

The Center for Medical Missions'

e-Pistle

April 2011

“Don’t be afraid, I know you are looking for Jesus Who was crucified. He is not here! For He has been resurrected, just as He said.” Matthew 28. He is risen! I trust God’s gifts of mercy and grace and the power of His resurrection bring you great joy at this time of year. How blessed we are!

We have just completed our 6th annual Pre-field Orientation Conference for 22 new medical missionaries. What a joy it was to spend 2 and a half days with this group who are willing to follow the Lord wherever He sends. About half the group already have their assignments so will be leaving for their fields soon. The other half are still seeking specific guidance. I ask you to join us in praying for these people. It will be exciting to see lives transformed through their obedience. If you have co-workers who have not yet reached the field, please be sure to tell them of this conference. It will be held again next April. A missionary dentist with 8 years already in the field, participated in this year’s conference and he shared after the first day that he was already glad he came. It is a helpful conference for those going to the field.

This month’s e-Pistle has several good articles. They include:

[The Art of Running a Meeting](#) by David Stevens, MD

[Cura Animarum](#) by Rev. Stan Key

[Training Opportunity](#)

[Update by our Vice President for Government Relations – Mr. Jonathan Imbody](#)

[Coping with Change](#) by Dr. Ron Koteskey

Enjoy,
Susan

The Art of Running a Meeting (Part 2) - Section I: Planning/Administration

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

There is more to the art of running a good meeting than these four principles. You can take some very practical steps to make your meetings run better. Here is what I recommend:

1. Prepare For It – Clearly communicate what issues are being covered in the meeting, where it will be held and how long it is expected to last. Send background materials, handouts, previous minutes and other materials as far in advance as possible. Include an

itemized draft agenda and solicit other items that they may want to include. Ask each participant to review all materials before the meeting begins. Don't forget to ask for prayer if major changes or new endeavors are being considered.

Preparation may also include pre-meeting discussions with important stakeholders to uncover issues that need to be addressed or to get buy in from an influential attendee.

- **Tip:** Don't use valuable meeting time to report individual attendee's activities. Before our monthly senior staff meeting, each person can circulate a one to two page status report on their area of responsibilities that answers three simple questions – *Your Progress? Your Problems? Your Plans?* Each staff member is expected to review those before the meeting. That way we can focus our meeting on problem solving, coordination of efforts and envisioning.
- 2. **Organize It** – Agendas are a crucial roadmap to success. Start out with prayer, approve the minutes if you have them from the last meeting and then approve the agenda. Follow this with “Old Business”, which are items you have previously dealt with. This may be unfinished business or a report on the results of a decision made. Follow this with “New Business” – new things that are being brought up for the first time. Add a section for “AOB” – “Any Other Business” where last minute items can be addressed. These should be rare if you have organized and prepared well.
 - **Tip:** In my senior staff meetings, I always add a section to the agenda for “Discussion” and include items there that need envisioning, long range planning or a broad overview of effectiveness. I don't want to get so involved in details in meetings that we don't take time to look at the big picture. It is dangerous to be so close to the trees that you can't see the forest. Discussion is the time for broad questions like: *What is the reputation of our medical ministry? How can we improve staff morale or If we were starting this area of ministry over again, what would we do differently?*
- 3. **Time It** – If you are having a longer meeting like a board meeting or have a history of not getting done within the time limits you have announced, time each item on your agenda. This gives you early warning that you are behind and encouragement if you are ahead. It helps keep the leader on track and attendees focused on moving forward.
 - **Tip:** If you are having problems projecting accurate times, have your meeting secretary note for you how much time is being used on each agenda item. Set down with this after the meeting and if you went overtime was it because you didn't move things along well or you projected too little time? That will help you to do better next time around. If you don't allow adequate time for discussion, your attendees will get frustrated.
 - **Tip:** Use committees to save time if there is a large agenda like at a board meeting. Put board members on committees where they can use their expertise and have them meet before the general meeting. For example, you may have a Finance Committee, Governance Committee (to deal with bylaws, board policy manual, trustee selection and evaluation) and a Strategic Planning Committee. Each committee needs a staff assigned to assist them. Committees make recommendations to the board and do the board's work. Board committees have

no control over their staff. You can also assign smaller task forces or ad hoc committees to bring recommendations to a staff group.

4. Control It – Good meeting leaders encourage the airing of different viewpoints and healthy debate. You want to have your organizational wagon pulled by spirited horses, but you can't let them run out of control. Step in quickly to quell personal attacks, manage negative conflict, to identify areas of commonality and to make sure issues are resolved. Make it known that you welcome freewheeling discussion but once a decision is made, each team member is expected to support it. It is divisive for a board or staff member to leave a meeting and start politicking their own personal position with others. It is even worse to break confidentiality. If you are discussing confidential matters, let everyone know what they are and that they should not be discussed with others.
 - **Tip:** Try to get as much consensus on important decisions as possible but take formal votes if you are having formal board or similar meetings. If everyone has to agree for a decision to be made, then an individual member can veto any decision. That is not healthy and can incapacitate progress. It is also not healthy to move forward if a board is seriously divided on an important issue. You may need to step in and table the item. Collect more information if needed or ask people to pray about the issue before the next meeting.
5. Document It – The more complex or long the meeting, the more you need formal minutes. They remind you of the decisions made, serve as an official record and are a starting point for the next meeting. They are very useful to give to those that weren't able to attend, but who need to know what occurred.
 - **Tip:** Review the minutes of the meeting before they are circulated. Your minute taker may have misunderstood something, give something more prominence than it deserved or explained something poorly. You can correct the minutes before they are circulated. For groups that have fiduciary responsibilities like a hospital board, the minutes are legal documents and need to be signed and kept in a secure place.
 - **Tip:** For official minutes, I like to use a readily understood numbering system. For example the first minute may be 9/3/11-1 *New Hospital Ward*. The numbers denote the meeting of the ninth day of March 2011 and this is the first minute of that meeting. When you are doing old business, you can add after the minute title, (Ref: 16/11/10 -5). That means to find the old minute on this topic refer to the fifth minute of the November 16, 2010 meeting.
6. Summarize It – Take a few minutes at the end of the meeting to summarize decisions, assignments that have been given and the things that are going to require more discussion. This makes sure everyone heard the same thing and you are going to move forward. The most common critique of meetings are, “they lasted too long”, and next is “they didn't accomplish anything.” Meetings are a waste of time if they don't contribute to progress. Summarizing emphasizes what has been accomplished and makes sure momentum is maintained.
 - **Tip:** It is a good practice to pull out “Action Items” from the minutes and restate them at their conclusion. Make sure these action items note who has the responsibility to take action and when that action must be accomplished.

Okay, meetings aren't "evil" and there is a place for them. They can only be great meetings if you master leading them to produce significant results in a reasonable amount of time. If you apply these principles and practical steps, you can be a "Master of the Art of Leading a Meeting."

[Back to menu](#)

Cura Animarum

by Rev. Stan Key

Christians have always instinctively answered important life questions by turning to the Bible. We build our faith around what is in God's Word. And rightly so. However, God's truth can be found not just in what is included in the Bible but in what is omitted! I am learning to listen to silences of God. Let me share some of what God is teaching me though things not mentioned in Scripture.

1. **Nice.**

It is hard to imagine that a word so loved by our culture does not make a single appearance in God's Word! God's great goal in redemption was not that people would be "nice." Prayer was not instituted so that we could have a "nice day."

Jesus died on a cross so that we could be holy. This should certainly make people kinder and gentler than they were before. But the word "nice" just doesn't convey the reality of God's saving purposes for a human soul. "Nice" people need to be saved just as much as "nasty" people. And their salvation is usually more difficult!

2. **Fun.**

This little three-letter word has mega-importance for most Americans today. In fact, our Declaration of Independence boldly claims that the "pursuit of happiness" is one of our inalienable rights. We feel somehow cheated in life if we are not having a good time.

Indeed, God wants us to experience joy. But His Word is strangely silent when it comes to "having fun." C. S. Lewis said it well: "I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity" (God in the Dock, p. 58).

3. **Religion.**

When this word is used in the Bible, it is almost always in a negative sense! I find only one verse in the entire Bible where "religion" is something that God views in a positive way (James 1:27). This is truly an amazing fact for a book that serves as the inspired text for the world's largest "religion." Don't miss what God is not saying! The Gospel is not

the announcement of a new religion. Rather, it is the offer of a **new life** and an **intimate relationship** with God.

So, the next time you read your Bible, listen not only to what God says but to what He does not say! There is a message in the silences of God.

[Back to menu](#)

Training Opportunity

WVU's Clinical Tropical Medicine and Traveler's Health Course – 2011

West Virginia University is again offering their Tropical Medicine course June 14 – August 5, 2011. Four modules are offered.

June 14 – June 24: Introduction to Global Public Health

June 27 – July 8: Clinical Practice in the Tropics and Traveler's Health

July 11 – July 22: Medical parasitology and Entomology

July 25 – August 5: Infectious Diseases

There is a significant discount for missionaries, residency program, nurses, physician assistants, physicians from developing countries. For more information you can contact Nancy Sanders at nsanders@hsc.wvu.edu.

Update on efforts of CMDA's VP for Government Relations By Mr. Jonathan Imbody

April 8, 2011 - CMA met privately today at the U.S. Department of State with President Obama's top international health official, Lois Quam, Executive Director, Global Health Initiative (GHI). Pres. Obama created GHI to pursue "a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to global health. GHI seeks to achieve significant health improvements and foster sustainable effective, efficient and country-led public health programs that deliver essential health care." Ms. Quam reports to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

CMA Vice President for Government Relations Jonathan Imbody relayed to Ms. Quam the perspectives of CMA-member medical missionaries, who when surveyed several years ago had identified specific challenges in working with the U.S. government. Mr. Imbody also explained the importance of conscience rights to faith-based healthcare professionals, noting that the same conscientious commitment that motivates faith-based physicians to care for needy patients also

motivates them to practice medicine according to ethical standards. The Obama administration recently gutted the only federal regulation protecting the exercise of conscience in health care.

One large faith-based organization that works on AIDS overseas recently reviewed 35 AIDS-related grant proposal requests issued by the USG and found they only qualified for four given the requirements to either traffick in contraceptives and/or affirm the LGBT lifestyle in order to get the grant.

Mr. Imbody suggested three practical solutions:

1. Invite faith-based organization reps to serve on grant review panels (as I've done).
2. Have the WH and agency faith-based offices review the Funding Opportunity Announcements before they're issued.
3. Investigate the pros and cons of having a large faith-based organization (e.g., World Vision, Catholic Relief Services) serve as an umbrella group for smaller fbo's that don't have the sophistication to navigate the complex USG grant world.

[Back to menu](#)

Coping with Change

By Dr. Ron Koteskey

Jonah faced change in his life when God told him to become the first cross-cultural missionary by going east and confronting Nineveh (Jonah 1). Jonah went west. When he finally obeyed, the people in Nineveh responded to his message and repented. However, rather than rejoicing, Jonah became disillusioned and angry because of God's grace and compassion for a despised people group. Though succeeding outwardly, he failed inwardly.

At the beginning of his second term of missionary service (Acts 15) Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go back and visit people where they had been before to see how everyone was doing. However, as recorded in the verses immediately following that, Paul wound up going with Silas (rather than Barnabas), going to Macedonia (rather than to Asia), and meeting new people (rather than visit people they had seen before). Paul adapted to the changes and became a successful missionary, both inwardly and outwardly.

Anchor to a point of stability.

The Bible is clear that our point of stability is in God himself.

- I the Lord do not change... (Malachi 3:6).
- He will never leave you or forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6).
- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).
- I am the alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13).

To successfully adapt to change, we must keep our commitment to God up-to-date. Without this secure anchor, we may become like Jonah rather than like Paul.

Expect emotions.

When you face change and emotions of all kinds come flooding in, you may say, “I don’t understand why this has affected me so much.” One moment you are laughing, the next you are crying—because you are normal. Nearly every emotion occurs during change. Here are some of the most common, illustrated in Paul’s life as he experienced great change at the end of his third term.

- Uncertainty about the future may result in fear, worry, anxiety, apprehension, dread, self-doubt, or panic. Paul said he was going to Jerusalem, not knowing what would happen to him there (Acts 20:22).
- Being forced to change may result in stress, anger, frustration, or hostility. Paul felt compelled by the Spirit (Acts 20:22).
- Looking at what you are losing may result in sadness, depression, despondency, or despair. Paul wept as he was about to leave (Acts 20:36).
- Considering new opportunities may result in joy, elation, or happiness. Paul said he looked forward to finishing the course and completing his task (Acts 20:24).

Note that Paul acknowledged his emotions, and this allowed him to cope and continue with his work. These emotions may overlap, or you may find yourself on a pendulum swinging back and forth between them. Acknowledge and express them as you hold on to your anchor. Trying to build a dam to hold them inside may result in the dam bursting and the emotions spilling out.

Take time to grieve.

Your losses are real. It is all right (even necessary) to do all the things Paul and the elders from Ephesus did as they departed from friends in Acts 20:37-38.

- Wept
- Embraced
- Kissed
- Grieved

Coming to terms with your losses as you adjust to change takes time. Trying to rush through without getting closure on what you are leaving will make it hard to enter your new roles. (See the brochure on grief)

Find friends.

Pride makes some people try to cope alone, a most difficult thing to do. Sharing with other people is a great help. Bravery may mean having the courage to ask for help when you need it. Here are some people who can swim with you—or throw you a life jacket.

- People who have been through the change you are facing. They may have helpful suggestions to cope or mentor you through those changes.
- Your family (missionary, church, and biological) cares, so someone in that family will listen to you and help.
- Close friends whom you trust deeply will allow you to express your fears and frustrations, and they may offer ways to cope.
- Member care people in your organization can help you function through its changes.
- Pastors or counselors with no connection to your organization can bring an outside objectivity not found within your agency. When facing new dangers in Jerusalem, Paul called on the elders of the Ephesian Church (Acts 20:17).

Focus on the good.

Every change has both good and bad in it. You may be leaving friends, but you will also make new friends. You may have to leave a task you know well, but you will also learn to do something new. Focus on good new things.

You have the choice of looking back at what you are leaving or looking ahead to where you are going. Paul wanted to finish the course, to complete the task. Keeping your attention on what God has called you to keeps you moving in the right direction. Concentrating on him and his goodness as your point of stability, you can navigate change. Remember that every glass that is half empty is also half full. Optimists may make as many mistakes as pessimists, but they have a lot more fun getting where they are going.

Take one step at a time.

When you begin to feel overwhelmed by the size of the change, break it up into smaller parts. It may seem hopeless to walk across the continent, but many people have done it—one step at a time.

Your new assignment may be to begin a school in a village that has never had one. You went to school but have never started one so the task seems hopeless. Take it step by step.

- Find a place to meet.
- Select a curriculum.
- Hire some teachers.
- Etc.

Take care of yourself.

During change some people forget to care for themselves. They need to care for themselves in every way, spiritually, socially, physically.

- Have a daily devotional time.
- Spend time daily with spouse and family.
- Schedule time with other missionaries.

- Eat good healthy meals.
- Exercise several times a week.
- Get rest—keep a Sabbath.

Remember that it will end.

Every stream or river ends at a lake, sea, or ocean sooner or later. Likewise, every torrent of change comes to an end, and you will experience feelings of stability and normalcy again. Keep this in mind as you feel like you are being helplessly swept along in the current.

When people move to a new position in a different city, they may ask how long it will be before it really feels like home. Although some people make it sooner, it takes a full year for many to adapt to the change. It may not feel like home until you have gone through every season, every holiday, etc.

For a more complete treatment of this topic as well as other topics please visit www.missionarycare.com. Also please let your non-medical colleagues know about these free resources

[Back to menu](#)

Center for Medical Missions

PO Box 7500

Bristol, TN 37621

423-844-1000

www.cmda.org/cmm

To unsubscribe, send an e-mail to susan.carter@cmda.org. Thank you.