



Dear Friends of Global Orphans,

March 2021

My church is currently in a series called, "Creators or Consumers?" It has been so encouraging and challenging to consider my identity as an image-bearer of my Creator-God, and to look at my personal reality through this lens. Our God creates, and He made us in His image to create, reproduce, and provide eternal fruit as we commune with Him. Chaos, void, or even death do not seem to hinder Him from being able to create life, beauty, and goodness (Genesis 3, John 11).

As I look at all the projects on my 2021 plate with this fresh perspective, I am amazed at the possibilities of what might be, and of what God might want to create through these. There are four major projects, which I will share in subsequent letters. For now, I want to share with you **what is happening in Russia.**

The trauma training that I do, TBRI (Trust Based Relational Intervention), is being internationally recognized as one of the best practices for trauma treatment. Its implementation is expanding well beyond its original target audience of foster/adoptive families and orphanages into educational, judicial, mental health and medical systems worldwide. From a secular viewpoint, TBRI is attempting to change childcare and child welfare to a much healthier framework that is deeply rooted in research from several psychological and medical disciplines. From a Christian viewpoint, we know that all truth is His truth. I have never quite understood the tension between faith and science. I understand true science to be a study of God's creation, which He tells us is all a revelation of Himself, His power and divine nature (Romans 1:20). If there are points where science and the Word disagree, I assume the Word wins and we need to keep going in our research. TBRI has no such points of disagreement.

Thus, through a biblical worldview, TBRI teaches all of us about how God has designed us to attach to one another and Himself. How we attach, or not, impacts us in body, mind, and spirit. Just like our skin cells are designed to regenerate when we get a cut, our brains and bodies have amazing capacity to rewire and heal from deep wounding and brokenness. Learning how to partner with God's design and journey with one another in this compassionate healing process is really the fleshing out of His command to love one another and to set free those who are afflicted and in chains. *It is the gospel wrapped in research!*



Faculty at the TCU Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development are conducting virtual TBRI trainings in eight European countries, May-November. This culminates three years of preparatory work for me. Now, I am responsible for recruiting, administration, and follow-up in Russia. After receiving this training, all participants will be allowed to train others in TBRI. The map shows where participants are coming from in Russia.

Who is coming?

The class of participants come from many different spheres. They include government workers in charge of regional foster care, missionaries involved in foster care and adoption ministries, professional therapists and social workers, Harbor staff, churches involved in orphan work, several foster families leading ministries in their regions, and several national leaders of Russian NGO's attempting to address child welfare, orphan care, and human trafficking issues in Russia. They are coming from the furthest cities in the North, South, West, and as far East as Tomsk in Siberia. They represent a geographic area comprising 90% of the population in Russia. The majority are believers, a couple are not.

Follow-up?

The key to a deep and lasting impact will depend on the follow-up. Lena Chernyshova is the Russian point-person helping me think through how to develop meaningful networks for encouragement, continuing education, and focused strategic implementation. I want to encourage the Russians to begin asking themselves and each other several questions: "What might the Lord want to do with all of us learning this material?" "What could it mean to our families, churches, and communities if we learned to raise and love each other in accordance with God's design for families?" "How can we begin to strategically impact our educational systems, mental health systems, and government social services?"

The beauty with TBRI is that because it is research and evidence-based, it is widely accepted into environments that might otherwise not be open to the gospel. God gives His sun and rain to all, even to those who do not believe, that by His goodness they may come to know His love (Matt 5:43-45).

What could be?

As I contemplate this, I want to pray BIG. Please join me! The thought of it is both exciting and terrifying! I remain extremely grateful for your role and partnership in this work, which could not go on without you! Thank you!

Creating from Chaos for God's Goodness,



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Lena & Melinda TBRI training, Tolyatti, Russia

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