

# The Center for Medical Mission's *e-Pistle* October 2016

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Welcome to this issue of the *e-Pistle*. I've compiled several great articles that will encourage and challenge you. Please enjoy.

## Included in this issue:

[Tell Me Why](#) by Rev. Stan Key

[Primary Surgery \(Volume One\)](#)

[Raising Children Successfully Overseas](#) (continued) by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

[Under-appreciated](#) by Al Weir, MD

[Pornography](#) by Dr. Ron Koteskey

If you are in the U.S. next month, please stop by the CMDA booth in the center aisle of the main exhibit hall during the [Global Missions Health Conference](#) on November 10-12 at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

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## Tell Me Why

by Rev. Stan Key

*"For the love of Christ controls us..." (2 Corinthians 5:14, ESV).*

The real question that must be answered when it comes to missions is not *Where?* or *How?* Or even *Who?* The real question is *Why?* If we can answer this question, all other questions will take care of themselves. I have discovered at least eight reasons why we should be actively and passionately involved in sharing the Good News of salvation both across the street and around the world.

1. **Obedience.** Matthew 28:19-20 is not called the Great Suggestion! It is called the Great Commission because it is a command, an order. Don't wait for some mystical calling. Obey! Jim Elliot asked, "Why do you need a voice when you have a verse?"
2. **Justice.** God's blessings are meant to be shared (Luke 12:48). William Borden stated the matter powerfully, "If 10 men were carrying a log, nine of them on the little end and one at the heavy end, and you wanted to help, which end would you lift?"
3. **Final Judgement.** God will hold us accountable if we fail to share the message with those around us (Ezekiel 3:16-21). When asked if those heathen who had never heard the gospel could be saved, Charles Spurgeon responded, "It is more a question with me whether we, who have the gospel and fail to give it to those who have not, can be saved."
4. **Love.** How can we obey the second commandment (Matthew 22:39) if we do not show concern for our neighbor's soul? Alexander Duff put it well: "I will lay my bones by the Ganges that India might know there is one who cares."
5. **Christ's Return.** When we share the gospel with others, we are actually hastening the day of Christ's return. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14, NIV 2011).
6. **Personal Blessings.** Those who cling to possessions and seek security by playing it safe will lose both. But those who surrender to Christ and obey His call will find blessing upon blessing (Matthew 19:29, Luke 9:24, Acts 23:35).
7. **No Other Name.** Only the name of Jesus has the power to save (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). All other names

(Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna, Marx, Freud, etc.) lead to hell.

8. **Societal Improvement.** The most important thing we can do to improve society (poverty, malnutrition, trafficking, disease, AIDS, war, racism, etc.) is to preach a gospel that transforms the human heart. Only redeemed people can redeem culture.
9. **Revival.** Some think revival is the cause of missions. Perhaps the truth is just the opposite! Don't wait for a visitation of the Spirit to get involved. Get involved and then see God move! Christ promised His presence to those who go (Matthew 28:19-20).

Give up your small ambitions and get involved in the only cause that matters!

Point to Ponder: What hinders you most from sharing the gospel with others?

Prayer Focus: People you know who are spiritually lost.

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## **Exciting Resource**

### **Primary Surgery (Volume One)**

The revised edition of Primary Surgery (Volume One) is [now available FREE online](#).

This is THE seminal text for surgery in resource-poor settings!

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## **Raising Children Successfully Overseas (continued)**

### **David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)**

4. Time Together - Rituals and traditions are an important part of affection and appreciation through family devotions, things you do together to celebrate birthdays and holidays and much more. These are things that make your "family special," create memories and show affection, and they can go on for a lifetime.

A friend and fellow missionary always had an open house on Christmas Eve and invited fellow missionaries and nationals to drop by for food, fellowship and celebration. The entire family helped prepare for the event and it had many small traditions involved. They now live in the U.S. and still practice this tradition.

I still vividly remember when I was in my first year of medical school and Dad took me with him to a mission conference in Pennsylvania. He told me beforehand that he wasn't going to do the Sunday morning service, but he wanted me to preach at the most important service of the weekend. I know I didn't do as good a job as he would have, but he encouraged me, mentored me and praised me in front of the entire church for my sermon.

I was apprehensive going into the weekend, especially as I stood up and spoke to the congregation behind an imposing podium, but I've treasured the memory of us ministering together ever since. Dad was with me when I preached my first sermon in a church. He mentored and helped me start my preaching career. That church became one of our supporting groups when we went to the field and members came to help us with projects at Tenwek on short-term teams my dad led. I've been back to speak at their mission conference in Pennsylvania a number of times.

I was speaking at crisis pregnancy center fundraising banquet in Alabama about 11 years ago. Afterwards a lady in her late 80s tottered toward me assisted by one of her grandchildren. In a feeble voice she said, "You preach just like your dad!" Without thinking I said, "If you had heard him preach as many times as I did, you would preach like him too!" She laughed as her grandson passed her a file folder she then handed to me. I opened it up and it had every personal letter and organizational newsletter my dad ever sent her. She said, "I've treasured these, but I want you to have them. Your dad led my husband and I to the Lord at a revival service he preached 55 years ago. One of our son's accepted Christ after he preached a number of years, and after that he took us on our first short-term mission trip." She went on to relate other ways

Dad had impacted their spiritual walk and that of their children.

When she shared this with me, my dad had already been dead for 20 years. But what she shared wasn't news to me. I had seen his impact as I traveled with Dad and Mom. I watched them minister to people wherever they went. I saw God work through my dad's sermons and relationships to change countless lives. Much of our close family relationships and what I've done in ministry is because of the time my parents included me in their ministry.

As for my wife and our children, we tried to be together as a family as often as possible when we were on the mission field and on home assignment. I looked for opportunities to take one of our children with me on trips away from the hospital and looked for appropriate ways to involve them in ministry at the hospital and in the community. At home, I involved them in my hobbies and interests from photography, to making videos and working in my woodworking shop. One of my favorite pictures is of Jason (age 10), Jessica (8) and me outside our car on a trip through the bush. The tire is flat and Jessica is putting a rock under a wheel, I'm starting to change the tire and Jason has his hand on top of the spare ready to roll it to me. We are together doing an important thing together.

It is important to be together, but it is even more important to be doing something together. Involve your children in helping others. My daughter Jessica lives in inner city Memphis. Last year she was driving with her three children and they stopped at a stoplight. Josiah, her oldest, was four and was sitting next to two-year-old Eli and Emma Grace, who was only a few months old. Josiah said, "Mom, there is a homeless man with a sign needing food. Do we have something to give him?" As a family, Jessica and her husband John David had modeled taking care of the poor and downtrodden, so her son recognized the need before she did with everything else going on. What they had modeled and done together had "stuck" and now he, at age four, had already internalized the practice of taking care of the poor.

What more can you and your family do together? How are you modeling the behaviors you want to your children to emulate? If you want good relationships with your teenagers or young adults, it has to start with doing things together when they are young and then continue it throughout their lives.

5. Spiritual Wellbeing - The couple and the family that prays and worships together stays together. That, of course, should start in the home with daily devotions. It can be around the table in the morning or before bedtime at night. When the children are younger, it should be done in an engaging way: snuggle up in a chair or get into bed with all your children and use an illustrator children's Bible storybook. And change it up. As your kids get older, have them read the story or tell a Bible story in their own way. Start teaching them choruses, hymns and Bible verses at a young age.

Recently, I had the blessing of doing devotions with two of my grandchildren, Josiah (4) and Elijah (2), each evening while we visited them in Memphis, an eight-hour drive from our home. We curled up in a bean bag and read a number of Bible story books. I was amazed! They had memorized some of the stories in them and would say the next sentence before I did. Then they told me what songs they wanted to sing, from multiple verses of *Amazing Grace* to *Jesus Loves Me*. Next they shared some of their "favorite" Scripture verses before we prayed, had a goodnight hug and they went to bed, but not to sleep! Brothers will be brothers!

Lots of seemingly important things can push family devotions to the back burner. Resist that, especially as your children get older. And as they get older, ask questions, get them to participate, to think and to "own" their spiritual formation. You may want to incentivize behaviors. I know parents and grandparents who give financial or other rewards for learning a bunch of verses or reading certain books of the Bible. What gets measured and recognized gets done.

Don't stop there. Involve them in ministry with you so they can model your behavior and see the challenges and victories. Teach them to pray for people they know who have needs. Teach them how to see needs and help others. Visit the sick. Give clothes or a toy to someone who doesn't have any. Teach them to tithe

as soon as they being receiving money as an allowance or for doing work.

Modeling is so important. I still remember as a college student being at Tenwek for a number of weeks with my later mentor, Dr. Ernie Steury. He was the only doctor at the hospital, so he was on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I stayed in his home and shadowed him day and night. Frequently, the glow of the hospital guard's kerosene lantern would light the window curtain in the middle of the night as he came to tell Dr. Steury he was urgently needed. No matter how late we were up doing surgery or seeing a critically ill patient, I always found him in his study before daylight for devotions or down on his knees in front of his chair praying. He knew that was the most important part of his day. Everything depended on it. He modeled to me the importance of maintaining your spiritual equilibrium, no matter the cost. His example had a profound impact on me in my often-busy life of ministry to keep the most important thing the most important thing in my own life.

*To be continued in December*

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## **Under-appreciated** by Al Weir, MD

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves" (Philippians 2:3, NIV 2011).*

**I've got a new chief at the office. And he doesn't know how great I am. He doesn't know I work harder and longer than most; that I care for my patients more than most. He mainly complains about the petty stuff.**

**I was dwelling heavily on this on the way home this evening: *This is not fair; how am I going to prove to him that I am worthy of his appreciation?***

**I was chomping on an evening salad at the grocery café when I realized: Why am I dwelling on me? I should be dwelling on God's love for my boss. It should not be *how can I be appreciated*, but *how can I show this man the way to my Lord?* How do I introduce him to Jesus? It really is not about me at all. I crunched on my salad and got it; I then handed him off to God.**

It's good that God every now and then lets me see my pride and helps me understand how it leads me away from His mission for my life. It's good to see where my natural self would take me were it not for Jesus. As much as I long to follow Him and as much as I do stuff to please Him, I am basically a self-centered human being who is only saved from myself by the blood of the Lamb. Life really *is about me* if I don't let go and let Him live through me.

This overwhelming focus on my being under-appreciated was just a reflection of my pride. I was choosing to focus the spotlight on me instead of my chief. I needed to take myself out of the center of my circle. I needed to let my thoughts focus on God's love for others rather than on their appreciation of me. I needed to be more like Jesus.

*Dear Father,  
Help me get myself out of the center of my circle.  
Amen*

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## **Pornography** by Dr. Ron Koteskey

About a decade into the 21st century, Josh McDowell sensed that something was distorting our views of morality and the Christian faith. He finally became convinced a major part of the problem was easy access to pornography through the internet. As a result, the Josh McDowell Ministry commissioned the Barna Group to conduct major research to find out how much pornography has permeated the family, the church and the culture.

The research involved nearly 3,000 people in four surveys during 2015. The surveys included parallel questions relative to age and sample. One survey included 813 people between 13 and 24 years of age in the general U.S. population. A second survey included 1,188 people 25 years of age and older in the U.S. The third survey included 432 senior pastors. The final survey included 388 youth pastors. These surveys were given to representative national samples.

## General Findings

The report is 160 pages long and includes many findings. Much of the report contrasts practicing Christians with those who make no profession of faith. Practicing Christians are self-identified Christians who agree strongly their faith is very important in their lives and have attended a church worship service within the last month.

Here are some disturbing findings about the general population.

- 27% of those 25-30 years of age began viewing pornography before puberty.
- 41% of male practicing Christians 13-24 years old seek out porn daily, weekly or monthly. In addition, 23% of those 25 or over do so as well.
- Those 13-24 ranked not recycling, overeating and overconsumption of electricity or water as each more immoral than "viewing porn."
- More than half of all Americans seek out porn at least occasionally.
- Young women who seek porn are more likely than men to be involved in "sexting." Among women 18-24, 69% had received a nude image and 51% had sent one. Among men 57% had received a nude image and 33% had sent one.

## Pastors

However, the "Special Report: Pastors & Porn" section is much more relevant to missionaries. One in five youth pastors and one in seven senior pastors use porn. That means more than 50,000 church leaders in the U.S. use porn. Missionaries and pastors are both in Christian leadership roles. Pastors lead in their own home cultures, and missionaries lead in their host cultures. We do not know if the use of porn is similar between pastors and missionaries, but since online videos and online pictures are the primary sources of porn for people of all ages, missionaries have at least equal access.

Pastors struggle with porn. Pastors who currently use porn (1 in 7 senior pastors and 1 in 5 youth pastors) checked, "I started viewing porn before puberty." Among senior pastors, 57% are either struggling or have struggled with porn in past (43% in past, 14% currently). Among youth pastors, 64% are either struggling or have struggled in the past (43% in past, 21% currently).

Pastors were asked about the effects of porn in several areas of life. Here are some results for pastors who currently use porn.

*I feel guilty when I use porn.*

Senior pastors 86%, Youth pastors 95%

*I feel shame about using porn.*

Senior pastors 87%, Youth pastors 94%

*I am currently trying to stop using porn.*

Senior pastors 71%, Youth pastors 83%

*I tried to stop using it, but couldn't.*

Senior pastors 54%, Youth pastors 68%

*I live in constant fear of being discovered.*

Senior pastors 55%, Youth pastors 56%

*It negatively impacts my ministry.*

Senior pastors 64%, Youth pastors 75%

*It negatively affected my sex life.*

Senior pastors 38%, Youth pastors 45%

In addition, the study also found that porn also had negative effects on other things, such as relationships and

productivity.

## **Missionaries**

No study of this type has been done on missionaries serving cross-culturally, so no one can draw firm conclusions. However, it is extremely unlikely that people ministering in other cultures would be less tempted than those serving in their passport cultures. Missionaries are likely to also experience the same effects: guilt, shame, fear, unable to stop, hindrance to ministry, etc.

Warning signs became obvious about the turn of the century. In a chapter in *Doing Member Care Well* (2002), Ken Williams said, "Once we have begun the slide, sexual temptation will probably be the strongest force we will ever experience. Its power can grow to the point that we become willing to give up everything to gratify it: relationship with Christ, spouse and children, home, ministry, reputation, friends, *everything*. And no believer is so spiritual that he or she is immune to its power."

The cover article of the January 2003 issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ)* was, "The dark side of the Internet." It was written by two people who had given a presentation at the International Conference on Computing in Missions. The "Techies" of mission agencies were finding evidence of porn on computers in their organizations and they did not know what to do about it: confront the person, report to a superior or do nothing. Unfortunately, most mission agencies did not follow up on the information. They neither thanked the authors for bringing the subject into the open nor took steps to help their missionaries.

## **What does the Bible say?**

Sexual fantasy is certainly nothing new. While elaborating on the Old Testament commandment against adultery in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28, NIV 2011).

Some people interpret this verse to mean that if they have a passing thought about sex with another person they have committed the sin of adultery. However, both Jesus and Paul used the same word describing themselves. At the Last Supper as Jesus spoke to His disciples, He said, "I have earnestly desired (lusted?) to eat this Passover with you..." (Luke 22:15, ESV). When writing to the Romans, Paul said he would not have known what coveting (lusting?) was "...if the law had not said, 'Do not covet (lust?)'" (Romans 7:7, NIV 2011). Thus, lusting is more than a passing glance or thought; it is also translated "strongly desired" or "set your desire on."

People in the porn study were asked to give the reason they search for porn. No matter how the researchers cut the data, the most frequent answer was "for personal arousal." Here are the results for several cuts.

- By gender: men and women
- By age: 13-17, 18-24, 25-30, 31-50, 51-59
- By marital status: married, all single, never married, single, have been married
- By ethnicity: Black, Hispanic, Asian, White
- By frequency of porn use: daily, weekly, monthly, less often

The most frequent answer for all of these was the same, "for personal arousal."

Even if it was not sinful in God's sight, viewing porn can be devastating to relationships and may lead to divorce, breaking engagements and stopping dating. At best it hurts a friend who feels committed.

## **What can one do?**

In 2002 Ken Williams also said, "Involvement in pornography is particularly difficult to overcome. When one has become addicted, that is, compulsively drawn to pornographic images time after time and unable to stop, he/she will need help from a colleague, a support group, or a counselor to overcome the pull. No one makes it alone to recover from addiction. And no believer is so spiritual that he or she is immune to its power."

Preventing an addiction is much more effective than overcoming it after it occurs. The Barna study asked pastors

what they recommend to help people overcome it, and all of these are effective in preventing it. The following five procedures are recommended for prevention.

When asked what resources they recommend to help people overcome porn use, senior pastors and youth pastors do not agree which are of most help. Here are the percentages of both recommending the top five procedures.

*Personal counseling*

Senior pastors 71%, Youth pastors 76%

*Internet monitoring/filtering*

Senior pastors 59%, Youth pastors 79%

*Accountability groups*

Senior pastors 52%, Youth pastors 72%

*Mentors*

Senior pastors 45%, Youth pastors 82%

*Topic-specific Bible study*

Senior pastors 24%, Youth pastors 45%

Both senior pastors and youth pastors recommended internet monitoring/filtering and accountability groups. Covenant Eyes ([www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com)) includes both the filtering and accountability, and the study included a special report on how much the combination improves the capacity not to seek out porn.

Covenant Eyes is software that not only filters sites individuals can visit and videos people can watch, but also it sends a chosen accountability partner an email list of similar things a person accesses. Unlike many free filters, one cannot turn it off or uninstall the software without the accountability partner getting notice.

The research found that among adults 25 and over, no matter how often they sought out porn, those with Covenant Eyes were less likely to access porn. In fact, 37% never sought it out at all. The old saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" really is true. The more individuals seek porn, the more likely they are to find it. Soon they find themselves wanting more but not liking it more. They then move from "regular" to more deviant and cruel images and videos.

For 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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