*interpathic caring*” (p. 30) as a vital process in which a counselor feels and thinks with another in a temporary entrance into that persons’ culture.

TELOS Associates continually seek to provide interpathic caring as they conduct trainings and therapy in various

locations. They go wherever they are welcomed:

- To a “Listening Centre” in Burundi, Africa
- To a yurt in Mongolia
- To a counseling office in the U.S.
- To a jungle in Venezuela
- To a church in Nicaragua

• To an orphanage in Albania

- To a counseling center in East Asia
- To an apartment in the West Bank Israel.

As they go, they do not impose U.S. cultural values but seek to bring incarnational and interpathic healing. They understand that as humans we are all very similar and very different. They celebrate the good wherever they are and struggle with the challenges.

In short, they practice Augsburger’s theology of presence.

“*They understand that as humans we are all very similar and very different*”

## Comments from the President...

By Rand Michael, D.Min., Co-Founder and President, TELOS International, Inc.

### What a Summer it has been!!!

**Albania** (July): Training for social workers, psychologists, and other care givers in counseling as well as child development. Also, interestingly enough, one team member provided computer interventions and training. Team Members: Murray and Sandy Ahlquist; Glenn Koppang.

**East Asia** (June and August): Training marriage and family therapists (the first phases of a three-year project). Team Members: Phyllis and Rand Michael

**Nicaragua** (July): Ministering to pastors and spouses, helping to strengthen their marriages and then training them to provide more effective pastoral care to their parishioners. Team Members: Blythe and Peter Nordbye.

**Venezuela** (July): Providing counseling, prevention services, and training in “solution-focused pastoral care” to a vast variety of persons and pastors throughout the country, from rain forest to Andes and back. Team Members: Luis Carriere, Sharon Casurella, and Judy Tuttle-Zollner.

**Thank you one and all-team members, hosts, and also prayer and financial supporters!**

**Then, what a Fall it will be as TELOS transitions to consolidating all its operations back in Portland, Oregon.**

Sadly, due to personal and professional obligations, Mike Ward (as Executive Director/Business Manager/Newsletter Editor) and Sherry Brinkley (Treasurer) who have served so faithfully and effectively are needing to let go of their TELOS positions. They live and serve in Olathe, Kansas (located on the southwest side of the Kansas City Metroplex) where TELOS was originally founded in the 1980’s.

We will miss Mike and Sherry’s direct involvement in TELOS but they are dear friends and we look forward to continuing our relationships with both of them and their spouses. Thank you for your prayers for Mike and Sherry and for TELOS as we make this important transition.

Rand Michael, D.Min., LMFT  
President, TELOS international, inc.



# Summer Team Reports:

TELOS International had its most active summer ever... *the summer of 2005!* Because of generous, visionary supporters and dedicated clinical associates, TELOS sent clinical teams this summer to Albania, East Asia, Nicaragua and Venezuela. You will be blessed to hear of the work—and *the lives touched*—that your support made possible. Because of space limitations we will bring to you the *teamNicaragua* and *teamVenezuela* reports in next quarter's *TELOS Report*.

## REPORT: *teamAlbania*

Training for Albanian and Kosovar social workers and other service providers, including pastors and a physician, was the focus of *teamAlbania* during July.

**Glenn Koppang** and **Sandy Ahlquist** offered a week-long course in *Principles and Techniques of Counseling* to seven

students; they also had private consultations with each student in reference to how the students plan to use the material. Glenn and Sandy also trained the orphanage caregivers in the basics of child development. While they were teaching and consulting, **Murray Ahlquist** conducted computer and business training and consulting.

“... he truly became a ‘human being’ as he socialized with a family in Albania.”

Murray relates an experience

that exemplifies how TELOS team members bring an “incarnational” presence into the venues in which they move:

**Agim**, the director for Bethany International in Albania, asked Murray if his 17-year-old son could shadow Murray while he helped with computer issues. Out of this afternoon spent together, **Sandi** invited Murray to visit in his home. Murray was welcomed in true Mediterranean style, as both Agim and his wife **Marita** took a day off from their jobs to provide hospitality to Murray. Sandi and Murray played chess (Murray was unaware that Sandi was a national champion in the game until after he was beaten.). However, Murray evened the score with a rousing ping-pong tournament. The family served Murray a typical Albanian



(L to R) Glenn Koppang, Agim, Medical Director of Bethany Services, Sandy and Murray Ahlquist.

high meal with several courses and delicious entrees. During that time, questions were asked and answered about the U.S., what Sandi should pursue in terms of higher education, and other issues of interest. At the close of the time together, both the family and Murray were aware that they had participated in a true cultural exchange. Sandi and Murray are now in e-mail contact, keeping in touch and playing games on line. While Murray will not say that he did anything special, he truly became a “human being” as he socialized with a family in Albania.

According to **David Harmon** of Bethany, TELOS’ two weeks were “*the hi-lites of the summer*” for him. He continues, “*Thanks so very much for all you did, personally and collectively in the name of TELOS.*”



Bethany Family Services headquarters where *teamAlbania* worked.

As is typical of TELOS’ experiences around the world, a team is invited back to

continue the work begun.



encouraging · empowering · equipping

TELLOS INTERNATIONAL INC.

# REPORT: teamEastAsia

A very successful beginning for the 3-year training project occurred this summer.

"Helping make the world whole...one person and one relationship at a time"

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- Individual, Couple & Family Counseling
- Consultation
- Education / Training
- International Clinical Associates & Teams Having Served In:

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / BOARD MEMBER  
Marriage & Family Therapist

## Office Locations:

Kansas, USA  
PO Box 4545  
Olathe, Kansas 66063-4545 USA

Phone: (913) 940-2051  
Fax: (913) 782-2265

E-mail: [telosinternational@sbcglobal.net](mailto:telosinternational@sbcglobal.net)

Oregon, USA  
PO Box 23292  
Portland, Oregon 97281-3292 USA

Phone: (503) 620-2137

E-mail: [telosintl@yahoo.com](mailto:telosintl@yahoo.com)

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The trainings that took place June 2-20 in a provincial capital in Northeastern Asia were facilitated by **Phyllis** and **Rand Michael**. Between the English-speaking and the Mandarin-speaking cohorts, there were 29 eager and talented students, many of whom are already conducting counseling. Most come from the northeast of the country, but there is representation from the south and west as well. Three students traveled over 24 hours on the train to attend.

The two courses taught were *"Persons in Context: People and Their Relational Systems"* and *"Integrative Foundations for Counseling."*

Feedback, both written and verbal, from the participants was that the training was helpful in terms of concepts learned and skills practiced.



**Rand Michael** demonstrating couple therapy for the class. The couple knows English well. Rand says, *"What we did was a person translated what I said to the couple (call them Sam and Cindy) so the class could know what I was saying. Sam and Cindy answered me in Mandarin so the class members heard first hand what Sam and Cindy were saying and a person sitting next to me translated to me 'simultaneously' what Sam and Cindy's answers were since they were in Mandarin. It sounds complicated but it worked quite well. The response from the students was very positive and they really began to understand focusing on process and on 'facilitating rather than fixing.'"*

Several more who could not attend the first module were added to the next module, which was also taught in this key city of 10 million people.

*"Three students traveled over 24 hours on the train to attend."*

Rand Michael traveled again to East Asia to teach two courses: *"Principles & Techniques of Systemic Counseling"* and *"Ethical Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy."* Rand was able to engage students from the English-speaking cohort to help facilitate the Mandarin classes. This is a useful strategy so that eventually, the training is carried out by local, trained Marriage and Family Therapists.

In January, 2006, plans are to present two more classes: *"Group Counseling/Self-Care"* and *"Stress, Trauma, & Crisis Intervention."* Faculty are being selected at this time.

One of the goals of this training program is to create curricula that can be replicated by local teachers. The process is labor-intensive but will yield clinical preparation courses that will be effective in producing therapists who will make a difference in their own locations and in the entire country.