

The Center for Medical Missions'

e-Pistle

May 2009

I'm keeping this newsletter short since you received one just a couple weeks ago. I think you will be encouraged and challenged by what you read. If you have ever used International Aid as a supplier, you will be interested in their new on line catalog. Keep reading to learn more about it. In this month's edition Dr. Koteskey's article focuses on depression. If any of the articles seem particularly helpful, please feel free to share them with others. As usual, this e-Pistle begins with an article by Dave Stevens on good use of time.

In this issue of the *e-Pistle* you will find the following:

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Time Limit

Section XII: Taking Care of Ones Self

By David Stevens, MD

Don't complain that you don't have enough time. You have the same amount of time each day as Albert Einstein, Mother Teresa and Michelangelo. The issue is not lack of time, but how you are investing the time you have each day. Thomas Jefferson advocated, *Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much can be done if we are always doing.*

Don't misinterpret Jefferson's words. He was not advocating working 24 hours a day but investing your time in what is important.

The topic of time management recently came up when I had some problems with my computer calendar program. My son was trying to help me repair the problem and noticed how many events I had each day such as; supervision meetings, media interviews, writing projects, strategic phone calls and speaking engagements. It was a teachable moment as I shared something I had learned about investing my time well.

If you are like most missionaries, there does not seem to be enough time in a day for all that you have to do, much less what you want to do. I can relate to that. Don't think for a minute that I

have it all together on this issue. At the same time, I get a lot more done than most people by employing a set of principles. Perhaps they can be of benefit to you as well. Check them out:

1. Change Your Mind – Being busy is often not what life does to us but what we do to ourselves. Some things are beyond your control. If you have a malaria epidemic or an emergency C-Section, your time is not your own. Yet, good time management is even more important during a crisis than when things are going well. Periodically, step back and evaluate with an objective eye, “How am I using my time?” If you are not investing your time well, change your mind. Make a conscious decision to apply good time management principles to your life and then act on them. Assessing how you are doing is critical to investing your time well.
2. Opt for Organization – Lack of organization robs you of time. Yesterday, it rained. I could have spent a number of minutes looking for my umbrella but organization has solved that. The umbrella rack is right beside the front door where I head out to work. When I come home, that is where it goes so I can easily grab it on my way out the door. Multiply these few minutes by the dozens of things you do each day – looking for your keys, trying to locate your cell phone or finding a pen - that can take less time if you get organized. I travel a lot so I have packing down to a science. I have two sets of toiletries. One is in my dock kit ready to grab and stick in my bag. I’m not looking for bits and pieces or constantly transferring items back and forth between the cabinet and it with each trip. I have a suitcase I keep in my closet instead of the attic so it is easy to grab. I have a mental checklist of what I will need to take; mix and match clothes and can pack for a weekend trip in 10 minutes. Whatever you have to do each day, how can you minimize the time wasted through good organization?

Clutter is the enemy of organization. Ruthlessly give away or donate things that are not needed. If you haven’t used something in a year, you probably don’t need it. Put things that you often use in easily assessable locations and file everything else away. Mark storage boxes with their content so you can easily find things. I don’t sort through drawers and cupboards looking for things in my workshop. Everything has its place on pegboards on my wall where I can find it at a glance, and so I can put it back where it belongs. I have a three ring binder in my top right desk drawer containing reference lists that I need to consult frequently. There are hundreds of things you can do to get organized. Get a good book on this subject and apply it. Opt for good organization. It will save you a ton of time.

3. Rally to Routines – I have daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual routines that I keep on my computer calendar. For example, I avoid many time robbing interruptions because I meet individually with every staff member I supervise at the same time each week. It gives me a chance to find out what is going well and what problems I can help solve. I can assign a new task, give encouragement, feedback and set priorities. Each person knows that is their time and we want to use it well so I expect them to come in organized with a check-list of important things to go over.

Our board meets three times a year. There are a number of routine things we assign to each meeting during the year. One meeting reviews the audit, examines our insurance

policies and reviews the staff policy manual. Another one sets budgets, nominates new officers and does other routine tasks. We don't forget to do something because they are on the annual calendar. It also let's us stagger tasks so we don't have too much work to do at any particular meeting.

The added blessing is that these routines don't take as much mental energy because they are good for us psychologically and physically. You can do simple routines while occupying your mind with more important things.

4. Be a Goaltender – Take time to list daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and even lifetime goals. The Bible says, “without a vision, the people perish.” You need a vision for what you want to accomplish, what new skills you want to acquire, people you want to keep in contact with and projects you want to accomplish. They can be specific or general goals. You may have a general goal of spending quality time with your family and a specific goal of reading through the Bible in a year.

Goals are meaningless unless they are connected to a measurable objective and a due date. What is the goal line you are trying to reach and when do you want to get there? I like to work backward from when I want to have big goals accomplished to figure out what I need to be doing now to accomplish them. In other words, big goals get broken into measurable milestones so I can see how I am progressing.

I do this organizationally and personally. At CMDA we have 250 goals in our strategic plan. Three times a year I take the pulse of each department to see how they are moving forward to accomplish what they set out to do, and the board then measures my success by how we are accomplishing the plan.

One of my new hobbies is flower gardening. Since perennial plants are expensive, I mark my calendar to germinate 400 plants in seed trays starting the first week of March. That way by the time it is warm enough to transplant them outside in late April, they are ready to go. [Yeah, you should see my English fire garden. This morning I picked a long stem pink rose off my eight-foot high bush (no it is not on steroids, just good compost) and there must be 40 blooms on it. But, I digress]

I find checklists a great way to monitor my progress. What gets measured gets done. Michael Altshuler said, the bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot. You get in the pilot's seat by knowing where you are and where you want to go.

Continued next month.

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Cura Animarum
By Rev. Stan Key

One of the most famous testimonies in history is that of the Frenchman Blaise Pascal. Mathematical prodigy, physicist, inventor, literary stylist and religious thinker, Pascal's life was turned upside down when he experienced a "night of fire". A piece of parchment on which he had recorded this decisive experience was found sewn into the lining of his coat after his death. It seems he wanted this testimony always close to his heart.

The year of grace 1654.

Monday, 23 November, feast of Saint Clement....

From about half past ten in the evening until half past midnight.

FIRE

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and scholars.

Certainty, certainty, heartfelt joy, peace.

God of Jesus Christ.

God of Jesus Christ.

My God and your God....

The world forgotten, and everything except God.

He can only be found by the ways taught in the Gospels.

Greatness of the human soul.

O righteous Father, the world had not known thee, but I have known thee.

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy....

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

I have cut myself off from him, shunned him, denied him, crucified him.

Let me never be cut off from him!

He can only be kept by the ways taught in the Gospel.

Sweet and total renunciation.

Total submission to Jesus Christ and my director.

Everlasting joy in return for one day's effort on earth.

I will not forget thy word. Amen.

Fire! There is no better word to describe the coming of the Spirit of God into our midst. But there can be no fire without fuel. Are you combustible this morning?

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Announcement

International Aid

International Aid (IA) is pleased to announce the launch of our new **Health Technology and Supplies Online Catalog (HTS)**. Just go to www.InternationalAid.org and click on "Online Catalog." Check us out!

The HTS Catalog merges *tradition with technology*.

For nearly three decades International Aid has been the trusted source of high value medical equipment and supplies for organizations and professionals who bring health and health care to the poor throughout the world. IA is privileged to serve!

Our HTS Online Catalog brings new convenience, more products, better service and greater value! Simply go online to explore products, check features and prices, register as a customer to select items and submit a request. Each order request receives prompt personal attention.

In addition to high value products, IA's team of product experts and experienced field advisors answer questions, make recommendations, facilitate strategic planning, perform onsite assessments, fulfill custom orders, coordinate shipping logistics, and facilitate installation.

The health and medical products that IA offers include: new and reconditioned equipment from partnering manufacturers, reconditioned equipment secured from healthcare providers, and healthcare products including over the counter medications, personal care items and nutrition products. These healthcare products are available in quantities ranging from a pallet to full truckload. IA's equipment selections, product preparation, shipping logistics, and partner services are sensitive to the unique conditions and demands found in developing countries and diverse cultures. IA's expert team provides insight and advice to solve partner challenges, and capture emerging opportunities.

Don't see what you need? Just contact us by email or phone – it's likely we can source it for you.

From providing over-the-counter medications to equipping entire hospitals, IA is the “go to” partner for health technology and supplies.

We invite you to visit our website and online catalog today!

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Healthcare Products

Email: elzingaj@internationalaid.org

Phone: (616) 935.6854

International Aid, Inc.

17011 Hickory Street, Spring Lake

Michigan 49456-9712 USA

Toll Free: (800) 968.7490

FAX: (616) 846.7911

Office Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. EST

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Depression

By Dr. Ron Koteskey

It occurs to you that you have been feeling really sad, tired, discouraged about the future, unable to concentrate for some time, and you begin to wonder what is wrong. You just wish you could feel happy and enjoy life again. Certainly committed Christian missionaries could not be depressed, could they? Wouldn't God keep them from that? Should you pray? See someone for counsel? See your physician? Will you get better? How long will you feel like this? Let's consider some of these questions.

Can God's people be depressed?

Depression is the "common cold" of psychological disorders. About 20 of every 100 women and about 10 of every 100 men experience clinical depression at some time in their lives. Christians sometimes deny that they feel depressed, but many do, as did God's choice people thousands of years ago. Of course, there is no way we can go back and ask people in the Bible, but let's look at some things they said about themselves.

- David, king: "How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?...My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction" (Psalm 13:2; 31:10 NIV).
- Job, layman: "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?...I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil" (Job 3:11, 26 NIV).
- Elijah, prophet: "I have had enough, Lord. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors (1 Kings 19:4 NIV).
- Jonah, missionary: "O, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:3 NIV).

Can committed missionaries today be depressed?

Maybe heroes and heroines of the faith in Bible times became depressed, but what about some of our great missionary founders and their spouses. Let us look at what they said:

- A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: I fell "into the slough of despond so deep that...work was impossible...I wandered about deeply depressed. All things in life looked dark and withered."
- Adoniram Judson, missionary to Burma: "God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in him, but I find him not."
- Mary Morrison, wife of Robert Morrison (China), who wrote, "My poor afflicted Mary...She walks in darkness and has no light."
- Dorothy Carey, wife of William Carey (father of modern missions) who wrote, "My poor wife remains as she has been for several years, a melancholy victim of mental derangement."

What Causes Depression?

Many different things may cause depression. Here are just a few:

- Loss, disappointment, failure, grief
- Unfulfilled expectations, concern about the future
- Negative thinking, success seen as failure
- Medicine side effects, illness, imbalance of hormones or neurotransmitters
- Lack of social support, conflict
- Guilt, unforgiven sin
- Too little light, too much heat

Will I ever get over depression?

The good news is that although depressed people often feel so bad that it seems hopeless, most people recover from their depressions in a few months to a year or more without professional help. Depressions come, and, usually within months, they go. The bad news is that when people become depressed, the condition may interfere with their work and relationships. Some become so hopeless that they may try to take their own lives before they start to improve. Some types of depression do not get better without treatment; in fact, they can get worse. Other bad news is that about half the people who have depression once have it again.

What can I do about Depression?

Many people begin by trying to treat it themselves. Here are some things you might do:

- **If you have not been doing all the things listed below as preventives, do them**
- Replace negative with positive thoughts
- Keep a journal of what you think and feel
- Give yourself affirmations
- Listen to relaxing music
- Get more light or less heat
- Change your normal routine
- Set realistic goals and record reaching them weekly

People who are seriously depressed and considering suicide should not attempt self-treatment, but seek professional help immediately.

Who can I see for help?

If self-help does not work, the kind of treatment you receive depends on who you see for help.

- Pastor. Missionaries, like other Christians, often think their feelings of sadness, guilt, and worthlessness have a spiritual basis. A talk with your pastor for a “spiritual check-up” is a good place to begin. If this spiritual treatment works, fine. But if it does not, see a mental health professional.

- Psychiatrist. Depression may have as its cause a chemical imbalance, and psychiatrists tend to emphasize chemical treatment. An antidepressant, such as Prozac or Zoloft, may help.
- Psychologist/Counselor. Depression may be caused by your way of thinking about things. Cognitive therapy, which helps you change the way you think about things, is widely used by psychologists and other counselors, and it may help your depression.

We have come to expect instant fixes for any problems we have, and you must be aware that none of these professionals can bring about a cure in a few days. All of these usually take several weeks, but they do often shorten the depression. In addition, your depression may have several causes, so that you need several different kinds of treatment at the same time. You can pray long, but if your depression is a result of your way of thinking or a side effect of a medication you are taking, God may answer your prayer through counseling and/or appropriate medication.

Can I prevent depression?

There is no sure way to prevent any disorder. People inherit tendencies toward certain disorders, and if depression runs in your family, you are a more likely candidate. However, there are steps you can take that make depression less likely. The most helpful thing you can do is greatly to reduce stress!! Of course, telling missionaries to avoid stress is like telling them to quit; but fortunately, factors that increase happiness also tend to reduce stress. Happy people tend to have:

- High self-esteem. Remember that you are created in God's image.
- Optimism. Change your thinking to see the good in every situation.
- Close friendships (or a satisfying marriage). You are part of the body of Christ.
- Meaningful faith and work. You are a part of God's plan for the redemption of the world.
- Adequate sleep and exercise. Although this seems unrelated, not taking care of yourself physically leads to depression.
- Enjoyable activities. Regularly do "fun" things.

Although depression is common, you can take steps to prevent it and recover from it. You can find joy and hope.

For a more complete treatment of this topic as well as other topics please visit www.missionarycare.com or www.crossculturalworkers.com (no mention of missions/evangelism). Also please let your non-medical colleagues know about these free resources.

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The fastest and most secure way to give to CMDA is through our [secure online giving site](#). Your gifts will be used to continue and expand the critical work of CMDA as we minister to doctors, students and patients.

Center for Medical Missions

PO Box 7500
Bristol, TN 37621
423-844-1000

www.cmda.org/cmm

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