

# The Center for Medical Missions'

## *e-Pistle*

### June 2010

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Welcome to this issue of the e-Pistle. I hope you will find it useful. Dr. Stevens shares some proverbs from his new book and Stan Key challenges us to find our talents and give all to the Boss. Finally, Dr. Koteskey has some advice on reconciliation.

Advance Notice: We are in the process of developing a questionnaire to collect data and update our Handbook on International Rotations. Hopefully, within a month you will be given a URL where you can either update the current information or provide information on a clinic/hospital site that is not yet included in the Handbook. As you know, introducing medical students and residents to your ministry is a great way to recruit future colleagues. We provide the Handbook to everyone who inquires about an international rotation. I hope you will be willing to take the few minutes required to help us improve this service to medical students and residents.

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**Here are the links to this month's articles:**

[Proverbs by Dave Stevens](#)

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

[Reconciliation](#)

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#### **Proverbs - Section I: Management/Administration**

by David Stevens, MD

I'm in the midst of writing a book with Bert Jones, the president of Go International. Bert served at CMDA for a number of years as our Director Leadership Ministries.

The book is going to be called Leadership Proverbs and our goal is to encapsulate leadership principles into small memorable bites. Leadership skills can be learned and enhanced by adherence to enduring wisdom. Pithy proverbs communicate these truths most memorably. Their brevity and clarity facilitate their usage for would-be leaders in every walk of life. Proverbs are also one of the most enduring forms of communication, because they are viral. They are first internalized and then passed on to others. They change behavior and enhance skills. They are the germs of an infectious leadership movement.

All missionary doctors are leaders, so, this month I thought I would share a few proverbs with you. The book will have 500-1000 of these. If you find them useful, let us know and stay tuned, the book should be out this fall!

1. A lonely leader is soon a moaning leader. Share your burdens and they become bearable, but choose your confidant carefully.
2. No matter how successful you are, the only thing you will take to heaven with you is other people.
3. Be winsome, especially when you win.
4. Don't worry about winning every battle. Do what is right then relax. If you have been faithful, there is no need to be fretful.
5. Master the art of communication to master the art of motivation. If you are creative, concise, and compelling, you'll inspire.
6. When it is all said and done, leadership means little if you have not led the ones you love.
7. Your greatest abilities are your greatest liabilities when taken to the extreme.
8. If you don't keep your balance, you will soon fall down.
9. If you don't read, you are unlikely to succeed. You are either getting smarter or you are getting dumber.
10. Create fun memories with your team. They will cherish them and cherish you.
11. Money is like food. Too much or too little of it is dangerous to your team's health.
12. No stress, no strain, no growth. To get leadership buff you have to lift the heavy stuff.
13. Laughter lubricates life. It unwinds your mind, soothes your soul, and energizes your emotional batteries.
14. Good governance is the firm foundation for leaders to build on. If the foundation fails, the building will ultimately fall.
15. Every leader needs to be held accountable. If you are not responsible to someone; you soon will be irresponsible with everyone.
16. Your leadership heritage is measured by how well things would move ahead if you dropped dead tomorrow.
17. Reinforce each team member's identity and uniqueness. Knowing you are significant motivates extraordinary performance.
18. If you create a sense of family, your team members will not want to leave home.
19. If you're mad, shut up! It saves on apologizing.
20. Protect your followers. Loyalty breeds loyalty.
21. Respect is the keystone in the arch of leadership. Everything falls apart without it.
22. If you're hard up, kneel down.
23. Deflect praise directed at you to your team. The more people it hits the more power it gains.
24. Criticism is bitter medicine. If it will make you better, swallow it. If not, spit it out and get on with life.
25. Managers tweak the system. Leaders transform the system.
26. Give your followers permission to fail. If they believe they always must hit the bull's eye, they will set the target too close.
27. Lead to serve; serve to lead.
28. There is a better way to do everything. Leaders find it.
29. Your values are more important than your vision. One delineates where you want to go, the other defines what you will be when you get there.
30. The best measure of a leader's quality is the quality of the people who follow

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## **Cura Animarum**

by Rev. Stan Key

John Piper, pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, has a way of shocking us into reality and reminding us of what is truly important. I simply cannot say it better than he does, so I let him speak for himself.

In April 2000, Ruby Eliason and Laura Edwards were killed in Cameroon, West Africa. Ruby was over eighty. Single all her life, she poured it out for one great thing: to make the Son known among the unreached, the poor, and the sick. Laura was a widow, a medical doctor, pushing eighty years old, and serving at Ruby's side in Cameroon. The brakes failed, the car went over a cliff, and they were both killed instantly. I asked my congregation: Was that a tragedy? Two lives, driven by one great passion, namely, to be spent in unheralded service to the perishing poor for the glory of the Son – even two decades after most of their American counterparts had retired to throw away their lives on trifles. No, that is not a tragedy. That is a glory. These lives were not wasted. And these lives were not lost.

I will tell you what a tragedy is. I will show you how to waste your life. Consider a story from the February 1998 edition of Reader's Digest, which tells about a couple who "took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast five years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30 foot trawler, play softball and collect shells." At first, when I read it I thought it might be a joke. A spoof on the American Dream. But it wasn't. Tragically, this was the dream: Come to the end of your life – your one and only precious, the Boss-given life – and let the last great work of your life, before you give an account to your Creator, be this: playing softball and collecting shells. Picture them before the Son at the great day of judgment: "Look, Son. See my shells." That is a tragedy. And people today are spending billions of dollars to persuade you to embrace that tragic dream. Over against that, I put my protest: Don't buy it. Don't waste your life. (Don't Waste Your Life. Crossway Books, 2003, pages 45-46.)

Today I join my voice with Piper's. There is a war going on. And to play trivial pursuits while the destiny of the world is hanging in the balance in to squander God's grace and to waste our lives. Whether you are a teenager or in retirement, don't buy the lie. Find the place where you can contribute most to the cause of Christ and His Kingdom and then give it all you've got! This life is the only one you have. Don't waste it!

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## **Reconciliation**

by Dr. Ron Koteskey

After a serious disagreement with other missionaries, you have settled your differences. You have asked for, received, and granted forgiveness, but something still seems wrong. Although you do not sense any anger in the relationship, your friendship is not the same as it was before. Forgiveness literally means to “give up” or “give away.” The dictionary defines it as “to give up resentment against” someone. That is a necessary first step in reconciliation—but much more is possible. Let us see what we can do, how we do it, and what are some possible results.

### **Go and be reconciled.**

The Son told his disciples that while they were worshiping Him in the sanctuary they might remember that a fellow Christian had something against them. If that happened, they were to leave their place of worship and, “First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:24). Reconciliation should take place as soon as possible after we realize we need it. Of course, one must be careful not to attempt it immediately after the offense while emotions are still highly aroused and may interfere.

Reconciliation literally means to “bring together again.” The dictionary defines it as “to make friendly again or win over to a friendly attitude.” Although forgiveness has occurred, friendship may not have yet been restored, and that is what is missing. Forgiveness may involve only one person, but reconciliation always takes two.

Note that here we are talking about restoring a relationship between you and someone you know has something against you. We are not talking about the situation in Matthew 18 which involves you having something against another person.

### **How do I do it?**

People are sometimes unsure of how to go about actually moving toward reconciliation. Fred DiBlasio has developed several steps he uses to help people through forgiveness and into reconciliation. After defining, considering scriptures on, and explaining forgiveness and reconciliation, he introduces the following steps. Then after reviewing the steps, he asks if the people want to go through them toward reconciliation. If so, they proceed. If not, they wait.

- The offender states and explains the offense. He or she clearly, specifically, and explicitly states the act for which he or she is seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. He or she then follows with an explanation of the reason behind the offensive behavior.
- Both parties ask questions and receive answers about what happened, and this information may begin to bring them together.
- The offended shares his or her emotional reaction (with the permission of the offender). This ventilating of feelings in detail often leads to the offender being more empathic.
- The offender then paraphrases what was said and proposes a plan. Expressing the feelings in other words usually leads to even greater empathy, and then he or she proposes a plan (including specific changes and means of accountability) that will eliminate the behavior.
- The offended then identifies with the offender. Realizing that he or she is not completely faultless, the offended may be able to identify with some of the guilt, loneliness, etc. that the offender has experienced since the act.

- Both persons must agree on what forgiveness and the first steps toward reconciliation mean. Granting forgiveness means that the offense can never again be used as a weapon-- it is a letting go, but not necessarily forgetting. The one receiving forgiveness must remember that he or she has agreed to be accountable and not repeat the offense.
- The offender then makes a formal request for forgiveness and reconciliation for the action in question. This may include asking the Boss as well and the formal recording of the date, time and place of the request.
- The offended then either grants, or refuses to grant, forgiveness and movement toward reconciliation. If granted, it is recorded with the request. If not granted, the process stops here, and may be resumed at a later time.

This cycle is then repeated as often as necessary until all offensive actions have been discussed. It usually includes both parties taking turns being the offended and the offender. However, no one is allowed to pressure another person to ask forgiveness for perceived wrong behavior. Also remember that although forgiveness is final in this process, much emotion may remain and full reconciliation may take much more time.

### **Will everything be the same?**

Certainly not immediately, and perhaps never. Remember that this is just the beginning of reconciliation, and it may take months or years to complete. Trust takes a long time to develop. Just one wrong act may destroy it, and then it will take even longer to develop again. Sometimes it never fully develops after it has been destroyed. The following will help rebuild trust.

- Carry out every detail of the plan you have proposed to see that the offensive behavior will not be repeated.
- Be completely accountable as you have proposed.
- If you do engage in some wrong action, apologize immediately and sincerely.
- Always keep your word on other things.
- Be completely and consistently trustworthy in all dealings with others.
- Trust others yourself.
- Be openly and consistently cooperative.

John Mark had deserted the first missionary team to take the gospel to other cultures. Although his uncle Barnabas wanted to take his nephew when the team went back for a second term, Paul had not yet reconciled with Mark and would not take Mark on his team. However, forgiveness and reconciliation came later as indicated by Paul saying, "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11).

### **What if the person refuses?**

Sometimes the person refuses, as was the case with Samuel and Saul in 1 Samuel 15. Although Saul's repentance ("I have sinned...Now I beg you, forgive my sin..." vs. 24-25) sounds sincere, it came only after two denials in which he blamed the soldiers (vs. 13-15; 20-21). After that incident, Samuel never went to see Saul again (v. 35). Some offenses are so serious, and some requests for forgiveness are so insincere, that the process stops and never begins again.

Whether the process continues depends on such things as the seriousness and duration of the offense. For example, it is much easier to reconcile after an argument over forgetting your spouse at the store than it is over adultery. Likewise it is easier (though still very difficult) to forgive your spouse over a single act of adultery on impulse than over a long affair with “a friend.”

Sometimes the process ends because the other person simply refuses. Such a refusal may be temporary, or it may be permanent. All that the Boss asks of you is that you sincerely repent, enlist the aid of a mediator, and try everything you know to do. Reconciliation takes two people, and the other person may continue to refuse. Paul, that early missionary, put it so well in the last half of Romans 12. He said, “Be devoted to one another (v. 10).... Live in harmony with one another (v. 16).... If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (v. 18). The ideal is to be reconciled to everyone, but sometimes you have done everything you can do and it still does not happen. God does not hold you responsible for someone else’s refusal to proceed.

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

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