

The Center for Medical Missions'

e-Pistle

March 2011

Welcome to this issue of the e-Pistle. In it you will find a report on your answers to the physician assistant licensing question I asked last month, a request from a group of medical students for a missionary mentor, and articles by Dr. Stevens, Rev. Key and Dr. Koteskey. I trust you will be encouraged.

I hope the following are helpful to you.

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The Art of Running a Meeting (Part 1) - Section I: Planning/Administration

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

Meetings are a necessary “evil” that must be mastered. They can consume way too much of your team’s time and effort. If you have a meeting with eight senior staff for an hour, you have taken away a person’s full day of productivity during the time you met.

Don’t get me wrong, you have to have some meetings, but you should first remember these four principles – Keep Them:

1. As Rare As Possible – Since meetings consume a lot of time, set the goal to have fewer sit down meetings and ruthlessly pursue replacing them with better alternatives. Look at the meetings you presently schedule. Are they needed? Are they accomplishing what you intend? Which ones can you eliminate and accomplish your goals in other ways?
 - o **Tip: Meetings on the Fly** – I hate to have progress held up waiting for a meeting or a decision to be made, so we do lots of “meetings on the fly,” like we do when we practice medicine. If I have a problem patient, I may do a “sidewalk consult” or get the key people around the patient’s bed to make a decision. Do the same in management. Quickly call the needed people together and decide what needs to be done. This keeps things moving.

2. Involving As Few People As Possible – Meetings often have people at them that are not really needed. They are there because you don't want them to be left out. That is a big waste of productivity. Figure out some other way to keep them in the loop.
 - **Tip: Survey:** Do a survey of those in regular meetings and ask questions like –*Do you wish you didn't have to come to this meeting? What are better, more efficient ways to accomplish your job description?*
3. As Brief as Possible – If you are not careful, people come late, personal discussions start and your meeting takes ten to fifteen minutes longer to get underway. Insist everyone is five minutes early and start exactly on time whether everyone is there or not. What is expected is what gets done.

Avoid letting meetings get off track. Last weekend I was at a board meeting where, as we should, we had “Executive Session” at the end of the regular meeting to discuss the President's performance and how to help that person do a better job. Before the cat could meow, someone got us back on a topic we had discussed earlier during the regular session and we found ourselves talking general board business without the CEO there. This is a big “no ... no.” I had to interrupt and get us back on track.

Continue to ask, *How can we accomplish our meeting goals in less time?* Set a time limit to each meeting. My rule is no meeting can last more than an hour and many should be scheduled for much less time than that. I was recently at the CME conference in Thailand and noted their teaching sessions had been shortened to 45 minutes. I asked why and they related studies show that teachers at hour-long meetings spent 15 minutes telling jokes and personal anecdotes that were not substantive to the topic.

- **Tip: Stand up Meetings** – Have stand up meetings where you don't sit down. Studies show they take 1/3 to 1/2 the time. Some teams such as those at ward shift changes have stand up “Scrums” each day that only last 5-10 minutes to relate problems and status reports from those leaving to those coming on. Stand up gatherings can work well for many types of meetings.
4. As Focused as Possible – It takes time for people to get on track and the more often you “jump tracks” the more time is spent in gaining momentum again. Keep the meeting focused on what is important and stick to it. Keep everyone's nose to the grindstone by recapping discussions, asking questions and letting everyone know you want their input to be concise. You may want to use a white board if you are brainstorming.
 - **Tip:** Don't let one person dominate the discussions or go on and on. Solicit people's opinions who are not contributing and don't hesitate to creatively interrupt those that aren't getting to their point by saying something like, “How would you summarize what you are saying in one sentence?” If a person is a perennial problem, meet with them between meetings to constructively discuss how they can better contribute.

To be continued next month.

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Cura Animarum

by Rev. Stan Key

The problem today is not so much the absence of Jesus as the confusion that surrounds his true identity. How many Jesus' are there? Will the real Jesus please stand up!

Many today believe in **Jesus-Lite**. The most profound thing that can be said about this Jesus is that he is, well... nice. Always smiling, this is a deity whose supreme purpose is to ensure that your day goes well. Jesus-Lite tastes great, but he's not very filling.

Genie-Jesus is another option high on the list of many today. Do you have a need? Just rub the magic lamp, say the proper words and poof...out comes Genie-Jesus to grant your wish. One of the great benefits of this Jesus is that he comes and he goes on command. Once he does what we ask him to do, we send him back to his lamp until we need him again.

An older version of Jesus that is now back in vogue is **Jesus-Plus**. What makes this Jesus so popular is that he is happy to sit on your god-shelf next to your other favorite deities. You can worship Jesus-Plus and the money-god, the sex-god, the pleasure-god, the security-god, etc. all at the same time.

You'll hear people talk about **Jesus-Chic** on Oprah, at the Academy Awards and in the tabloids. You'll find bumper stickers evoking this Jesus on late model Lexus' and Mercedes. Warning: this Jesus is not omnipresent. He is not found in areas of poverty, hunger, disease or suffering.

One of the latest variations to emerge in recent years is **Designer-Jesus**. Many prefer this Jesus because he adapts so easily to his environment. He morphs into the deity you desire: a long-haired rabbi, a psychotherapist, a CEO, a fishing buddy, a teenage revolutionary, or a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

The problem we face today with these multiple versions of Jesus is not new. Paul faced the same situation in the first century.

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached...you put up with it easily enough. (II Corinthians 11:3-4)

What about you? Which Jesus do you worship? Only the **Real Jesus** has the power to save. The only place to meet Him is in the New Testament.

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Thank You for Your Responses to my PA Licensing Question

I'm sending a big thank you to the ones of you who responded to my question about whether or not a Physician Assistant can be licensed in your country of service. It appears that some countries in Africa are leading the way in this. Licensing Boards in Malawi and Kenya are licensing PAs as clinical officers, a degree that is offered in training schools in those countries. Other African countries also train clinical officers, but have not yet recognized the similarity of physician assistant training. Tanzania falls into this category.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Cameroon have licensed PAs as RNs or MAs in Nursing. Nurses in these countries are licensed to diagnose and treat.

Honduras is the only Latin American country where a worker reports success in licensing PAs, but he is not sure he would try again due to time and effort required. Workers in Guatemala, Bolivia and Ecuador have not been successful in getting PAs licensed. Neither have workers in Papua New Guinea and Nepal.

I know there are many PAs who would love to serve in outreach to the needy around the globe. If you think it might be helpful, you now have an idea of which countries could be a reference for the officials in your country of service. I'll help in any way I can.

Susan

Wanted: Missionary Physician Mentor for Medical Students

A group of students at the Medical School for International Health in Israel will be forming a medical missions interest group. Although our program has an integrated global health curriculum, there are few Christian or missionary physician models in the area. Our group is expecting to meet around once a month and would appreciate your insight, via e-mail or possibly Skype, into questions like these:

What are some approaches to effective, sustainable physical and spiritual healing?

What have your ministry and medical practice looked like? How have you integrated the two?

How can one get from medical school to the mission field?

What should we be doing now to prepare for the mission field?

If you are interested or have questions, please email elisa.crystal@gmail.com.

PS: Please copy your response to susan.carter@cnda.org so that I will know someone replied. Thank you!

Resource

Could You Use Equipment, Supplies and Medicines?

Medical Ministries International is a Christian-based non-profit organization located in the Central Valley of California. MMI is a unique organization that recycles new and used medical equipment, supplies, and medicines and puts them to use in less advantaged clinics and hospitals all over the world. Medical surplus that would end up in landfills are transported to countries where it is used to serve those in need.

MMI's goal is to supply just the things you specifically need. The cost to the organization requesting assistance is shipping. To learn more, visit www.medministries.org. To send a request go to www.medministries.org/services or email: AJ Bowser, Director of Logistics: aj@medministries.org.

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Saying Goodbye

By Dr. Ron Koteskey

One missionary said, "I am tired of making friendships and then moving all over; to me it is not worth the effort. On furlough I know I am leaving, so why try?"

Another said, "I don't know how to deal with the changes that surround the arrival and departure of staff members on the field. Especially with short-termers coming and going, it seems like we are always expanding and contracting to include so many different people on our team.... How do we love deeply yet hold lightly?"

Still another said, "I find it hard to have to say goodbye all the time. People I become friends with leave our part of the field, and I have to stay behind. How do I cope with that other than to quit building relationships?"

When you became a missionary you probably thought about saying goodbye to your family and friends in your passport country and then leaving. However, you may have never considered how difficult other goodbyes would be. Is this a new problem? Is it getting worse? How can you cope with it? Let us consider these issues.

Is this a new problem?

No, this problem has been around as long as missionaries have. A look at Paul and his relationships with the people of Ephesus shows us some of the problems with saying goodbye.

Paul was apparently in Ephesus only a short time near the end of this second term. After speaking in the synagogue, Paul left a couple in Ephesus to continue the work. People asked him

to spend more time there, but he declined, saying he could come back if it was God's will (Acts 18:19-21). He and his co-workers there had to say goodbye.

Near the beginning of his third term, Paul again went to Ephesus. After more than two years of evangelism, discipleship, spiritual warfare, and encouragement Paul again said goodbye and left. He traveled to Macedonia with a multinational team of seven others (Acts 19:1-20:1). Again he and the disciples he left there had to say goodbye.

Near the end of his third term, Paul decided not to stop at Ephesus even though he was passing close by, because he was in a hurry. However, he did stop a few miles south of Ephesus and sent for the elders of the Ephesian church so that he could meet with them briefly. Then they again had to say goodbye. In this instance we are told more about the nature of the goodbye: They wept, embraced, kissed, grieved, and finally tore themselves away (Acts 20:16-21:1).

Saying multiple goodbyes to coworkers is nothing new for missionaries.

Is it getting worse?

It is probably no more difficult to for each individual, but it may well be that people have to say goodbye more often than they did in Paul's day. Changes in the last half of the twentieth century have made short-term missions to any part of the world a reality. Before the advent of reasonably priced air travel since 1950, just reaching many mission fields often took several weeks crossing the ocean by ship. Today people can be on any mission field in the world in a matter of hours, a couple days at the most.

Does this affect everyone?

Yes, it affects everyone, but it affects people differently. Some people seem to have little need for deep relationships and are content to keep relationships at more of a surface level, so saying goodbye has relatively little effect on them. Other people have a greater desire to share intimately with a larger group of friends, and saying goodbye affects them, very deeply.

Women tend to be more relationship oriented than are men. Therefore, they may be more affected by leaving their friends or having their friends move away. Unfortunately, their husbands are sometimes not sensitive to this difference between themselves and their wives.

Do we just quit building deep relationships?

Some people try to cope by simply becoming detached or "hardened." By not getting deeply involved with their fellow missionaries they decrease the pain of having to say goodbye. This coping mechanism may reduce the pain of goodbyes; but the person becoming detached, the person who is "rejected," and the gospel message are all harmed by this.

Jesus commanded us to love each other as he loved us. Loving and being loved are important to both our mental and physical health. When deep relationships are avoided, both parties lose a part of their potential support system. In addition, Jesus pointed out that this was how others

would know that we are his disciples. Thus, by not developing these relationships, we make it less likely that people will see Jesus in us (John 13:34-35).

How do we love deeply yet hold lightly?

Since saying goodbye is a normal part of life, especially missionary life, we can take steps to minimize the pain.

- Change your perspective. Rather than concentrating on the negative aspects of anticipating parting, it is better to concentrate on the positive aspects of the current relationship. As someone said, it is better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all.
- Look for people who “click.” When you find people with the same values, same aspirations, same commitment, etc., become close friends even if it seems there is no “future” in the friendship. One couple we met more than a decade ago when visiting a field are still good friends. We have become one of their supporters, visited them on the field again, made contact at conferences and had them in our home while on home assignment. We have spent hours talking and sharing deeply.
- Communicate while apart. This has always been possible, but is much easier with the invention of such things as e-mail, Skype, and Facebook in recent years. However, these are mixed blessings.
- On the positive side, friendships can be continued at virtually no financial cost even when people are far apart. (In fact, relationships can be initiated without ever meeting personally, and that may become a problem.)
- On the negative side, some people become so busy keeping old friendships alive that they fail to make new ones. Some missionaries communicate via e-mail daily with old friends, but spend little time with the people living near them currently. Thus, they fail to continue to make new friends.
- Grieve your losses. It is all right (even necessary) to do all the things Paul and the elders from Ephesus did:
 -
 - Wept
 - Embraced
 - Kissed
 - Tore away
- Remember that relationships give hope. At creation God built parting into the family. When a young man and young woman grow up, they leave their father and mother and cleave to each other (Genesis 2). Most people do not refuse to have children because their children mature and leave, they look forward to reuniting with their children both here on earth and in heaven. We also look forward to reuniting with other loved ones in heaven.

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.

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