

The Center for Medical Missions'

e-Pistle

February 2009

Welcome to this month's e-Pistle. I hope you are well and happy in the Lord. We are busy in the Center for Medical Missions – gearing up for our second annual Medical Mission Summit for mission sending agency executives. This meeting will take place on March 26 & 27 here at the Bristol office. I hope you will join us in praying that the Lord will use this time to further His Kingdom's work. We will spend most of the first day listening to participant reports and discussing issues they raise. The second day will include some information on working with the millennial generation as well as innovative strategies for working in creative access countries. Among other goals for this meeting, we hope partnerships will develop for taking the Gospel to those who have yet to hear.

Three weeks after the Summit meeting, we will be hosting our fourth annual Pre-field orientation for new medical missionaries. Many of World Medical Mission's post residency program participants will be taking part in this three day conference. Again, we ask for your prayer. We have changed the curriculum somewhat, inviting new speakers so we expect this conference to be the best yet. It is not too late to register if you have a new colleague scheduled to join your ministry. Please feel free to suggest the conference to him/her. [Click here](#) for more information.

Here is a list of articles that follow:

- [Flameout](#) – by David Stevens, MD
- [Cura Animarum](#) – by Rev. Stan Key
- [Testimony of the Blessing of Serving the Lord](#) - by David Ayer, MD
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- by Rev. Glenn Schwartz

Flameout

Section XII: Taking Care of Self

By David Stevens, MD

On October 14, 2004, Pinnacle Flight 3701 crashed near Jefferson City, Missouri. While ferrying a 50-seat passenger plane from Little Rock, the two pilots decided to see what the plane could do. They first did some acrobatic moves and then decided to climb at an excessive rate to 41,000 feet, far above the recommended maximum altitude. They overheated both engines in the attempt so when reaching their goal, they slowed the plane to cool the engines until almost stall speed.

After overriding the anti-stall device four times that would have automatically forced them nose-down to take them to a safer altitude, both engines flamed out and the plane plummeted.

They put the nose down to gain speed in an attempt to “windmill” restart the engines, but the overheated turbine blades had expanded and the engines were jammed. They delayed notifying ground control of their plight for 14 minutes during repeated failed attempts to restart their engines. By then, they had lost so much altitude they could not glide to an airport. They crashed 2.5 miles from the end of the runway between two rows of houses in a ball of flames. Both pilots died.

Those pilots sound like some medical missionaries I know.

Okay, I admit it, I was one of them, so instead of ragging on you, I will rag on me. When we arrived at Tenwek, we had 180% occupancy in our 135-bed hospital for the year. I was the third doctor and we only had six trained nurses. The electricity was on only 11 hours a day to save diesel fuel costs and the water coming out of the hospital water taps was straight from the river. It was the same water that brought scores of children in with gastroenteritis. Over half the deaths and half of the admissions were from preventable diseases.

Like you, I had been professionalized to believe that when the going gets tough, the tough get going. I soon realized seeing endless patients were not going to solve our problems no matter how competent and efficient I was. It was going to take extraordinary effort to carry my regular work load at the hospital while working to develop it at the same time. I went into a steep climb to take my work output to 41,000 feet.

I wrote funding proposals at night, worked on governance and administrative issues on weekends, started new programs, designed buildings, recruited new missionaries, learned computer programming to design database systems and even personally kept the accounts when we built our hydroelectric project.

The ministry began to expand and develop. It begins to change but unfortunately, so did I.

Most of this happened in my second term. My friend, mentor and father figure, the founder of the hospital, went to the US on home assignment a couple of days after we came back from our leave. I was in charge and thought, “I can push really hard this year while he is gone. I want him to see lots of improvements when he returns.”

He didn’t return on time. His routine physical found colon cancer. The operation went well but he formed massive adhesions and obstructions that couldn’t be released on repeated surgeries. They put in a TPN line and sent him home. I still remember the day I heard Ernie was not coming back, probably forever.

My engines were overheating and the stress was evident. I was working every minute of every day and far into every night when I wasn’t on call. I was getting irritable and pushing people more than leading them. I didn’t have time for regular devotions or time with God. *(Surely he would understand. I was doing all of this for him. It wasn’t my fault Ernie wasn’t there to help. I*

was trapped and the only way out was to just work harder and more efficiently doing all the work of a full time doctor, a full time administrator and a full time developer.) Since my office was at home, I was near the kids and Jody but had little real time with them except at hurried meals. No kicking a soccer ball in the yard or a leisurely walk down to the river.

And then the stall indicator began to repetitively flash, but I kept manually overriding it. My engines were running in the red. I was about to flame out.

Two things kept me from crashing.

Jody, my wife, summed it up very succinctly to me one day when she said, “You’re not much fun to be with anymore.” Increasingly, she felt she worked for me instead of being my wife -- doing my laundry, making sure I had a meal no matter how late I was and keeping the children out of my way.

Her comment was like a flash of lightening in the darkness of my work obsession.

Secondly, miraculously, providently, God healed Ernie. One day everything opened up and he could eat. Within a few months he returned to share the load.

I woke up and realized I had to put the nose down and get to a safer and sustainable flight altitude. That took discipline of a totally different sort.

Now, your turn.

As a medical missionary (or spouse) you are smart, hard working, success oriented, a problem solver and more than a little obsessive compulsive. (Just the kind of doc I want for my personal physician!) The problem is those great traits and talents are your greatest liabilities when they are exercised to the extreme. If the devil can’t get you to ignore God’s call, he will get you to work yourself to death. I’ve seen it again and again.

Here is what I learned and now practice to avoid flaming out:

1. Set Margins – Recognize your boundaries (be honest!) on work, sleep, exercise, spiritual growth and thriving relationships. Everyone is different. I need seven hours a night of sleep on average. You may get by with six. Step back from your limit by five or ten percent to give you space to take opportunities that may arise.

At the same time realize there may be periods you will have to exceed those margins - another doctor gets sick or there is an epidemic that fills your hospital to overflowing. You can exceed your limits for periods of time but as soon as possible, get down to a safer altitude inside your margins. Flameout happens when you go too hard for too long.

2. No Fly Zones – Create a culture of protected time. At Tenwek, our days off were sacrosanct when we finally instituted them. Since we lived where we worked it was easy for someone to say, let me just call Dave or drop by his house to get his advice on this

problem. I could be asked to look in on a problem patient. We badly needed to mentally leave our heavy work load when we physically could not do so. The standard was established that you didn't bother folks on their day off unless it was for purely social reasons. A day off became a real day off to restore, renew and recharge. Of course the other side of the equation had to work as well. No sneaking in some of your usual work.

3. Develop Habits and Traditions to Unplug – Jody and I developed the tradition of playing Scrabble for a couple of hours on my day off. In reality it was a focused time for us to sit down and talk, catch up and enjoy each others' company. Scrabble was the excuse. Find a hobby you enjoy and can absorb you. I got into carpentry, Ham Radio and reading books. Other docs collected stamps or gardened.

Today, I've designed and developed a beautiful English flower garden at our house. I nurture plants from seeds, add on to my drip irrigation system and spend time in the garden with Jody pruning, weeding and cutting our flowers. We put in a vine-covered gazebo with a little table where we can have lunch or supper and enjoy the beauty. I'm restored and renewed when I'm working in my garden.

4. Restoration Zones – Plan regular time to get away to relax. Don't do too much or go too far. Focus on relationships, lots of sleep, prayer/Bible study, good exercise and doing the things you enjoy. These times are the built-in flame out prevention system. Use them.
5. Battery Charger – Your responsibilities are too big to tackle by yourself. Only Christ can give you peace amidst the stress, compassion among the masses and joy in the midst of unrelenting demands.

Every night I put my iPhone in its charger by my bed. If I forget and I'm using it a lot the next day, the screen will go dead. What makes us think our spiritual batteries won't die if we don't get charged up by God everyday?

6. Find an Overseer – All of us need an accountability agent. Someone who sees us better than we see ourselves. Someone who we will listen to and act upon their advice. Someone who will say, "Whoa! Slow down. You are pushing too hard." Or, "Your life is getting out of balance. It is time to get back on course."

You can't run a marathon at sprint speeds. Learn to pace yourself and you will not only run the race well, but win.

God will be glorified. You will be fulfilled. Others will be blessed.

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Cura Animarum

By Rev. Stan Key

While in Calcutta for a pastor's conference in January 2001, I made sure that I found the time to take a one-day excursion to Serampore, about 15 miles up the Hoogly River. I wanted to visit the

grave of William Carey. The tomb itself was unimpressive. Other than his name and the dates for his birth and death, the only words written were these: “A wretched, poor, and helpless worm, on Thy kind arms I fall.” Yet few lives have had a greater impact on human history.

Born in humble circumstances in England, Carey began his adult life as a shoe cobbler and then entered the Baptist ministry in Leicester. As a pastor, he began to feel a great burden for the evangelization of the world. However, when Carey proposed to the leaders of his denomination that the church should become involved in missions beyond the borders of England, he received a harsh retort: “Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He’ll do it without your aid or mine!”

Carey did sit down, but his belief that God was calling him into missions would not go away! In 1793 he and his family sailed for India and eventually settled in Serampore. He served for 34 years without ever taking a furlough. Although his life and ministry were characterized by incredible trials and adversities, the fruit of his labor was beyond one’s ability to calculate.

- He translated the Bible, or portions of it, into over 35 languages and dialects.
- He helped to establish co-ed schools across India and other institutions of higher learning.
- His work in botany and agriculture was very influential in India. In fact, a variety of eucalyptus has been named after him: *Careya herbacea*.
- He introduced the steam engine, the idea of savings banks to India, and the first modern newspaper to India.
- His example inspired the greatest century in mission activity the world has ever seen. History knows Carey as “The Father of Modern Missions.”
- He worked hard for human rights and helped to end cruel practices such as infanticide and sati (widow burning).

Carey’s motto for life gives an insight into his spirit: *Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God.* May the life and legacy of William Carey inspire us today as we set aside this week to consider the world and our role in it.

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Testimony of the Blessing of Serving the Lord

I just wanted to drop you a little note to say thank you for your ministry--the more I learn and see what the Lord is doing through CMDA the more blessed and excited I get. My name is Dave Ayer and I'm a Pediatrician serving with the Army in Taegu South Korea. My wife and I hope to move to Ethiopia to serve the Lord in 2.5 years once I finished my Army obligation. I wanted to write you because after reading Jan 09 Epistle I felt like you might be blessed by something the Lord did through me in early December when I med-evac'ed a little girl with cancer from Taegu to Tripler Army Med Center in Hawaii. Only a few times in my short career (I graduated from residency 18 months ago) have I really felt like the Lord used me...this was one of those times.

My Prince Of Peace

8:30 am December 2nd Camp Walker Clinic Taegu, South Korea

A favorite family of mine lays before me their angel Abriana, cachectic, struggling for breath, she smiles forced to speak in brief sentences. She will be three in January. A malignant, soft ball-size tissue protrudes from her sacrum...

Father, she's sick and I know not what lies ahead for her, nor even where to start...

"But now, this is what the Lord says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...Do not be afraid, for I am with you." Isaiah 43:1-3,5

6:30 pm December 2nd Dongsan University Hospital Pediatric ICU Taegu, South Korea

Her CT scan show the impossible, it's far worse than I could have imagined. Countless metastatic tumors fill her lungs, her pelvis brims with cancer—one mass extends to the base of her lungs. Maybe 50% of her lungs are functional...

How Father? How can I tell these parents their angel is dying before our eyes?

"...do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." Matthew 10:19-20

4:30 am December 3rd Camp Walker Clinic Taegu, South Korea

Air evacuation arrangements are finalized, eight to twelve hours until we fly to Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii. Due to the urgent need of evacuation, I will be her medical attendant. I have never done anything like this before - I am officially scared.

"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken." Psalm 62:1-2

11 pm December 3rd K2 Airbase Taegu, South Korea

Nervous and exhausted, Abriana, Kaleb (her 4 month old brother), mom, dad and I board a C-130. She has worsened but is in stable but moderate pain and terrified. The noise is deafening. Her pain cuts my soul - it can't be treated adequately, for it would worsen her breathing.

"Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear..." Hosea 6:1-3

3am December 4th, Kadena Airbase Okinawa, Japan

Last transfer, we board a C-141.

Lord, my body is starting to fail me. I need your strength.

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:28-31

10:30 am December 4th, somewhere over the Pacific Ocean

Abriana is slowly decompensating and requiring more oxygen with less effect. We're two and a half hours out. I call for medical advice and cry out for spiritual intercession.

Father, if ever in my life I have needed you, it is now...

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ...For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. ..."Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." Psalm 91:1-2, 11-15

No intervention is made...her oxygen saturation begins to rise.

1pm December 4th (Korea Standard Time) Hickam Airbase Honolulu, Hawaii

Touch down, American soil has never felt so sweet.

4pm December 4th (KST) Tripler Army Medical Center Honolulu, Hawaii

Abriana is intubated and taken to the OR for line placement and biopsy. Fourteen hours later chemotherapy is started.

I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered you, O God, and I groaned; I mused, and my spirit grew faint. You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak. I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused and my spirit inquired: "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. With your mighty arm you redeemed your people... Your path led through the sea your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen..." Psalm 77:1-15,19

60 hours of Heavenly strength on 90 minutes of sleep.

Two planes

Three countries

My bride of quiet strength and powerful prayer

A Battalion Commander, Sergeant Major, Chaplain and others who personify compassion, support and love.

A world wide community...Thailand, France, England, Kenya, Senegal, Germany, St Croix, Nigeria, Iraq, Washington, Florida, Hawaii, Colorado, Texas, North Carolina, Tennessee, Minnesota, Utah, Nevada, Virginia, Maryland, Wyoming, Nebraska, California, Illinois, Alaska...of prayer warriors standing in the gap, asking for a miracle

One Almighty God who listens...and answers

In Korea we have a saying "Katchi Kapshida", it means "we go together" in reference to the Korean & US military alliance. It will never mean that to me, for now I understand what He has spoken...

"Be strong and courageous...The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deuteronomy 31:7-8

PS--Abriana is doing amazing well--its turns out it was Germ Cell Cancer and after 3 doses of Chemo her repeat CT scan showed incredible improvement and she is doing about as well as anyone could have imagined.

Book

When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement by Rev. Glenn Schwartz

This book is about avoiding or overcoming unhealthy dependency in the Christian movement. It contains a description of the dependency syndrome, its historical development and how to overcome it. Though unhealthy dependency is widespread, the basic premise of this book is that it does not need to be considered an incurable illness. The reader will be introduced to churches that were once victims of unhealthy dependency but learned how to overcome it. There are many practical illustrations and suggestions for those in Christian service that face the challenge of avoiding or overcoming unhealthy dependency. Other issues dealt with include medical mission institutions, short-term missions and, most significantly, long-term missionary service. Several chapters are a basic introduction to cross-cultural issues for missionaries and church leaders. This book contains suggestions for non-western church leaders, missionaries, short-termers, mission executives, mission-minded donors and church mission committees.

The book can be ordered individually or in multiple copies on the World Mission Associates website. A generous bulk pricing schedule is available on the website at www.wmausa.org.

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