

Episode Outline Template

Title: Inspired by Christ: Ukraine Relief Container

Topic: ukraine relief container

Hosts: Ricky Altmiller and Emily Drayne

Guest(s): Natasha Reimer, Mulberry International, David Stine, Randy Jones and Jody England, IDES, David Empson, ICOM

Episode Summary:

This episode is all about people coming together to be the hands and feet of Christ to those suffering. Guests from Mulberry International, I.D.E.S., and ICOM join Emily and Ricky as we discuss the upcoming project being held at ICOM 2025 of filling a 40-foot container (or more!) of supplies that will be sent to Ukraine to aid in the relief efforts of the war that continues there. We are very excited to be hosting this group today and we hope you come away with ideas and a plan on how you could get your church, college, family and friends involved. You won't want to miss the links in the show notes to learn more about this effort!

Hosted by Ricky & Emily. Music by Pala.

Related Resources:

- Ukraine Relief Container: <https://www.theicom.org/ukraine-relief>
 - ICOM Website: www.theicom.org
 - Partner with ICOM: www.theicom.org/donate
 - Connect with us on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).
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Opening

- The Mission Room Podcast is your place for information, impact and innovation for local and global missions. You will come away from these episodes feeling inspired and challenged to engage in God's global Church. Our goal is to bring awareness to God's People about making disciples in a cross cultural context. This show will incorporate classical foundations of missions into modern outlets, lift up best practices and inspire you to see how you can win the world for Christ.

Content Transcript:

Emily Drayne, Host: Welcome to the Mission Room. The Mission Room Podcast is your place for information,

impact and innovation for local and global missions. You will come away from these episodes feeling inspired and challenged to engage in God's global church. Our goal is to bring awareness to God's people about making disciples in a cross cultural context. This show will incorporate classical foundations of missions into modern outlets, lift up best practices and inspire you to see how you can win the world for Christ.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: In this episode we discuss the unique opportunity the ICOM community has in coming together in participation with Mulberry International to help with bringing relief efforts to the Ukrainian people. We will discuss how families, churches and organizations can participate in helping with gathering these items. In addition, we'll hear from Natasha as she shares about the current condition in Ukraine, the devastating effects the Ukrainians have been suffering from this war, and how God is moving in spite of these hardships. We hope that you'll listen in and hear about how you can participate in meeting some needs for the Ukrainian people. Well, we're excited today to have a wonderful group with us. This is the most we've ever had on one episode. So this is amazing and I think it's for a good reason as well as we are going to be diving into learning about some different organizations that are part of the ICOM community. And what I really am excited about is this episode is going to really highlight the beauty of multiple organizations that have unique gifts and focuses coming together to accomplish and meeting the needs and also sharing the gospel to the ends of the earth. And I'm excited to have our guests with us. So we're just going to go right into it and if we could go everybody just introduce yourselves and we will roll right into our episode.

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: Well hey, my name is David Stine. I'm the Executive Director here at IDES. IDES is International Disaster Emergency Service. We've been meeting physical and spiritual needs of suffering people all around the world for over 50 years now. We work here in the US and over 135 countries that we partnered with to meet physical and spiritual needs. We care a lot about help and hope. Our responses are based around disaster response development work and then disciple making efforts. All of our projects are geared towards meeting a physical need and hopefully opening the door to have a spiritual conversation as we do that.

Randy Jones, I.D.E.S.: My name is Randy Jones, I'm the International Aid Director, work with a lot of our partners, missionaries, national churches, international churches, corresponding and working with them during times of disaster and just like David said, the development work to sample making. So yeah Working with those folks, it's a, it's a treat to be able to see, you know, all the different works all around the world.

Jody England, I.D.E.S.: Hey guys. My name is Jody England. I am the gap director at IDES. Gap stands for God always provides. I've been here with IDES since 2019. My privilege at working at IDES is I get to travel all across the nation packing meals, currently packing meals with churches, organizations, organizations, groups that just want to be a part of the mission of IDES and also have a direct impact in feeding people. Soon we are going to

be going beyond meal packing and providing other things and that's what you will kind of learn about here today.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Hello, my name is Natasha Reimer and I'm the executive director for Mulberry International. Mulberry started about 35 years ago in post Soviet Ukraine and now we have expanded our focus to, to respond to the current challenges and needs of the Ukrainian people during the war. And our mission statement says that we share the hope of Christ and alleviate suffering of Ukrainians by building the capacity of Christian ministry partners and by empowering churches in the US to fulfill the Great Commission. So we're trying to bring both the local church, the indigenous church of Ukraine and the church in America to work together to reach the suffering and unreached Ukrainians in Ukraine and beyond and those that have been evacuated in other places. So it is a privilege to be a part of this effort to help my countrymen in very tangible ways.

David Empson, ICOM: And I'm Dave Empson, I'm the director of ICOM.

Emily Drayne, Host: All right, great episode over.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: We've already had an episode on you.

David Empson, ICOM: There you go.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah.

David Empson, ICOM: Okay, my thoughts exactly.

Emily Drayne, Host: So this episode is going to cover something really unique we're doing at ICOM 2025 this year, but also just the hopes of spreading awareness of how your church, your school, your college, anyone can get involved in kind of the war torn disaster relief efforts that we're doing. But specifically this episode, Dave Empson, if you could tell us a little bit about the container, what's it, what's the overall goal of this relief effort happening at ICOM? And then after that Natasha, we'll kind of head to you and talk about the state of Ukraine right now and the needs are what you're seeing on the ground.

David Empson, ICOM: Sure. I get Natasha's newsletters and I, I read her newsletters at the most recent one where she'd taken a bunch of stuff over and just, you know, the, the whole idea of what was going on over there and her expression of that in the newsletter that, you know, these people, Ukrainians that get bombed out or rushed out of their house, they grab what's most important being their families, and they. They run for safety and they. They leave everything. And so, you know, they have. They don't have anything with them except what they can carry and go on. And. And I just got to thinking, you know, we've. I've seen this done before. I said, you know, Natasha, have you ever thought about a container or. Or taking donations and ICOMs in Atlanta this year? And it'd be a great way to get the Georgia churches involved and get a grassroots kind of thing to

collect whatever's needed. And so I simply wrote her an email and said, is this something you've ever thought of doing? And from that it just spun off into we're doing it at the same time.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah. I think one of our Ricky and I's favorite things is being able to get the whole of ICOM involved in something from child up through adult. And so we're. Natasha, we would love to hear a little bit from you about just kind of the current state in Ukraine of, you know, during the war and just the relief that you guys are needing and kind of just what's the overall situation there right now?

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Well, as you know, it's been year number four. We are into the fourth year of the war, and unfortunately, the, you know, the people in America, we shift focus, whatever the. The next thing, and forget about what's going on. So this is a kind of, I don't know, detachment that I see already from the general public. People don't even realize that it's not just going on continues, but actually getting worse. The warfare is being changed as we speak. So now most of the destruction is done not by ballistic rockets or bombs, but it's through the drones. And drones are coming better every month. Payload is heavier, and the destruction is even worse. So right now it's actually. They've learned to just really operate remotely and just destroy everything. They. They call it sometimes like it's hunting people like it seriously. Sometimes it feels like that because there's so many videos that being intercepted that just like the drones just follows a person or a truck. We personally, our volunteers have been affected by that. Have one story of a volunteer vehicle that was going into Donetsk region to deliver bread and water, gallons of water in those big buckets and. And bread. And they were targeted by a drone like it was on purpose just to destroy them. And they succeeded. They hit them and bread and water fell out of the truck. So like it was a big gap, it was a miracle that they, it didn't, you know, hit the gas tank. So bread falls out, water spills out. The drone operator sees that this is a humanitarian mission. It's not like delivering weapons or anything. They continued, they would not let them go. And it was just, you know, grace of God that that truck was operational somehow and they were able to reach safety. But the warfare is just vicious. And think about all the people that have suffered during the beginning years of the war when it was like convention warfare and people were losing houses due to bombs and rockets. But now it's on the top of that we had flooding in Kherson region, which is the southern part of Ukraine, exacerbating the fire. Now it's the flood that destroyed pretty much livelihoods of a hundred thousands of people. And so on the top of that, now it's a drone warfare. So people not just leaving everything behind and evacuating with the clothes on our back, they also experience horror in their homes and the homes that just randomly being targeted. So we have pretty much the whole country is now at risk. You cannot have a safe place anymore. But what Mulberry does specifically, we go where nobody goes. So we concentrate on the most battered villages, war torn areas where it's dangerous to go. And God provided volunteers that just don't have any fear. They probably have fear, but have such strong faith in the Lord that they wanna do that. And so that opens the door for us to bring essentials, basic essentials to people whose houses

have been destroyed by flood, by fire, by drones, and to open the door for the conversation, for the gospel to come in and just. I don't know whether this is the time to share, but we have close to 2,000 people on a regular basis that we provide livelihood for.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Wow.

Emily Drayne, Host: Wow.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Yeah, that's per month. And obviously the container would expand that base to more people. It's a drop in the bucket considering the fact that there is about 7 million of people that are in critical need in a country. But you know what? We are not concentrating and we're not being overwhelmed by this big old disaster. We think that one person at a time, whoever, we can help using the resources that we have. And you would be surprised how much the population of Ukraine is open to receiving the gospel.

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: That's wonderful.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: We have about 70%. Our volunteers report that people are open from the first conversation to hear more about the gospel. And we need to seize this opportunity to share, share the gospel. As many people as we can.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yeah, exactly. And Natasha, I'd like to also jump in a little bit and see. Correct me if I'm wrong though. I think from our standpoint in the States, we're more familiar with the most recent encounters in this war that have been happening. This actually has been going on a lot longer than what, just what maybe most people in the States are going to be aware of. How long has this war really been going on between Ukraine and Russia?

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Well, the first disturbances started in October, like fall of 2013 and then the wave of annexations. I'm talking about Crimea, which is my home by the way. This is my area been annexed in 2014 and then Donetsk and Luhansk People Republic as they call them. So and then that's when, you know, obviously when those areas were taken, except for Crimea, that was peaceful relatively. But there's a lot of bloodshed in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in 2014. So for a Ukrainian, this is an 11 year old war that just started smaller. But if you're talking to the eastern region, that's, that's all they've seen in the last 11 years. Death, loss, occupation, persecution and so forth.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yeah, that's incredible. And I think that's something that I forget often as well when I keep hearing about the Russian and Ukraine war that's happening. I just think of the most recent years. But this has been going on for over a decade. And so that like you were describing, all of the effects that this is having for some in that eastern region particularly, it's been devastating and displacing families and whole communities for over a decade.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah, I didn't know that at all.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yeah, so. Well, I'm excited to share or have the team share now about how we're going to come together at ICOM to really try to make a huge impact.

David Empson, ICOM: I told Natasha that, you know, I'm sure we would get help from groups like Ives and Fame and Lifeline that have constituents, you know, across the country. It's amazing. And Natasha, you'd probably mention on this too the amount of work that's being done like in Poland and in Romania and in other countries around. And Dave, you might know about this too, that's feeding into that area or they're dealing with, we all know about refugees coming out of that area, but, but so anyway, we just thought, well, we could, we could maybe fill a container and, or get, get started on one or whatever. This thing has kind of bloomed because I, I told David Stine on the phone the other Day I thought, you know, we could have more than one container. I planned, I'm the missions share at my church and I had planned on collecting things at my church just to get my church involved on the west side of Indy and just truck things over to Ives after ICOM. And then I got a call from someone in Bettendorf, Iowa, and they want to do the same thing. And then they said someone else wanted to do the same thing. And I'm like, this is really going to catch. And I think what's going on right now politically is going to fuel the fire between Trump and Putin and the governments them want to stop the war and all that stuff. I think that's going to fuel it at the moment. But yet my whole dream is that the folks in Georgia could bring and be involved. We could fill that, fill that truck. Jody drives it back and right.

Jody England, I.D.E.S.: I will be driving a truck. But if I tell you, if we fill a couple containers, I'm not driving that vehicle. Yeah, I'm not driving that one bit. We'll have to ship that back up to our new warehouse here in Noblesville and take care of my bags. I will take whatever you can throw at me, David.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Well, and those are going to be good problems to have. And that's why I think just allowing God to move throughout the people coming to ICOM, the churches and Georgia and beyond, really to just rally behind and unify together to help meet the needs of the people there in Ukraine. David, if you don't mind, or Randy, Jody, if you all can kind of pitch in and really share how IDE is coming alongside and playing a very intricate role in helping with, facilitate the container, the needs and supplies and all that type of stuff.

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: Sure, I'll let these guys talk too. One of the things we have going on and this container just fits in perfectly. Jody said, you know, Gap has for a long time been food. Primarily we've done other relief items. Actually, specifically in Ukraine that we've done other relief items, but primarily it's been food. And, and the next step is that it will be broader than just food to a variety of relief supplies. And so we're building this huge 18,000 square foot warehouse and there's construction going on outside my office like crazy. And the this container, or as Dave said, maybe multiple containers that would be amazing too,

will be probably the first containers to leave our new warehouse and kind of launch it for what it's intended to do, which is expand to relief supplies that can be shipped all over the world. And so we're excited for the timing of it and the facility to be able to receive everything, have volunteers, be able to come in, you know, repack, sort through, make sure that it's ready to go and then get it on a container and get it over there just as quickly as we can to those who are in need.

Randy Jones, I.D.E.S.: Yeah, I mean, it's funny we talking about Crimea. That's. Natasha and I go way back. We'll get into all those details, but back in college days. But we got reconnected because of the, the IDPs in Crimea, you know, a decade ago, trying to help, you know, feed as many people as possible. And it's been, it's been good, it's been slow. The, the fact that people don't know about those things. I think this is an exciting way to help people get reconnected, to help them, you know, know what's going on, to continue to pray for our brothers and sisters over there. I was just talking to a partner this morning in Poland and they're still, their, their prayer is, you know, the people that are still displaced and, and really the tension even in Western Europe, all around that area, there's, I mean, it's still a lot of like, unknowns. But, you know, it's been great. We've had a great response, you know, with over, you know, two and a half million dollars in aid helping over a quarter million people with, you know, 14 other different partners like Mulberry. But like Natasha said, it is a, it seems like a drop in the bucket because there's so much more to do, so much more that needs to be done and so many people that need help. And so just I coming at this with prayer, you know, reminding people that again, like the doctor said, this has been going on for longer than just, you know, 20, 21, that this is, you know, a big, big hurt for the people of Ukraine and we need to pray for peace and we need to be the church for them and provide that. I'm glad we have some experience in doing that. Doesn't make it mean it's going to be easy getting over new containers over there. There's going to be other things that.

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: Are going to pop up.

Randy Jones, I.D.E.S.: But I'm excited for what this means and for ICOM and then letting people know, hey, this is still something we need to pray about and continue to work towards.

Jody England, I.D.E.S.: Yeah, so I keep reminding my David, David Stine. I keep telling me, hey, I, I went to, I went to, you know, I got a degree in Bible, I got a degree in Christian education. What are you doing to me? He goes, this is your job. So, you know, this job has been amazing. We've. Ukraine has taught us as an organization that there are multiple ways to respond. We've sent, at last count, 14 containers of not only meals, but supplies. A large, large amount of supplies at the beginning of the invasion, this current invasion. So, yeah, just going through the logistics of receiving, processing, and shipping them out and then learning all the intricacies of, you know, global shipping documents and this and that. We are well versed in it. But the problem is the language changes every container that you ship out. So it's like learning a new language every time. But we're excited about

this opportunity to gather all these humanitarian relief supplies and collecting them there on site at ICOM and then bringing home back. But looking forward to the challenge of, you know, providing this aid to the citizens and those in Ukraine. It's going to be a huge undertaking. Nothing's too big if God is involved. And we look forward to seeing how God works through everything from. From Indiana to Georgia and from all over.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Amen.

Emily Drayne, Host: What's your timeline kind of plan for getting the container to Ukraine?

Jody England, I.D.E.S.: Yeah, so that's an interesting. That's a very good question, Emily, because I got a call from my broker today going, hey, we can ship this container out in three days. And I said, hold your horses.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: We may not be ready in three.

Jody England, I.D.E.S.: Right now, it's not ready. She goes, oh. And I'm like, hey, remember that spot on that email where I said, you know, early December? And she's like, oh, yeah, I do remember seeing that now. Yeah. So our hope is that within a week to two weeks after ICOM that we will have everything here sorted and ready to go. So by the early December, this, these containers are going out and being deployed for immediate relief.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: That's an incredible turnaround.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah, I'm impressed by that and just.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: The efficiency of coming together. And again, just the work that's happening right now in preparation for this, I think is so vital. And Jody, you playing a significant role in that, and I don't think we would. It would be possible to. To accomplish it this quickly if it wasn't for these different pieces together especially. I mean, I have in the facility to be able to house and separate in the teams, volunteers and those coming together to help with putting this all in its place to. To have it organized and ready to ship out. So thank you to ides in advance and already for all the effort that's gone into the preparations for this and I'm excited to see how Mulberry would be able to, to get these very needed items to the people and especially again they're on the front lines. I mean it's not that sometimes can be an overused term, but literally on the front lines, going into areas that are being currently bombed or attacked and stuff. And so we also want to bathe this in prayer. Not just prayer for the organization of getting all the items and the mobilization of everybody. Although we want to pray for that, we do want to be praying for those at the end of all of this, the ones receiving this, receiving the items, and those volunteers that are part of Natasha's team that will be going into challenging areas and circumstances to be able to get these items to them. And so I just wanna make sure we definitely cover that in prayer.

Emily Drayne, Host: Ricky, I don't know about you, but it reminds me of the episode we filmed or recorded a few weeks ago with CORE about God connecting the dots and how it starts with one per, you know, Dave Empson in this case, you know, having as an idea or really Natasha sending an email, someone reading it, and now it's this full blown, you know, here we are recording a podcast about it and just how God has provided those avenues for this to get accomplished. I think it's just, I love these kind of stories. Like these are just so incredible for the church to come together. You know, Big C church.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Right. Well, and again, this is one story of many that have been, that could be listed that have been happening through ICOM and the ICOM community and network over the 77 years as we're approaching that. And so again, God has been, God is doing, and God will continue to do incredible things to the wonderful people of ICOM, the churches, the organizations and, and those that are willing to do the tough things. One thing that would be helpful too, could we jump in and kind of go over some of the broad picture logistics like what exactly are we doing, how are we getting them, when are people, you know, bringing them to there, whatever. So like prime example, I personally have grown into a dad bod. And so I have some clothes that I'm probably going to be bringing that are in good condition because they physically don't fit me anymore. And so I'm sure there's some wonderful individuals that also have dad bods or previously, you know, maybe they worked out of their dad bods in Ukraine that could benefit from some of my clothing.

What am I supposed to do with this?

David Empson, ICOM: Take them to Goodwill because we can only send new clothes I, well, I.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Got some new stuff that I'll be willing to bring.

David Empson, ICOM: You just feel like I'm going to go buy me some new clothes for my body.

Then what you do is you say, oops, I packed the wrong ones. I put the new clothes into that suitcase that I'm going to put in that container.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: There you go, there you go.

David Empson, ICOM: Tell us, David, you and Natasha, I want you to talk about that we need new clothes and not used clothes.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Keep in mind that if we all have a quick turnaround and hopefully the container reaches there in the beginning of 2026, that the primary need as far as clothing is winter. So coats heavy, not T shirts please. Not like a thin anything. Because again, remember Russia is targeting energy infrastructure. That's like number one thing. Comes fall, that's their favorite thing to do to destroy bus stations and electric

grid and everything. So it's already operating at like 50% capacity. So we expect could be. And people have rolling blackouts. Think about, you have two hours of electricity per day, that's it. And sub zero, very like daily temperatures. So think about heavy, heavy sweaters, heavy jackets, heavy boots, you know, or pants, something like that. Something that would really make a big difference, not just the everyday clothes, people just wearing whatever and you know, they not looking at matching outfits. But when, when you want to keep warm, you gonna put, you know, if you're gonna put a quality jacket, it, it will save you a life. So think about winter and all the other essentials that will come with this.

Blankets, you know, bedding and things like that.

David Empson, ICOM: So, so if, If I have 20 sweat long sleeve hooded sweaters that I don't sell at ICOM, can I throw those in there?

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Absolutely. Perfect. Yes.

David Empson, ICOM: And like Ricky, probably like the rest of us, I've got 40 hooded sweaters from Mission Trips and Youth Stuff and ICOM. But yet you want new stuff.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Well, and here's what I'm going to tell you. If it's new. So again, Ukraine is, believe it or not, but flooded with containers with food. It's like I was just got, I just got off the phone with my country director and he said they just received a whole container full of like canned meat, probably from European Union. And they just gonna be sending them to families and you know, probably to the front line. So food is okay. It's, I mean again, they take in whatever is being sent. Nobody speaking. What do you like, spam or not Spam. They are taking whatever. However, nobody's sending clothing, household supplies, things for their house, for medicine. These are the scarce items. So those things that we, we get, they come with extra value. If you are getting like another. And I'm not to diminish the need for the food items as well, of course, but people kind of growing used to getting a food packet, so. But when you get something nice and new, it almost shifts the weight and the conversation. People are way more stunned if they receive something nicer and they're way more open. I was just talking to my director. His position is that if it's like something of a value that is a higher end, then I mean, he just says what it is. He says for that one, you have to attend three gatherings, three church services, if you will. So they come. We don't just give out. We're not Red Cross. We are not there just to give out things because we believe we have to use what we can, we can receive from others and give it in the name of Christ. We don't want to be just a charity to give out things. So everything that's done serves the purpose. So when it's a nicer item, a higher price item, like a new item or you know, like a package that is, you know, extends just a basic food packet. Then they have sort of like a three services. And what happens during those times? You know, that faith comes from what? Hearing. They have to hear it. First. They're not going to be like, oh, thank Jesus, I love you, God. No, they will. They might say it, but we will. Second of all, we know that it is promised in the Bible. God's word does not return void. We want to saturate them and then, you know, let them go in their

marriage. Nobody's twisting anybody's arm to do anything. But we want to give them that chance. These people never heard and never been to a church. They don't know how it looks like. They think it's Orthodox with icons and you have to cross yourself and pray to St Nicholas. That's all they know. They don't know there is a living God that they could talk to. Not by their church, Orthodox Church, you know, in old Russian, mind you, like King James. Language that they don't understand through the priest, that they have to kiss his hand for. For what? I don't know. He forgives their sins. It is backwards people. They have no cross them so much to this personal relationships that we have with Jesus in our churches. They don't have that. They don't have that access. They don't know it exists. We want to bring them in that Environment where they could accept experience and one time is almost not enough. So the better the package they receive, the more kind of obligation yeah, sure. It creates for them to receive it. But then through that we establish that avenue for the Holy Spirit to really touch them, for God's word to be saturating their minds and their hearts. And you would not believe by how many people we have, like, we have about 70 to 80% response after this evangelistic events. Wow, 80% response sometimes. This is incredible. We have the. The little villages that we go to in Kherson region, about 80% of those people that they keep coming because they are hungry and they didn't even what they were missing. So again, circling back to the better the items are, the better the chance that these people would be coming again and again to listen to the word of God.

David Empson, ICOM: Do you have Bibles?

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Yeah, they do.

David Empson, ICOM: Again, you have Bible. You don't need Bibles.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: We don't. You know who we need? Local Ukrainian preachers. The war that. Just this one, this one aspect just tears me up. They just grab young man and old. If you're under 65, you go into the front. Wow, you are being killed or maimed. It's awful. It's awful. There's not enough young men. So absolutely, missionaries are welcome, but we can't ship them the container.

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: I was just gonna say, you know, Natasha's message. I just want to say, keep going. That's awesome. Listening to her talk, it's a It's such a great example of, you know, everything that IDES does is with people like that. It's Christian churches and missionaries and partners who are using it as an opportunity to share the gospel. Nobody's arm is twisted. Nobody has to be dunked and baptized to receive anything. But the opportunity is there. And, you know, we have a. One of our partners calls the physical response that we do pre evangelism because just like Natasha said, when. When you meet that need with Christ's love, you open the door for a conversation more willing ears to hear about Christ and. And why you are there, why you're doing these things, why you're giving these things. So it's. It's a great, great opportunity for this. The other thing that I would say on the new stuff is sometimes getting stuff through borders and through

shipping used stuff creates a roadblock, sometimes where new stuff doesn't, because you don't know what's always in Use stuff and whereas when it's new, it's clean, it's ready to go. There's not a concern about critters. There's not a concern about what somebody might be receiving. And especially with the other items as well, you know, new, clean items are a lot easier to be able to transport and get out, especially medications, you know, that route. Those obviously need to be new, unopened containers for us to be able to process those and have those go out.

Emily Drayne, Host: So I really love the, like, new. The new items, whether, you know, we've talked about medicine, household goods, hygiene products, clothing, I actually kind of love, you know, coming from the donor side. I'm, you know, a mom of three, and I'm gonna use this for our kids to kind of talk through what other people around the world are going in, you know, what they're dealing with. And, you know, I think the sacrifice of an American family or a person to buy something new that has no effect on them at all is such a great example for our kids and for our students. And, you know, Ricky and I have talked a lot about the whole church being involved in missions and how, you know, getting everybody. And I just think this is such an easy way that the Georgia, you know, I'm in North Carolina, Ricky's in Louisiana. That, you know, the churches all over America are able to get involved and to involve your youth, your kids and really have a valuable lesson for them to, you know, think about and just. It's just a great opportunity for my husband and I, even as parents, you know, not connected with ICOM, you know, that aside, it's just I can't wait to get to, like, roll this out with our kids and just get them thinking about, you know, how can you sacrifice? What can you buy for a young girl in a different country? I love all of this. I'm so excited, you know, that this is happening. And that will be, you know, you get to be part of something real.

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: Yeah. When we. When we do stuff like this, one of the things that I like to tell churches is it is a great opportunity for kids because, you know, Emily, like, you're saying you can take your kids to the store with you and talk through while you're there picking out these items, why you're getting it and who's going to receive it. And, you know, same thing with clothes, going and buying them and walking through with the family, what God's going to do through these things. And the opportunity that it is, it's a Great disciple making moment for families and kids.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: I also think of from the SICOM side of things that whole youth groups could come together and do some fundraising or they could take up offerings within their youth group like Wednesday night, Sunday night gatherings up until you know, close to to leaving and then being able to, to load up on new items and do like a,

a youth group shop night, you know and they go out and storm their local stores in the name of Christ for Ukraine. And so I think there could be a lot of neat opportunities for families, for churches and youth groups and to really come together in a multifaceted

way. And also too I wanted to point out that much like in a lot of war torn nations, there's always a lot of spotlight when the war begins, throughout the middle of it and obviously a celebration when it does come to an end. As much as you can even celebrate something like war and you know, ending. Yes. But what often gets overlooked and missed is the ongoing that's going to be happening after the war comes to a conclusion. So if it's been a decade worth of a war to this point, the recovery time could be decades, multiple decades to recover infrastructure, family, families re establishing their homes. And Natasha, as you highlighted a great need that's there is we forget that when the war happens so many people retreat and just leave and that for their safety and understandably so. And so that means ministers and ministries, churches, organizations that were all established in those regions are gone and maybe have nothing left to even return to. And so there's going to be a huge need in Ukraine much like other war torn nations that are happening even as we speak to as well that need people to rise to the occasion to go on the front lines even after the war concludes. So I think it's important this is a great opportunity for us to be focused upon Ukraine, focused upon meeting the immediate needs now. But then for us to always be mindful of what's to come to that the need never goes away. We'll continue on. And Natasha, you've done a great job sharing some different stories and different ways that Mulberry and the volunteers in these communities have been making incredible impacts. Do you have some other stories, ways or uniquenesses that you've seen and how God has been working in the midst of this war that can really help paint the picture of how what we're all coming to do, coming together with ICOM and supporting what Mulberry and the team's doing. What are some of those stories or unique ways you've seen God Move in the midst of war.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Well, I'm always bragging on my team in Ukraine because these are my heroes. Truly. It really highlights how God just provides for every aspect. So you know, I fundraise for the ministry. We send the funds over there and they just use it to be hands and feet literally to the people in need in a country, as I mentioned before, Mulberry goes where nobody goes. So we not necessarily working with the refugee population because all these countries have been so generous in providing for the basic need for Ukrainians. But within Ukraine it is dangerous. So it's not necessarily very easy to get in into those corners that are the most hit and the most ravaged by the war. And that's where our people go. And as I shared before the story of one group of people volunteers that went and was targeted by drones and they still accomplished their mission, they still continue to go. But here's another, another story that my country director, his name is Valadimir and he is just very charismatic young man that has, is doing everything. He is preaching, he's driving the truck that we bought semi truck for the ministry to Hirson. Two times a month he recruits volunteers across the country. And what they do, they go and restore houses, they distribute aid, but they also restore houses. And last year we were able to build 50 new mobile homes for the people in the Kherson region that suffered from the flood and the fire pretty much of the drones and ballistic missiles that they were hidden there. So they would go to a home that's destroyed and with a group of men, he would say recruit about seven people, seven to 10 people. And

they go there for seven days. They would drive to Kherson again literally under bullets. It amazes me how this and these men have families and work and obligations. They just take a week out of their life and they go into the fire and so they pick the most needed house. And he was just sharing about this grandpa, his name is Yuri. And his house was destroyed by the flood first and then he received a rocket. And so they actually moved in with him and they lived there for a week while building the house. So an eating dinner with and sharing the gospel with him every night. And Yuri was just in awe. He said I never knew how Christians could be. I've never seen a Christian disclose living in my house. And by building this lifelong now relationship, by eating together, by working together. And this man just work, get up in the morning and they just work within his house. And I have so many pictures and it's just incredible. So Yuri started attending church because he saw how Christians were, and it just blew his mind. They changed his whole perception of how he viewed the church because he got to experience Christians that lived such an exemplary life, you know, with him within his home. And we have another example, another guy who actually is in different in which is more or less quiet. And we have an outreach ministry there in the new church. 1200 people attend this church right now because they are just receiving aid every month. So this guy, his name is Sergei, he was coming to receive a packet because he heard from somebody that this is the location where they give out food packets. So he came and he sees our Vladimir under the car fixing the semi truck. And he thought, he's just in the mechanic. And he goes, can I talk to a director? Someone here? And dirty, you know, like oil hands. He was like, just a minute. He goes inside, washes his hand, puts like a suit jacket on. He comes out, says, hello, I'm the director.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: That's what I'm talking about.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Won this Sergei over in an instant. He said, I want to be a part of it. So now he's not just attending with his wife and eight of his foster children, unbelieving, mind you. They are attending the church and they volunteer. He's now like, I don't know, his right hand to give out aid, to pack the packages, to, you know, to. To do whatever the stuff the foundation needs there on the spot. But that's what I'm saying. The people who are serving other people, they're the best example of Christ's love, like how a Christian could love and serve other people.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yeah, that's beautiful, Natasha. And again, we're excited to be able to partner with you and Mulberry and to be able to support others that are on the front lines, even the executive director getting oil and greased up. And he would be the one.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Yes, he would be the one actually receiving the container. The container.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Oh, perfect.

Emily Drayne, Host: Oh, perfect.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yeah, that's great. Well, I'm excited and grateful again for ICOM, for Mulberry and everybody just jumping in and being a part of this, this endeavor that's coming together in Atlanta, Georgia this November. And we really encourage you all to be a part of fill in the container and let's make a good problem and have a couple containers to fill and allow Jody more practice in navigating those paperworks.

Jody England, I.D.E.S.: Thank you, Ricky. I appreciate the vote of confidence there.

Emily Drayne, Host: We have a flyer that we can download. Yeah, we'll link it in the show notes that has everything listed out of what items and supplies are needed and we'll make sure there's a deadline on there. If you are going to try and ship stuff to IDEs, we'll get that information on there as well. Just because we know not everyone will be in Atlanta. But we don't want that to hinder participation and relief supplies. So we'll, we'll link those in that information in the show notes.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yep. And we even have a page on our website that is specifically dedicated to the Ukraine container and it can be used.

David Empson, ICOM: I think we have a slide too that people can put up in their church on their screens that they can, you know, show it there too.

Emily Drayne, Host: Or a one stop shop.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: That's right. David, do you have anything else or. Sorry, Empson, do you have anything else you'd like to say or anything before we close out here?

David Empson, ICOM: You want old Dave or young Dave? Which one do you want stepping in?

Ricky Altmiller, Host: That one?

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah.

David Empson, ICOM: Dave Stine, you want to say something any more?

David Stine, I.D.E.S.: I just want to say thank you. I'm excited. I know Fame and Lifeline are also excited to be partnering with this. Natasha Mulberry are just incredible partners doing great stuff. So of course ICOM is amazing as well. So the opportunity to jump in and kind of collaboratively, everybody joined and then of course the churches and the thousands of people attending ICOM jumping in just to multiply this. It's awesome. Yeah. When, when Dave said, hey, David, have you, have you considered it might be more than one container? No, but that's great. If it's more than one, let's make it two and three and let's get them over there and provide some great help and great opportunities to share the help of Christ.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: David Emson, would. Is there anything that you'd like to share in regards to like Fame, Lifeline and how they're partnering since we don't.

David Empson, ICOM: Have a rep. Yeah, Fame's definitely helping with the medical part. They've got, you know, lots of donations and things in that way. Lifeline, you know, they primarily do the, the food and, and the food's not a big need, but they've opened up their distribution centers for collection sites. That would be another nice thing because, I mean, they're all over Kentucky, Lexington, Louisville, different places. They've got.

Emily Drayne, Host: Oh, that'll be good for us to have on the website.

David Empson, ICOM: So I think we have a chance of really having a great network and to include them as well. I'm going to put up a big banner with all their logos, like what's on the flyer and stuff as well, that we'll be able to recognize everyone involved. I really do appreciate everybody doing this. I know Bill Warren and Ben Sims with Lifeline are all behind it 100%. And yet I love some of the uniqueness of our missions, like fame and idea and another one or two that are really just very specialized. And this is the disaster thing. Every time I hear about a tsunami, I still have a picture in my mind. The wall of water that hit Japan. I don't know if you've ever seen that picture or not, but it's like, dad, it looks like a scene out of Godzilla from the 70s. It's just incredible what that looks like. And yet, boy, AIDS was just all over that. And, you know, every time I hear about that catastrophe stuff and yet, you know, why not? Here's Natasha and Mulberry knocking themselves out, you know, and that's what I love, is their own people are. They're not sitting around, they're busy, they're working just like the folks in Japan were too. I think it's just so awesome. So let's feed them, let's get the stuff to them and make it work.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: As we come to a close for this episode, Natasha, I would love for you to close out in prayer. I know we should be praying for Mulberry and yourself, but I would love if you would, if you're comfortable enough to pray in your native tongue, to close us out and to pray over the efforts here for the container.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Okay. If you can hear amen at the end, that would be the ending. Okay.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Okay, we will know that one.

Natasha Reimer, Mulberry Int'l: Okay, let's pray. Amen.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Amen. Amen.

Emily Drayne, Host: Thank you. That was beautiful. Because I'm feeling insanely inspired after hearing all the discussion and plans and not to mention everything Natasha talked about and just the impact that this 40 foot container is going to have in the communities of Ukraine or possibly two or two.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Because we want to make sure Jody has his work cut out for him.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yes, exactly. No, I think a huge shout out to Ides Mulberry International Fame and Lifeline Christian Mission and ICOM, of course, for just collaborating on this and just really being the church, you know, in Ukraine and helping bring together the American churches to kind of partner with everybody else to make. So I'm super. I can't wait to see what God does with this. I just think it's going to be so impactful.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Oh, yeah. But and also to be hearing from Natasha, personal connections and Ties to this as well. I think is was powerful and like you said it really she's great at being able to motivate and inspire people to move to not just meeting a cause or being a part of a cause and meeting some need but it's providing practical things that are needed. But then also the most important element of it all is making sure that the love of Christ is being not just communicated, but felt and received. And I love some of the stories that she shared highlighting that impact that people have had and even being able to see the director of Mulberry International over there getting down underneath the truck doing what need it. It's all hands on deck. It's, you know, you got to do what you got to do. And yeah, I, I love hearing, hearing that, but also how that unique experience led to an impactful encounter of with, with Christ for sure.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yeah, I feel like just a recap. We talked about some of the items that were needed. But just so we can mention it here all in place, we are talking everything being sent has to be new. So they talked about no used clothing. Even if it's gently used, if it has the tags on it, it's fine. They said if you're buying. Remember she talked about the seasonal winter. It's kind of the season that when the container gets there, that's what they'll be needing. So blankets, bedding, clothing, coats and jackets and thicker materials. So think about that and then keep the tags on it. But if it is new, they will take it even if the tags are off. Yeah, but we're also talking about hygiene products like shampoos, soaps, toothbrush, diapers for children, feminine products, sanitizers, laundry detergent. Like this is so far reaching into, I mean things that you use every day that you don't think about someone else would need. Then medical supplies. So pain and fever reducer, anti histamines, cold medicine, eye drops, vitamins, joint muscle pain cream, topical relief cream, antiseptic ointment, anything you can think of. But it has to be new in the box or however it comes when you buy it. And then the last thing they talked about was flashlight or they didn't talk about but they have list as flashlights. But it can, they cannot have batteries in them.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Right, Right. So yeah, the device itself.

Emily Drayne, Host: Yes. So that's kind of the list. We have a website that we're going to link in the show notes that has a slide, a downloadable PDF, a list of all these supplies. But I think for me the biggest thing on this site is going to be how to involve your church.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yes.

Emily Drayne, Host: Or college, your family.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Right.

Emily Drayne, Host: Small group, friend group, whatever. We've got four or five different examples of ways that you're able to involve your immediate circle, your circle of influence to really make this a service and a sacrifice for the people in Ukraine.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yep. Yeah. And that's the part that I'm excited to think about. On the other end of all of this is when the container gets to Ukraine and supplies are given out and people encountering Christ through these efforts. And again, this is nothing about like tooting our horns is like rallying as American communities and organizations, churches, all that all about just doing our part, even as little as it might be to be able to provide supplies but to have an impact across, across the pond overseas where we are able to, to do our little. To be able to. To allow God to do his big work of really meeting the people and tending to their needs and tending to their broken hearts.

Emily Drayne, Host: So the main drop off location will be at ICOM 2025 in Atlanta, November this year. But we just found out during this episode that Lifeline and IDES both have collection centers and we will have the addresses for those and the depths of when to ship it by on the website that's going to be linked in the show notes. So if your church is not able to come to ICOM, you're still able to participate and we would love for you to make the effort. Those drop off locations or shipping locations are all over the country. So we want that to be as accessible to everyone within our sphere as possible. So definitely make use of those and.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Make planning in preparation to for like the ICOM deadline, you know, when we are there because as you heard in the episode, it's going to move quick afterwards. There'll be a short window afterwards.

We're really just playing doing all your donations to the donation locations and site drop off sites to or bringing them to the physical location of the Georgia International Convention center in Atlanta, Georgia this November.

Emily Drayne, Host: Awesome. Well, we hope everyone takes advantage of these and praying about how you can involve your family, your church, your students, small groups, friend groups, all the, all.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: The groups, colleges, universities, everybody.

Emily Drayne, Host: Exactly.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Yep.

Emily Drayne, Host: So start praying about how you can get involved in. We're excited to see how many containers we can fill.

Ricky Altmiller, Host: Absolutely love it. Let's make a good problem for ICOM and Jody.

Closing Elements

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