

The Center for Medical Missions'

e-Pistle

November 2008

I hope this finds you well and rejoicing in the Lord's blessings in your life. I've had several opportunities in recent days to think on how my life has been blessed. We were challenged in church on Sunday to come up with eight things to be thankful for. I can list many times that number and I'm sure I would still overlook some blessing I'm not even aware of. God is good!

We certainly saw God's goodness at this year's Global Mission Health Conference in Louisville. As always, it was very well attended, with literally hundreds of young people seeking to learn more about medical missions. We talked, almost without ceasing, at our Center for Medical Missions booth. We've added a sign to our display banner that says, "Overwhelmed?" Many stopped to say that was exactly where they found themselves. But it was exciting to spend time with 3 couples who are at the point of choosing a sending organization. I'm not sure how many responses we gave to the question about international rotations.

The biggest challenge for me was the number of pre-med and first and second year med students who begged for a place to spend the summer in medical missions. It saddened me to have to tell them there are few options. The only places we are aware of are 1 or 2 positions at SIM's work in Angola, 2 or 3 positions at AIM's clinic work in Kenya and Cure's hospital in UAE (if the student can find his/her own accommodation). I'm told there may be some opportunities through Emmanuel Hospital Association in India but have been unsuccessful in making that connection.

It is not only at the Global Mission Health Conference that we field these types of requests. I've had daily email requests for the last month. There is tremendous interest out there and it seems that finances are not problem. The problem is available opportunities.

Knowing what I know now, if I were still at Tenwek, I would start a campaign to implement a new 'early' medical mission ministry. I'm not sure exactly what it would look like but it would include:

- following a physician (#1 request from these students)
- exposure to spiritual ministry with the patients
- chart reviews or similar tasks that would be helpful to both the student and the ministry
- opportunity to gain an appreciation for all the different departments of medical care
- community service and
- cultural experiences

That should be enough to keep them busy for 6 – 8 weeks and yet not completely overwhelm the medical caregivers.

Of course, room and board would be an issue, but those should not be insurmountable. I'm picturing a physician's spouse who no longer has children at home overseeing such a program. Or maybe there is another non-medical person who would be available to oversee such a program. If there were sharing/caring sessions planned in the set program, this could be an incredible, life-changing, life-affirming program.

I think (you can tell me if I'm wrong) the bigger problem is a lack of vision for how significant this could be in terms of reaching the world for Christ. I know most hospitals and clinics have more than enough 3rd and 4th year medical students and they can actually contribute to the ministry. But I'm suggesting that the first few ministries that catch the vision for exposing young people to medical missions earlier will play an important role in increasing the number of caregivers who will be used to influence the world for Christ. Will you be one of the first?

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I hope you are encouraged and challenged!

Susan

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Leadership (Pt 4) Section VII: Useful Skills

By David Stevens, MD

Spiritual Leadership – No matter how many of the previous characteristics you manifest you will not get far in a good Christian organizations unless you manifest spiritual leadership as well. We have touched on a few of the traits of spiritual leadership but let me emphasize the most important ones.

God assigns us to be leaders. There are lots of great examples of this in the Bible. There was Moses at the burning bush. God's selection of Joshua is recorded in Deuteronomy 31:14, *The LORD said to Moses, "Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tent of Meeting, where I will commission him."* Christ called the disciples individually to follow him. Paul had his Damascus road experience. When God told Ananias to go to Paul he said, *Go! I have picked him as my personal representative to Gentiles and kings and Jews.*

God does His calling in many different ways.

You may have a dramatic calling like Paul where God speaks to you in your mind, through a scripture, a message or a song and you know He is giving you specific directions. Many missionaries can point to God's calling in this way.

You may have someone, your Moses, recognize that God has equipped you for leadership. They may ask you to assume a leadership position in your church, a ministry or your profession.

God may provide an opportunity for leadership. There is a need for a leader and as you go to God you have a growing realization that you should be that person. You may accept that direction with fear and trepidation in your heart. You may feel unprepared and unskilled for what God wants you to do. Think about that for a minute. What if Moses had said "No!" to God's call for him to go down to Egypt? It is clear that he wanted it to be anyone but him. God would have still accomplished His purpose without Moses but then he would be a footnote in history, at best. He wouldn't have had the blessing of seeing God working in him or through him.

In this day and time, individuals are more reluctant than ever to be leaders. We see it on our campuses where increasingly there is a leadership dearth. No one wants to get out in front to pay the price or reap the blessings of leadership in their own lives. I have seen it in medical mission outreaches where the work has suffered because those with the capabilities come up with excuses, good excuses – *I need to spend more time with my family, My workload is heavy already* – or whatever, to not step up. And their ministry flounders or limps along, leaderless. The bottom line is not what you or I want but what does God want?

I have gone to preaching because God has been preaching to me. I serve on a college board. Last year I was asked to serve as the chair of the board and I said no. I didn't have enough time with my CMDA responsibilities. I didn't have the wealth to lead from the front in giving. I live too far away. This past week, as I drove back from the board meeting, God took me to task. I had the skills and experience to provide the leadership needed. It was an important time for good leadership as the long serving Chair stepped down. Most importantly, God was nudging me. I wrote a note yesterday stating I was willing to be considered.

More than our skills and abilities, God wants our willingness.

The other spiritual principal of leadership is that there is often suffering involved. Peter's words should resonate from 1 Peter 4:12, *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.* If you are a leader you will bear burdens, endure the loneliness of making difficult decisions, have individual's disappoint and even betray you, have dreams shattered, be criticized fairly and unfairly and sometimes you will fail. If you try to lead in your own power, you will soon be discouraged.

If you depend on God and let His love shine through you, in difficult times you will be like a broken perfume bottle releasing the fragrance of God. You will experience a peace that passes all understanding. Through the Holy Spirit you will find strength welling up in your soul as you seek God as it promises in Isaiah 40:31, *But those who wait upon GOD get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles; they run and don't get tired; they walk and don't lag*

behind. You will find His strength made perfect in your weakness. Suffering is a small price to pay to experience God working in and through you!

The Bible also teaches that if we are to be a good leader, we must first be a great servant. Matt. 23:11 states, *Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant.* The character of a servant leader is magnetic and magnetizing. Like rubbing a pin with a piece of silk, people want to get close to a servant leader to become as magnetic themselves. People get a servant's heart as they come in contact with a real servant who becomes their role model and example. The longer I live, the more I realize that having a servant's heart is the key component to influence. 1 Tim. 3:13 points this out, *Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.*

Where does it come from? It comes out of a great love for God and a great love for people. It comes from realizing how limited you are and how unlimited God is. It comes from being filled with God's Holy Spirit. When you truly serve God, you can truly serve others.

Well, let me sum it up. We are all influencing someone or some group whether we realize it or not – our friends, our family, our church, our workplace. By learning some basic leadership principles and applying them to your life you can become a much better leader and have incredible influence in other's lives.

Becoming a better leader boils down to just two things. Are you willing and are you willing to learn?

True leaders make an enormous difference in the lives of others. One of my favorite stories is of Dr. John Geddie, a Presbyterian missionary from Scotland. In 1848, he went to the Samoan island of Aneityum. He found head hunters, cannibals and terrible heathen practices. When a man died his wife was immediately strangled to prevent her from being a burden on their society.

He served God on this small isolated island for 24 years. By the time he retired, that small island of 3,500 inhabitants had a church that seated 1,000 people! His incredible leadership and influence were inscribed in two sentences on his tombstone:

When he landed, there were no Christians. When he left, there were no heathen.

What do you want your tombstone to say? I hope it is something like that!

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Cura Animarum

By Rev. Stan Key

How evangelicals are a curious lot. I'm not talking about our doctrines or styles of worship. I am talking about our vocabulary. We have developed a special language, "God-talk," that can only be understood by those who have been immersed in our subculture for years. To an outsider or a

newcomer, it is indeed difficult to comprehend what we really mean by what we really say. Let me illustrate.

What we say:

What we really mean:

I'd like to share a prayer request with you.

I just heard the latest gossip. Let me share it with you.

God has really been speaking to me lately.

Your opinion and position no longer matter.

I've been praying about coming to see you.

Sit down and shut up while I tell you what I really think.

I really feel led by God to do this.

Don't you dare raise a question about my actions.

I really feel led by God to do this.

Don't you dare raise a question about my actions.

It will be OK. All things work together for good.

I am not about to enter in to your pain or share your burden.

When God shuts a door, He opens a window.

I don't have a clue what to say to you in your situation.

I'll pray for you.

I don't want to talk about this anymore.

Let's forgive and forget.

Let's sweep this under the rug and pretend it never happened.

The next time you are tempted to resort to "God-talk" to hide your true intentions, the next time you resort to pious platitudes rather than really try to enter in to another's life, take a moment to breathe a prayer and ask God to give you authentic words that can truly communicate grace and love. If the words don't come, try silence.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). Use yours wisely!

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Help Please - MD 2nd Opinion Needs Specialists

Mary Jane Jewell, who so wonderfully coordinates matching requests for referrals from the field with specialists in the States, has a need for more specialists. I was privileged to chat with her at the Louisville Global Health Conference and said I would try to help her get the word out. If you are one of the following specialist or you know someone who might be willing to share their expertise with doctors serving in medical missions, please make contact with Mary Jane at md2ndopinion@aol.com. Thanks so much!

The specialists needed include:

Pediatric Urologist

Pediatric Orthopedist

Plastic Surgeon

Vascular Surgeon

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Conferences

Developing Health Course 2009 - BOOK NOW!

Bookings are now being taken for the 2009 Developing Health Course, to be held once again at Oak Hill College. The dates for the course are Sunday 28th June to Friday 10th July.

Last year saw the largest number of delegates with over 67 taking part. The course is designed for doctors, nurses and midwives who are working overseas or are about to do so. However last year saw a number who were thinking about overseas work.

For more information about the course and to download a booking form visit the Healthcare Mission Course pages on the HealthServe website. For more medical & healthcare mission news items, visit <http://www.healthserve.org/news/>

XIV World Congress ICMDA 2010

International Christian Medical and Dental Association
www.icmda2010.org

Punta del Este - Uruguay - South America
Conrad Resort Hotel
4-11 July, 2010

We are pleased to announce that the XIV World Congress of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association will take place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on July 4-11, 2010.

It is organized by the South America Regional ICMDA Committee and locally by the Uruguayan Christian Association of Health Professionals (ACUPS).

The subject of the congress will be "Priorities in the Professional Practice. Who are you working for? There will be plenaries with speakers of international reknown. There will also be workshops, time for discussion and exchange of opinions on various scientific issues from a Christian-ethical perspectives concerning our profession.

Among the activities on the agenda, the Trade Exhibition will constitute one of the key components of this Congress and will be held in conjunction with the event. The exhibition will cover a wide range of products and related services to appeal to the Christian medical and dental community. Opportunity is available for financial assistance, contribution to bursaries and scholarships, and support in the form of supply of equipment, Congress materials, gift or services.

We hope to welcome 700 attendees from all over the world providing companies and other non profit organizations a unique opportunity to offer their products and services at the Trade Exhibition.

Verónica Terzian
Secretary XIV ICMDA World Congress
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Dr. Jorge Patpatian
Congress Coordinator

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Opportunities

Seminar in Medical and Surgical Emergencies Rwanda July 2009

Can you give one to two weeks of your time to teach your specialty in Rwanda during the second week of July 2009?

Specialists without Borders has been invited to provide specialists to teach a seminar in medical and surgical emergencies in July 2009. This commitment would involve two to three lectures within your specialty. The seminar will be held in conjunction with the annual medical conference in Rwanda, and is fully supported by the national University of Rwanda/medical school. Specialists without Borders are also fully supported by the Flinders University and medical school in South Australia. Their aim is to provide high quality medical education in developing countries. They ask you to participate in this with them and the Rwandans.

For more information visit the SWB website: www.specialistswithoutborders.org/seminars.htm

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Winner of the 2008 ICMDA HIV Initiative Right to Dignity & Health Award Announced

We are pleased to announce that Dr Geoff Foster, a Paediatrician in Zimbabwe, was selected from a number of other highly regarded and most worthy nominations to be the winner of the 2008 Dignity and Right to Health Award.

A paediatrician in Zimbabwe, Geoff recognised in 1987 that HIV was a devastating exploding epidemic when he saw, within a few weeks, many infants dying of AIDS at the Mutare government hospital . He began a crusade which continues through today to alert the world

through publications, speaking, and demonstrating personal concern as a practicing paediatrician in Zimbabwe.

The Dignity and Right to Health Award (<http://tinyurl.com/5mlewy>) is made annually to persons for excellence, outstanding leadership and compassion in responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by the HIV Initiative of the International Christian Medical & Dental Association (ICMDA - <http://www.icmda.net>).

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