



below the surface

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Alongside

Restoring Christian Leaders • Impacting the World

Alongside Welcomes Rev. Michael Van Kampen as
Director of Administration and
Ministry Development

Alongside welcomes Rev. Michael Van Kampen as our new Director of Administration and Ministry Development. Mike graduated from Western Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree and is currently well into a Doctor of Ministry program. He is an ordained minister and has served in pastoral ministry for nearly a decade.

Those familiar with Alongside know that our counselors, Jeanne Jensma and Steve Maybee, both of whom have been with Alongside for over ten years, are former missionaries. Steve and Jeanne understand missions and missionary life—from the inside! Now we want to offer “the same deal” to pastors—someone on staff who knows the pastorate “from the inside” and can minister to pastors out of that understanding and experience. While Mike’s primary responsibilities will be administrative, he will be available to meet with pastors who come to Alongside, providing pastoral counseling in addition to the counseling given to by our professionally licensed personnel. We are excited to have Mike with us and to be able to offer pastors counsel from Mike’s understanding and experience of pastoral ministry.

Mike has been married to his wife Deb for twenty years. They have three children. Welcome, Van Kampen family!



My Heart and Vision for Ministering to Pastors
by Rev. Mike Van Kampen
Director of Administration and Ministry Development

Prior to becoming a pastor, I spent over a decade working in the tool and die business, where I became well-acquainted with a tool known as a grinder. We used a variety of grinders in that shop, from car-sized surface grinders to handheld disk grinders and burrs, but the concept remained the same: using a “hard” wheel or disk, spinning at a high RPM, to remove unwanted material from a “soft” piece of steel. The key to any grinding operation is that the “hard” material always “sharpens” the “soft” material, which makes the words of Solomon all the more difficult to understand:

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”
(Proverbs 27:17)

Anyone possessing even a passing familiarity with sharpening or grinding knows that one piece of iron can’t sharpen another, and Solomon’s original readers must have puzzled over his words. Yet in God’s grand plan of Christian relationships, that’s how it works. Each believer, each piece of “iron,” has the ability to “sharpen” another so that they may be more useful to the Lord. It’s important to remember that the act of sharpening always removes material, and not many of us enjoy having anything “removed” from our life. Nor do we tend to naturally cultivate the kinds of relationships where that sharpening can take place. Those relationships can be challenging and even painful at times, but the pain is rewarded with growth and maturity.

There is one final principle at work here that especially applies to those of us in occupational ministry. We are tempted to believe that we have to be the “sharpener” in every relationship, and that we ourselves are not in need of having a few things “ground” from our lives. Nothing could be further from the truth! The most healthy and effective pastors I know are people who see themselves as iron and who actively cultivate “mutual grinding” relationships. The ministry of Alongside is geared toward helping pastors see their own need of being ministered to and establishing relationships where that can be realized. In God’s eyes, we’re all just iron. . . .



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Dear Reader:

Your address could be here! Since it isn't, you must not be on our mailing list. However this copy of our newsletter ended up in your hands, thank you for taking the time to read it. It is our hope that you will find it informative and inspiring. Please contact us if you would like to receive future newsletters (info@alongsidecares.net). May God bless you.

Feedback from Recent Program Participants

"Being here at Alongside has been a life-changing experience."

"I came to Alongside . . . hanging on to the last shred of hope I had remaining. . . . I leave here full of hope. My doubts and fears have been replaced with a sense of expectation and a desire to see God's plan unfold in my marriage and family."

"I experienced more growth than I could believe."

"I believe my time at Alongside is one of those rare pivotal times in my life that has God's fingerprints all over it. Thank you for allowing yourself to be His instrument of recovery."

"I haven't been this healthy in mind, body, or spirit in years."

Upcoming Trip to Hungary

Steve Maybee, Alongside's Director of Missionary Care, will be traveling to Hungary the last week in February to speak at a conference for missionaries. He will also be available for one-on-one counseling. Steve's wife and two oldest sons will accompany him, all of whom have specific areas of ministry with which they will be assisting. The family would appreciate your prayers for safety, freedom from illness, quick recovery from jetlag, and effective ministry. Steve will report on his trip in our next newsletter.

"Most Wanted" List:

1. Missionaries and Pastors to join us for a Renewal and Growth Sabbatical
2. Additional partners in ministry who will help provide scholarships for the pastors and missionaries who come
3. A "gently used" minivan that can be utilized by the many missionaries and pastors who fly into Kalamazoo and are without a car during their three weeks with us

Renewal and Growth Sabbatical Dates

2007

March 12 - 30

April 16 - May 4

May 30 - June 15

July 9 - 20

August 20 - 30

September 10 - 28

Oct. 22 - Nov. 9

Nov. 27 - Dec. 14