

The Center for Medical Mission's *e-Pistle* May 2013

Greetings from East Tennessee where spring has finally arrived. The azaleas and rhododendrons are gorgeous. I don't know if you've heard about the monstrous tornado that hit Moore, Oklahoma, but the people there will really appreciate your prayers. Two elementary schools were in the storm's direct path.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to spend some time answering questions at our Orientation to Medical Missions Conferences. It is not too late if you too would like to come. The dates we need people are July 20-22 and July 25-27. This will be in Abingdon, Virginia, which is in southwestern Virginia about 12 miles from Bristol, Tennessee. susan.carter@cnda.org

International Rotation Handbook – If you want your ministry included in our handbook for students and residents (even allied health professionals), you need to be sure to complete the online survey that you learned about in an email from Scott Reichenbach as quickly as possible. He is moving closer to completing the revision so it will soon be too late to have your ministry included. We only update the handbook every two years. If you've lost the URL for the survey, you can contact Scott at scott.reichenbach@cnda.org.

So far I haven't had much progress in building a policy vault. I wonder if it is because you don't have personnel policies. I do recognize that you are very busy, but could you take a couple minutes to let me know if "policies" is an area where you could use some help? I'm also still hoping those who have policies will forward copies to me.

susan.carter@cnda.org

This month you'll find the following articles:

[Ready, Aim, Fire](#) by Rev. Stan Key

[CMDE Conference - Some Things You Should Know](#) by Dr. David Stevens

[MedicalMissions.com and 2013 GMHC](#) by Dr. David Stevens

[You Should Know](#)

[Plastic Surgery for Dummies](#) - well sort of

[UpToDate](#)

[Medical Consults](#)

[This is No Honeymoon!](#) by Dr. Ron Koteskey

READY, AIM, FIRE!

“Children... are like arrows in a warrior’s hands” (Psalm 127:4, NLT).

In Psalm 127, Solomon compares parents and children to soldiers and arrows. Understanding one enables us to better understand the other. What does a warrior do with arrows?

1. He makes them READY.

In Bible times, soldiers prepared their own arrows. The security of the nation was potentially at stake in the quality of the arrows in the quiver. Is the shaft straight and strong? Will the fletching (feathers) make for stable flight? Is the point hard and sharp? Making the arrow was both science and art. Each one was unique, custom-made for a specific mission.

Likewise, parents are called to form and shape their children. The quiver is a safe place to prepare for a dangerous mission! Developing character, building faith, nurturing relationships and learning skills are some of the responsibilities God expects of parents.

2. He AIMS.

Once made, the warrior waited for just the right moment. Then, carefully placing the nock against the bowstring, he pulled back on the string as far as he could. Steadying his arm and fixing his gaze, he pointed the arrow in the direction he intended it to go. If his aim was poor or the target ill-conceived, all the effort of preparation would be wasted.

Parents also have a responsibility to point their children in the right direction. Tragically, many parents are confused about the purpose of life. Consequently their aim is poor. An apt description of much parenting today is contained in the couplet: I shot an arrow into the air, it fell to earth I know not where. Christian parents have a distinct advantage in that the mission for their children is clearly spelled out in God’s Word: be holy, love the Lord, love your neighbor, make disciples, do God’s will.

3. He FIRES.

Arrows are not meant to be collected or displayed. They are meant to be fired! The quiver must be left behind so that flight becomes possible. Twang! Letting go of our children is just as much a God-ordained responsibility for parents as forming them and giving them direction. Yes, the pain of separation is great. But there is no greater joy a parent can feel than to see their children launched into the will of God so that their lives will have maximum impact. Once launched, children discover that God has equipped them with an internal guidance system that permits them to make in-flight modifications. Though Mom and Dad’s influence was great, now they must take full responsibility for their life’s path.

Ready, aim, fire! Get the point?

2014 CMDE Conference - Some Things You Should Know

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

As you probably know, the CMDE conference which is normally held every other year at Brackenhurst, Kenya will be held near Athens, Greece in 2014. The dates are April 28 – May 8, 2014. For many years, the CMDE commission has been looking for a site large enough to have families attend but to no avail. Last year Dr. Gloria Halverson, who is the chair of the commission, was on the CMDA tour we led to Greece. Our host was AMG (Advancing the Ministry of the Gospel), a mission organization based in the U.S. with a large focus on carrying the gospel into this needy country. During a conversation with Fotis Romeos, their country director, he mentioned he knew of a hotel that they have used many times for conferences that might work for CMDE. Wow, was he right! Just check out the website [here](#).

We've known the benefits of going beyond just a barebones educational conference to a family retreat setting with spousal and children's programs. As important, if not more, than getting caught up to date on CE, is restoration and renewal for whole families in a place with great food, comfortable quarters and on-site recreation. The CMDE event in Asia used to have around 200 in attendance when it was held at a spartan site in Malaysia. When we moved it to a resort hotel in Thailand, it grew to almost 600 each year.

You will love Greece. It is a beautiful country. But there is something else that has drawn me to Greece twice in the last few years and will again next year. Here is how I found out about it.

I was invited by AMG a few years ago to speak at their Greek mission conference on the Aegean Sea. Though the evangelical church has only about 30,000 members (some U.S. mega churches are larger) they have a worldwide reach in missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and others places around the world. Though I was honored to be invited, I was soon wondering why I was there. It is the only mission conference I've attended where everyone went out to do street evangelism Saturday afternoon and that was in a country where you can be put in prison for years (the same penalty as child molestation) for leading someone under age 18 to Christ.

As special as the fellowship and new relationships were, the pivotal event was when AMG offered for Costas, their own biblical tour guide, to take us to biblical and historical sites for four days! Let me sum it up this way. I've been to the Holy Land twice, but Greece blew me out of the water. One difference is that everywhere you go you are not simply visiting a church built where a biblical incident may have taken place. At Berea, Philippi, Corinth and Athens, you stand on the archeological site at the exact spot where something happened. You stand where Paul stood before the "bima" (judgment

platform) in Corinth. You stand in the Praetorian Guard office in Philippi at the stone post where he was chained and flogged.

But that is only a minor difference. The major one is Costas, one of only three evangelical guides out of 1,600 trained guides in the country. His knowledge of ancient Greek, the Bible, theology, archeology and history is phenomenal. Within minutes of arriving at Philippi, I urgently started looking for something to take notes on. He took passages that I had read a hundred times and made them come alive with new insights not once but three to four hundred times. Let me give you a small sample of that from Acts 17:22-34, the story of Paul speaking on Mars Hill.

Imagine you are sitting there just below the Acropolis and the sun is setting over the panorama of Athens. Mars Hill had a number of functions. It was where the Supreme Court of Greece met during Paul's day, where philosophers debated and any speaker could come and make their case. Each speech could only last five minutes and had to follow strict rules of logic. Most that spoke would spend a year or longer writing and practicing their speeches. If they failed to do it right, they were interrupted and told to leave. Yet Paul, with no practice, followed all the rules to the letter.

He started by referring to the Temple to the Unknown God. I always thought that temple was just an insurance policy in a polytheistic society in case they failed to appease all the gods. Wrong!

A couple of hundred years before Paul arrived, thousands died from a severe plague in Athens. They sacrificed to every god they knew to no avail. The leaders and priests of Athens in desperation, after learning that there was a Holy Man and healer in Cyprus, asked him to come. He wrote back and told them there was a God that they did not know and if they would sacrifice and pray to Him, they would be saved. That God was the God of the Hebrews. They prayed and sacrificed to Yahweh and the plague stopped, so they built a temple to Him. Paul was starting with what they already knew and believed to tell them of Jesus.

Paul spoke for a little over two minutes (we read and timed his speech while we sat there). He was interrupted and his speech stopped because he claimed Christ has risen from the dead, which was heresy to most of those listening. They had no problem with a god becoming a man, something thought common for gods to do among the Greeks, but when he suggested that a god could die and then be resurrected, it was unthinkable.

Look at verse 34. It reads in part, "Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus..." (NIV 2011). How is that possible, after a two-minute speech which didn't even mention Christ's sacrifice on the cross?

Like you, I had no idea about the Areopagus and who Dionysius was. Costas shared that the Areopagus was the Supreme Court. Why would a Supreme Court Justice come to Christ with so little information? Well, you need to know the rest of the story.

Historians know quite a good bit about Dionysius because they still have portions of his diary. He was in Antioch the day Christ was crucified and wrote that the sky went dark for no apparent reason in the afternoon when an eclipse was not due. He noted that something portentous must have happened, that God had acted in some unknown way. When Paul spoke of the resurrection, he connected it to that day and quickly became a believer.

These are just two or three examples of the Acts and the Epistles coming to life in a whole new way. We took a group of board members and major donors back to Greece last fall and recorded every word Costas shared and had it transcribed for the group.

Costas is going to be leading tours for the CMDE participants. That alone would be reason for you attend! Want to learn why Paul told the women at Corinth to cover their heads? Did you know that “gymnasium” means “the place of naked men” and knowing that will help you understand Hebrews 12:1? What do Roman and Greek military victory processions have to do with understanding 2 Corinthians 2:14-16? Bottom line is, you will gain enough new insights for a hundred sermons!

As a bonus, for the first time, medical missionaries serving around the world are invited so you will meet others from all over the globe. Even if you attended the event in Thailand this year, you should plan to attend. You will be glad you did!

The conference registrar is Dr. Collin Sanford. You can contact him at csanforddmd@gmail.com if you have questions.

Hope to see you there!

MedicalMissions.com and 2013 GMHC

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

Medicalmissions.com continues to expand and much more is on the way. Will Rogers, who organizes the Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville, stopped by our offices recently and I was blown away! It is the place to refer people who are interested in healthcare missions to read stories, see pictures, hear podcasts, research mission organizations, learn about unreached people groups, contact missionaries, network with people who share their profession or interests and much more. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on the site and many, many new features are on the way.

I encourage you to post your stories, pictures, videos and your blog to get involved. The more we all utilize it, the better the site will be. The better the site, the more people will

be involved in medical missions. The more involvement, the more people will find physical and spiritual healing. Register today and set up your own profile so people can learn about you, your family and your ministry.

Can you believe that registration is already open for the 2013 Global Mission Health Conference which will be held November 7 – 9, 2013 in Louisville? If you have hopes of having a display booth you need to check immediately. I'm not sure if there are any spaces left. Making your personal reservation requires an additional step, even if you will be registering as one of the two registrations that come with an exhibit booth. www.medicalmissions.com. There is a piece below about ways you can use this incredible website to promote and recruit for your ministry.

You Should Know

- **Plastic Surgery for Dummies**
Dr. Bruce Steffes shares: You can get a free “plastic surgery for dummies” book entitled *Principles of Rehabilitative Surgery for Africa* from the PAACS website. [Click here](#) and fill in the form to download the text. Anyone who would like a free PDF copy of *Your Mission: Get Ready, Get Set, GO* can email me at bruce@s3ministries.com and I will send it by return email.
 - **UpToDate®**
A resource recommended by a CMDA member. UpToDate® is an evidence-based, physician-authored clinical decision support resource which clinicians trust to make the right point-of-care decisions. More than 5,100 world-renowned physician authors, editors and peer reviewers use a rigorous editorial process to synthesize the most recent medical information into trusted, evidence-based recommendations that are proven to improve patient care and quality. More than 700,000 clinicians in 158 countries and almost 90 percent of academic medical centers in the United States rely on UpToDate® to provide the best care. That trust has been earned because of the integrity of our recommendations, including the fact that we never accept funding from pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers or other commercial entities. [Click here](#) for more information.
 - **Medical Consults**
The email contact to use when you as a medical missionary need a consult: md2ndopinion@aol.com.
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This is no honeymoon!

by Dr. Ron Koteskey

Even though agencies try to create realistic expectations during orientation, some missionary candidates think that their missionary service will be like a wonderful “honeymoon.” Though that may be the case for a short time, reality soon sets in.

When Dorothy Carey set sail for India, she was under no such illusion. As shown in the first brochure, she did not want to go. Unfortunately, reality was as bad as she thought it would be (or worse). She was on a ship for five months without stopping at a single port. During the first year on the field, she had dysentery most of the time and lived in four different places, at times with another family. She lived with the constant threat of malaria and attack by tigers. Her sister, who had promised to help her, left to get married. Near the end of the year, her five-year-old son died. Surely she would have said, “This is no honeymoon!”

Fortunately, most people do not have such a difficult time. We may ask questions such as: Is there a honeymoon period in missions? Will becoming missionaries have an effect on our marriage? If both bride and groom want to be missionaries, wouldn't it be good to spend the early years of their married life on the field? Does having children when beginning mission work have an effect on our marriage? Do men and women react differently?

Honeymoon Stage

During the early days or months of living in another culture, while still in “vacation mode,” a person experiences interest, fascination, joy and enthusiasm living in another culture. This may last for days, weeks or even months.

However, when the inevitable difficulties with language, people, housing and food arise, people may become critical, frustrated, resentful and angry. Simple tasks become daunting challenges, and disillusionment sets in. This post-honeymoon time is very hard on marriage relationships, resulting in lower satisfaction in marriages.

Though thousands of missionaries have experienced this over the last couple of centuries, it was not until the end of the 20th century that Christopher Rosik at Link Care studied this change in marital satisfaction systematically. Over a 20-year period, he gave couples the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) three times:

- First, while they were candidates (before serving as missionaries),
- Second, four years later, after their first term of service in another culture,
- Third, an additional four years later, after their second term of service.

He analyzed the data comparing gender, length of marriage and ages of children (if they had any). The MSI has a measure of overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the marriage. Rosik found that satisfaction with their marriage declined significantly during the four years between the first and second times they took the test (during the first term), and it remained lower four years later the third time (during their second term).

Just Married!

Of course, a similar phenomenon occurs in any marriage. During the early days or months after the wedding, while still in the “honeymoon stage,” a person experiences interest, fascination, joy and enthusiasm for married life. This may last for days, weeks or even months.

However, when the inevitable difficulties from different expectations, different backgrounds and daily “drudgery” tasks of living arise, newlyweds may also become critical, frustrated, resentful and angry. Maintaining the relationship may become a daunting challenge, and disillusionment may set in. This post-honeymoon time may be hard on a marriage.

If a couple marries and leaves very soon to serve in another culture, the early days may be wonderful. Then if the two “honeymoons” end simultaneously, the following days may be dreadful. The couple may confuse cultural adjustments and marriage adjustments. The resulting disillusionment may cause them to leave the field, perhaps even the marriage. Even if they do not leave the marriage, their marriage may be damaged.

Married, no children

In addition to the general overall measure of satisfaction, the MSI has nine measures of satisfaction for specific areas of marriage. Rosik found the same pattern of declining satisfaction during the first term of service and continued lower satisfaction during the second term in three areas.

- Affective communication: The amount of affection and understanding expressed by their spouse.
- Sexual dissatisfaction: The frequency and quality of intercourse and other sexual activity.
- Role orientation: Traditional vs. nontraditional orientations toward marital and parental gender roles.

That is, missionaries became more dissatisfied with the affection, understanding, sexual activity and roles they were expected to play during their first term of service, and that dissatisfaction remained through their second term.

A decade earlier, Steve Sweatman studied first term missionaries, and he found that they also experienced sexual dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with affective communication. He did not study role orientation.

Married, with children

Children in the home resulted in two additional specific problem areas.

- Conflict over child rearing: This was the conflict between spouses about child rearing practices. Again, satisfaction declined during the first term and continued lower during the second term.
- Dissatisfaction with children: This included both the relationship between the spouses and children as well as parental concern with the emotional or behavioral well-being of at least one child. This changed little over time for those entering missions when they had been married for five or more years. However, the dissatisfaction increased during both the first and second terms for those married less than five years when they entered missionary service.

Gender differences

Wives and husbands had significantly different levels of dissatisfaction in three areas.

- Problem solving communication: general ineffectiveness in resolving differences. Wives more dissatisfied than husbands each time they took the MSI.
- Time together: the couple's companionship during time shared in leisure activity. Dissatisfaction for both husbands and wives increased significantly, but it increased during the first term for the wives and during the second term for husbands.
- Role orientation (defined above): Wives endorsed more traditional gender and parental roles than their husbands each time they took the MSI.

In his study of first-term missionaries a decade earlier, Sweatman also found the greatest area of dissatisfaction was with time together. In addition, he found that that this dissatisfaction was significantly correlated with depression. He did not check to see if there was a difference between husbands and wives relative to the correlation with depression.

What can we do?

Serving as missionaries is often hard on marriages. After a brief honeymoon period, the pressures of work and the stress of living in another culture begin to take their toll on marriage relationships. However, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Since the first term of missionary service can be so difficult, it is a crucial time to take action to protect and preserve marriage. The best general thing to do is to make your marriage a high priority in your lives. Of course, you want to serve others, but you must also care for yourself and your marriage.

Since both studies using the MSI pinpointed several specific areas where missionaries are most likely to be dissatisfied in marriage, those areas are good places to begin.

- Both studies noted that "time together" is a major problem. Begin by scheduling at least two hours every week for "relationship time" as described in the brochure

on that topic. If you do not do so, you will probably grow further and further apart regardless of how close you believe you are.

- Both studies noted problems in affective communication, and one noted a lack in problem solving communication. Make it a priority to express your affection and really understand your spouse. Also learn how to resolve your differences so that they do not fester under the surface. Unexpressed and unresolved conflicts tend to explode under stress.

Both studies noted sexual dissatisfaction. Use your upgraded communication skills to discuss your sexual frustrations. Unresolved conflicts in this area may lead to illicit sexual activity, but this may be prevented by meeting each other's needs.

- Also use your communication skills to resolve conflicts about child rearing practices. Parents who do not present a united front to their children often wind up with divided families.

Finally, if possible, find a "mentor couple" about 10 years ahead of you in their marriage relationship and child rearing. Meet with them on a regular basis to ask questions and listen to their suggestions.

For other topics, please visit www.missionarycare.com. Also please let your non-medical colleagues know about these free resources.

Center for Medical Missions

P.O. Box 7500
Bristol, TN 37621
423-844-1000

www.cmda.org/cmm