

# The Center for Medical Mission's *e-Pistle* September 2015

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It seems like a long time has passed since I last wrote. I don't think it is so much an issue of time but rather all the things I've packed into the schedule since then. We trained 23 new medical missionaries, including spouses; hosted the ICMDA regional secretaries meeting; held the 2015 Medical Mission Summit for mission executives; and entertained CMDA's Board of Trustees. I think I have all my "events" done for the year now except the Global Mission Health Conference which is coming up November 5-7. Since part of the hosting of all these meetings includes keeping everyone fed, I'm ok with a break in kitchen duties for a while.

By the way, if you do make it to the GMHC in Louisville, Kentucky, please stop by the CMDA booths and introduce yourself. Our booths will be in the center aisle of the lower level exhibit area. I'd love a chance to say "hi." We are usually easy to find because we take up so much space – 12 booths.

I'm going to keep this intro short as a lot of helpful information follows. I encourage you to read each article. Please encourage your spouse to read the ones that are appropriate for her/him too. I think you will find the article about Elisabeth Elliott especially encouraging.

Susan

## Here's what you'll find in this month's e-Pistle:

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## Cura Animarum – Be Blessed

by Rev. Stan Key

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*"May the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (Romans 15:33, ESV).*

To give a benediction is to literally "speak goodness" – to use words to place a blessing into someone's life. The English word comes from the Latin root *bene* (good, well) and *dicere* (to speak, to pronounce). The Bible is full of such benedictions, typically promising God's favor and the lavishing of His best gifts to hearers in the days ahead.

- "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26, ESV).
- "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way..." (2 Thessalonians 3:16, ESV).
- "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14, ESV).
- "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2, ESV).
- "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of

his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Titus 24-25, ESV).

As we face the realities and challenges that face us every week, how we need the assurance that God's favor is up on us! Little wonder that many liturgical traditions make such words of blessing an integral part of every service of worship.

While reading Philip Yancey's book *Prayer*, I discovered a different kind of benediction used in the Franciscan tradition of the Catholic Church. On first reading it sounded more like a curse than a blessing, but the more I've thought about it, the more wisdom I see contained in these ancient words. So, quiet your heart for a moment and pray this benediction over you. These words will strengthen and help you as you face the challenges of the day.

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

And many God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in the world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. Amen

Be blessed!

*Give as 'twas given to you in your need, love as the Master  
loved you; be to the helpless a helper indeed,  
unto your mission be true . . . .  
Make me a blessing to someone today.  
-Ira Wilson*

Point to Ponder: Have you considered the blessings God has for you in adversity?

Prayer Focus: Ask God to show you to whom you can be a blessing today.

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## **Crumbs from Elisabeth Elliot's Table**

by Judy Palpant

*"God's work is never done under prime conditions. It is never what you expected. It is infinitely more glorious." - Elisabeth Elliot*

My favorite photo of Elisabeth is in her book *The Savage My Kinsman*. Still living with the Quichuas in Ecuador, she is sitting at a table, her head bowed in prayer, elbows resting on the table and hands covering her face. A small lantern glows next to her Bible. All around is pitch black. The caption reads: "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? I believe that, and asked Him daily, in the quiet hours before dawn, for light for that day."

I stare at this picture now, wondering where I would be without the example of this woman.

In 1980, our family was trying to find its way to a new nesting ground. Like a small flock of birds, our migration from Tucson, Arizona ended in Lugulu, Kenya at a Quaker mission hospital. I wrote to Elisabeth that first year in Kenya: "Thank you for playing a part in getting us here." A year earlier, while in the throes of deciding whether or not to go with our three children to Africa, I attended a retreat where she spoke.

On Saturday afternoon of the event, I stood in a line of women. It snaked through the restaurant. We all waited for five minutes with her. Like the Old Testament judge Deborah, sitting under the palm trees, Elisabeth sat in a booth. When it was my turn, I slid in across from her.

"How can I help you?" she asked. I laid out the possibility of going to Kenya as medical missionaries and paused.

Going directly for the jugular, she asked, "Do you want to do God's will?"

"Yes," I replied, while still quaking at the myriad of unknowns.

Her confident reply settled my heart. "My former husband Jim said that God is good at pulling strings for His children."

She ended our brief interaction regarding Scripture and counsel for discerning God's will by quoting a line from the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation:" "What more can He say than to you He hath said?"

Plain and simple. Direct. No nonsense.

As I left her, I hummed a different hymn in my head and heart: "My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed Thee." Back home in Tucson, I walked in the door and told my husband Sam, "I'm ready to go to Kenya."

Some months later, with tropical medicine school completed and three months of language school behind us, I put pen to a blue air form to let Elisabeth know and to express appreciation for being God's conduit. The Spirit used her words to soften and prepare my heart.

But in that moment of writing, we felt unsettled. Our spirits longed for family, friends and the familiar. New sights, sounds, smells and flavors assaulted our senses. We were experiencing the vice grip of the narrow end of the upside down funnel Elisabeth described. Not yet at home in our new place and culture, her words rang in my ears: "Do the next thing. In so doing God will meet you there. Do today what you know. Then you'll know what to do tomorrow. Make it an offering to God. Every task is material for sacrifice." So I picked up a broom and swept my cement floors.

"Wherever you are, be all there." I worked at not drifting through the day, week or month waiting for circumstances to change for the better--to stay engaged in the present.

"Accept your givens and your not givens." This proved a good Rx for comparison with other missionaries.

Over the six years in Kenya, these themes became part of the warp and woof of my life.

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I was an impressionable 7-year-old when *Life* magazine was delivered to our home in Colorado Springs in 1956. The Auca Indians and the story of the martyred missionaries captured my imagination. Fast forward through high school, college, Urbana missions conference and life as a teacher married to a medical student. I rode train and tramped through tough neighborhoods to hear Elisabeth speak at a CMDA gathering in the fall of 1970. Over the years, I copied by hand whole paragraphs from her books onto pages in my journals.

I carried *Twelve Baskets of Crumbs*, a collection of her essays, to Kenya. A gift from a friend, she wrote on the fly leaf: "Surprise! You can't go to Africa without this!" Every book counted in our baggage allowance. We took a carefully chosen few. This one offered new territory to cover.

Like the prophet Samuel, Elisabeth's words did not fall to the ground. She herself recommended using Scripture or hymns to prepare your heart to move into God's presence. This practical advice issued from someone who admitted prayer to be work and confessed, "Praying is the hardest thing in my life. Thinking is next."

But she had an astute mind, and read widely. Her first books, *Through Gates of Splendor* (1957) and *Shadow of*

*the Almighty* (1958), were best sellers. Critics of her book *No Graven Image* (1966) said that she asked more questions than she answered and "this book will edify no one." But her determined character and disciplined writings eventually spanned more than five decades, inspiring and instructing generations who followed. I was among them. Not only did she mentor and build me up in the faith, I enjoyed her references to other authors. Because of her recommendations, I consumed books by Amy Carmichael of India, Lilas Trotter of Algeria and British novelist Elizabeth Goudge.

We've recently watched futuristic demos of air drones delivering books to our doorsteps. But in the late 1950s, Elisabeth lived in the Ecuadorian jungle and received periodic air drops of books. I imagined her reading in her hammock after a day of translation work, her daughter Valerie sound asleep. Although an ocean away, I followed a trail of reading suggested by Elisabeth. She introduced our family to the writing of Isak Dinesen, so one of the first things I read by lantern light in Kenya was *Out of Africa*. Surrounded by distant drumming and bird calls, it was an environment that would have been familiar to Elisabeth.

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The extremes of Elisabeth's life offered perspective. She lived and worked with three different tribes in Ecuador. Each time she started over at the bottom of the ladder. Eleven years of faithful translation work "achieved precisely nothing." Once, her portfolio of translation work tumbled off the roof of a bus and rolled down the mountainside.

She often referred to life as being a mystery to be comprehended and lived, not a problem to be analyzed and solved. "I can endure if I know life is not a problem but a mystery," she said. "The Apostles' Creed is full of mysteries. The mystery of God was the answer to all of Job's problems."

When I remember this, I am helped to walk by faith through the vicissitudes of life.

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Since her death in June of this year, magazine articles and two memorial services stirred-up memories for all who knew Elisabeth well.

My relationship with her grew out of correspondence, a few retreats and a seminar at her home in Massachusetts. She spoke candidly about the joys of her life as well as her self-doubt and disappointments. Even though famous, I told my children, Elisabeth needed friends too. So my 10-year-old daughter made a trivet and we sent it to her. Later, she received a personal thank you postcard.

During one trip to Spokane, Lars and Elisabeth accepted our invitation for Sunday breakfast at a restaurant. In the rush of my husband leaving for hospital duty and me getting the family to church on time, we had the dubious distinction of inadvertently leaving them at the table to pick up the tab. Our chagrin and written apology brought only laughter and an enhanced intimacy to our relationship.

Another family story involves my sister inviting them to her home for lunch when Elisabeth was speaking in Colorado Springs. When Sandi asked them what they'd like to drink, her 3-year-old son piped up, "My mom drinks beer." While my mortified sister who doesn't even like beer pondered what to say, Lars chimed in, "I like an occasional beer myself." The lunch went on alcohol-free but with a good head of humor.

Controversial. Prickly. Forthright. Funny. A visit to her own home offered substance as well as hilarity. She introduced us to the skull on her book shelf. He had a name and she said he served as a reminder of her mortality. Later, we howled at her impersonation of a British preschool teacher.

"When the thing you fear comes upon you, He will be there," she aptly observed. Little could she have imagined that the last 10 years or more of her life would be progressively restricted by dementia--back in the narrow end of the upside down funnel. She lost all sense that she was part of something epic. Even in those last years, in some mysterious way, God's grace carried her.

Now, in her real home at last, she has passed into and through the wide end of the funnel. God has planted her

feet in the ultimate spacious place.

Early this morning I heard geese honking. The migration south begins. I'm reminded of Elisabeth's clarion call to trust and obey the sovereign Lord. She frequently underlined this summons by quoting lines from "To a Water Fowl" by William Cullen Bryant:

*He, who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.*

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## **PAACS is Looking for a Chief Medical Officer**

The Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) is seeking a Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to facilitate the work of PAACS in Africa to train and disciple African surgeons. The Chief Medical Officer will work with each of the PAACS training programs, administration, mission hospitals and residents to ensure quality training of surgical residents both academically and spiritually. Candidate must have 5+ years of experience in a senior level position, active medical license, formal surgical training and must be willing to travel extensively. Dr. Bruce Steffes, PAACS current CMO, will train the selected candidate. Dr. Steffes will also continue to be involved with PAACS and will be able to assist the new CMO in his/her new role.

For more information, visit <http://paacs.net/cmo-job-description/>.

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## **Dealing with the Demonic** by W. Philip Thornton, PhD

### **Global Impact Missions**

*Scenario 1. A patient comes to you with a sharp pain in the abdomen. You take him through a complete examination, but find no medical reason for the condition. Nor does the patient seem mentally unstable. You explain to the patient that you can find no physical cause for their suffering. At that point your patient gives you an understanding nod. Then, after a few moments silence, he reveals his perspective on the problem. He is suffering from a "curse." A witch doctor, working on behalf of a man whom your patient has offended, has called upon demons to inflict the pain. What do you do?*

*Scenario 2. You have completed your exam with a patient. A simple antibiotic should easily resolve the problem. You ask your patient if you can pray for them before they are sent on their way. The patient agrees politely. As you begin your pray, the patient lets out a blood curdling scream and drops to the floor, writhing in what appears to be an apoplectic fit. What has just taken place? What do you do?*

*Scenario 3. A young lady comes to you with a large sore on her heel. She explains that it was here that the demons entered her body. She asks not only for physical healing but also to be freed from the demonic activity. What is your response?*

Facing scenarios such those described above presents Western trained healthcare personnel an interesting, and sometimes disconcerting, dilemma. Two questions stand out:

1. How do you determine if the problem encountered in your patient is physical, mental or spiritual (i.e., the result of demonic activity)?
2. If the problem is the result of demonic activity, what do you do about it?

Let's begin with question number 1...*how do you know?*

*Discernment:* Discernment includes the capacity to assess the spiritual status of a person. It is operative at two levels. First, there are believers who have been given the spiritual gift of discernment (1 Corinthians 12). At the

same time, every Christian is equipped with the ability “to discern.” It is the result of the indwelling presence Holy Spirit speaking to our spirits. Scripture tells us that when we accept Christ as our personal Savior, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, takes up residence in our lives (Acts 2:38). Thus, the apostle John challenges us to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God...” (1 John 4:1, NIV 2011). In other words, even if discernment is not your spiritual gift, the Holy Spirit living in you will bear witness with your spirit as to the whether the situation you have encountered is the result of demonic activity or some physical problem. In addition to this spiritual discernment, there are certain “signs” which may indicate demonic presence. For example, mediumistic abilities, confusion in the face of sound spiritual counseling, trance-like voices, extraordinary physical strength, powers of clairvoyance, strange noises in the vicinity of the demonized one and even hateful (evil) facial expressions. Most notable in this category is that one who is demonized will fight and struggle against all Christian influences and prayer and will not speak of Jesus Christ and His atoning blood.

While demonic activity is present in all cultures, it is especially blatant among people who practice animism (the worship of spirits which inhabit all of nature). It is in these cultural contexts that missionary healthcare personnel are most likely to confront overt demonic activity. Likewise, it is in these cultural contexts that missionaries are most frequently called upon to confront that demonic activity. This leads us to our second question, namely what do we do when faced with obvious demonic manifestations.

Dealing with the demonic is not a situation into which any Christian enters lightly. In many cases, deferring to a respected pastor who better understands the larger picture may be a wise choice. Having said that, the Western healthcare professional may be the most qualified to tackle the problem. The implication is that the healthcare missionary has the understanding as well as the spiritual equipment to meet the challenge.

What does the Bible have to say about the demonic? Consider the following:

1. Demons can afflict the human body physically and mentally. This is evident in passages like Luke 13:16, Matthew 9:32-33 and 12:22; Mark 5:1-13; and Acts 10:38. The Bible also records how physical objects can be used by demons to affect people (e.g., idols. See Isaiah 44:9-20; Jeremiah 10:3-5). Demons use humans to oppose God’s servants (e.g., Matthew 2:16). They alienate people from God by denying or confusing sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1-2) and by blinding men to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
2. (Where do they come from?) Demons are angelic beings who participated in Satan’s rebellion and fall (Matthew 25:41; Jude 6)
3. The biblical concept for demonic activity in human beings ranges from Influence.....to oppression.....to possession.  
*The actual word used in Scripture is “to be demonized.”*
4. Jesus’ reaction to the demonized:
  - a. He confronted the demonic (Mark 1:23-27, 32, 34, 39; Mark 3:11-12; Mark 5:1-20; Mark 7:25-30; Mark 9:17-29).
  - b. He delegated power over demons to His followers (Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:14-15; Luke 10:1, 17; Luke 9:1).
  - c. This ministry was continued in the New Testament church (Acts 5:16; Acts 8:7; Acts 16:16-18; Acts 19:13-19).

Note: Of significance at this point is the Scripture in which Jesus says: “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father” (John 14:12, NLT).

5. Non-Christians are open to a wide range of demonic activity because they do not have the protective power of Christ in them. However, believers may also be “demonized” even after they become a Christian and must be dealt with accordingly. This is especially true if they come from a background of demonic involvement. Warnings to Christians about demonic involvement are numerous: Ephesians 4:27; Matthew 6:13; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:10-20; James 4:7; 1 John 4:1-6; and 1 Peter 5:8-9.
6. Biblical “*case histories*” of demonic activity among human beings are found in Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-45; Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-31; Matthew 15:22-28; Mark 7:24-30; and Acts 16:16-21.
7. *Deliverance ministry*. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to do so, a deliverance ministry is appropriate. Your “weapons” in this ministry are three:
  - a. Your *authority* in Christ over any demonic strongholds.

- b. *Prayer* (for safety, for repentance, for wisdom, for the Holy Spirit's presence, for overcoming any doubt or fear, for deliverance power).
- c. *Scripture* (truth brings freedom). Consider these Scriptures which speak of God's victory over Satan and our victory over the demonic: Revelation 12:7-11; Revelation 19:11-16; Hebrews 2:14-15; Isaiah 14:15; Psalm 91; Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 28:18; Romans 5:12-19; 1 John 3:8; 1 John 4:4; Colossians 2:15; Acts 26:18; Acts 2:22-24; Luke 10:17-20; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-3; Ephesians 6:10-18; Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:13; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Philippians 2:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:4; and John 17:15.

There is no particular formula which one must follow in a deliverance ministry. Some use a more head-on, combative approach. This is the approach most widely used in the "majority" world. Others prefer a more counseling approach.

Rather than trying to detail the various methodologies here, I would recommend the following resources to help you develop your own philosophy and skills:

- [The Adversary](#) and [Overcoming the Adversary](#) by Mark Bubeck
- [Spiritual Warfare](#) by Timothy Warner
- [The Bondage Breaker](#) by Neil Anderson
- [Deliver Us From Evil](#) edited by Scott Moreau, et al.
- [Tearing Down Strongholds](#) by Richard Webster
- [The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare](#) by Ed Murphy

In closing let me summarize in the following manner:

- a. There is no reason for the believer to be afraid of nor defeated by demons. A healthy respect...yes. Defeat....no.
- b. Develop a biblical understanding of what we are up against.  
Charles Kraft explains it this way: *What we experience in dealing with the demonized is a "power encounter." Power encounter is the demonstration by God's servants of God's great power working in and through those who believe (Ephesians 1:9), based on the work of Christ on the cross (Colossians 2:15) and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) in the confrontation with and victory over the works of Satan and his demons (Luke 10:19) in their attacks on God's children or their control of unbelievers, resulting in glory to God, salvation of the lost and the up-building of believers.*
- c. The triumph of Jesus is the surety of our victory (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 3:22).
- d. Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Luke 4:1f).
- e. Put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6).
- f. Minister with spiritual weapons.
  - The Scriptures (Hebrews 12-13)
  - Prayer (Ephesians 6:18)
  - Worship (Psalm 18:1-3; Psalm 149:6; Psalm 24; Psalm 59)
  - The Lord's names (Philippians 2:9,10)
  - The cross (John 12:24-33; 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 2:2-4; Colossians 2:15)

**Remember.....**

*"But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world" (1 John 4:4, NLT).*

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## **Danger and Risk** by Dr. Ron Koteskey

Don, Cynthia and their three preschool and elementary children had been serving in Africa for three years. They had come to terms with the dangers related to malaria and cholera, but Ebola had just been confirmed in a village only a few kilometers from the city where they served. The risks related to Ebola are now much higher,



and they now have to decide whether to move to a safer place or to stay and continue their ministry. Having three young children complicates their decision. Their agency told them they had the choice of staying or leaving.

Vern and Peggy were just finishing a summer of visiting family and fundraising in their passport country when conflict broke out in their host country, and the situation was approaching civil war. Their children were all in upper middle school or high school and attended boarding school in a stable country. Their host country had been quite safe with only a few travel alerts, but now there were travel warnings for much of the country, especially the city where they served. They felt needed so much there that they would like to return, but their children were afraid they would be killed. Their agency also left the decision up to them.

Most agencies have policies and/or recommendations for people serving with them. Sometimes those policies are firm and require missionaries to leave the country or not to go to places under specific dangers. However, those policies sometimes leave the final decision up to the people involved, and “to go or not to go” becomes the question.

### **Where is danger?**

Danger and risk are found everywhere. Thousands of people die every year from antibiotic resistant diseases they catch in hospitals in their passport countries. People are murdered each year on the streets of the cities in their passport countries. One concerned parent in the U.S. called a cross-cultural worker in Asia during the second week in September 2001, offering to fly the whole family back to the U.S. The family declined, pointing out that they were not the ones under attack by terrorists.

Danger from disease, violence, tsunamis, weather, earthquakes, accidents and so forth are found literally everywhere. The question is whether or not to go to places where known high risk dangers exist. Millions of people choose to live where these are likely to occur and, as a result, thousands die each year. Other people get caught in such situations through no fault of their own.

Of course, when only adults are involved and they have the freedom and means to leave, few ethical questions are raised. However, when children are involved or people are forced into these situations, new issues rise. Let us consider some of the questions that arise, what people did in Bible times and how to make such decisions today.

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

The Bible is not silent about this situation of facing danger. Here are some things that Jesus said and some that Paul did.

When sending His disciples out, Jesus gave them a long set of instructions (Matthew 10). First He told them where to go, what to do, what to take along and how to find lodging. Then He told them what to expect and what to do when certain things occurred.

- Stand firm. He told them they would be handed over to local councils, flogged in synagogues, arrested and betrayed, plus people would hate them, “...but he who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:17-22, NIV 1984).
- Flee to another place. He told them, “When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another...” and that they would not go through all the cities of Israel (Matthew 10:23, NIV 1984).

He made it clear that at some times they would stay in the dangerous place where they would be arrested and beaten, and at other times they were to leave those dangerous places and go elsewhere.

The apostle Paul illustrated this in his ministry in the book of Acts.

- Fled to another place. Paul and Barnabas had a fruitful ministry in Iconium. However, when the Jews and the Gentiles plotted together to stone him, “they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra...” (Acts 14:1-6, NIV 2011).



- Stood firm. When Paul and Barnabas arrived at Caesarea, Paul was warned by a prophet that the Jews in Jerusalem would bind his hands and have him arrested. People listening begged Paul not to go, but he went anyway (Acts 21:7-14.) He was arrested in Jerusalem.

Note that one time Paul fled, and at another time, he stood firm even though he was arrested.

## **A theology of risk?**

In addition to passages of Scripture such as those above, missionaries need to develop their own “theology of risk.” This is really not as scholarly as it sounds because all it means is for missionaries to put in words and internalize what they believe about God and how that applies to the risks they are facing. Some of the first ones to do that were Evan and Jewel Evans who served with their four daughters in Sub-Saharan Africa for decades. As their world unraveled, the family decided that they needed such a theology. They found that God promised them two things.

- God would be with them.
- God’s grace was sufficient for anything they would face.

They finally took a vote whether to stay or not, and everyone in the family felt that God was not finished with them there, so they would remain in their adopted land regardless of the cost (“Coping with risk: working in an uncertain world, *Interact*, Winter, 2005).

Missionaries wanting a five-page Bible study, “Toward a theology of risk” can get it by going to the SIM website at <http://www.thrive.sim.org/> and searching for “risk.”

Those who would like to see a sample theology of risk and read one for short-termers can find it at <http://www.baptistsonmission.org/News/A-Theology-of-Risk-for-NCBM>.

Apparently no books have been published about developing a theology of risk, but missionaries can develop one by writing down what they believe about God and reading Matthew 10, Matthew 24, John 16 and 2 Corinthians 11, and determining how their beliefs about God apply to the situations Jesus told his followers they would face and those Paul actually faced.

## **How does one decide?**

The basic decision rule is that people who do not want to enter or stay in the danger situation should not be forced, pressured or shamed into doing so. Anyone who wants to be out of it should be allowed to go or stay out.

Policies or guidelines of the agency should be followed. When missionaries join an agency, they agree to live by those documents whether they agree with them or not. If the agency tells them to evacuate, members are bound to follow the policy even if they want to stay. Of course, the agency may make an exception if it wishes to do so.

Adult individuals or couples can make their decisions as individuals or as couples. They can act as their theology of risk determines, as long as it is within their agency’s guidelines. Of course, when small children who do not understand what is going on are involved, their parents are the ones to make the judgments on whether or not they enter or remain in the danger area (if policy permits this). Agency policies may dictate that children and their mothers evacuate or stay out.

Families with older children and adolescents should include those offspring in the decision even if not required to do so. Everyone should be involved in the discussion and the “vote.” This is not just a majority vote. Like with the Evans family mentioned above, it should be a unanimous vote. Requiring anyone to remain in such a situation is likely to result in serious consequences and should rarely be done.

The experts in this area are [Crisis Consulting International](#). There is little information for individuals on the website, but it does describe their excellent training and seminars.

## **Does God always protect?**

God does not promise that His people will never have persecution or die prematurely. In fact, He is quite clear that some of them will experience persecution and die. What He does promise is that He will go with them through it all and His grace will be sufficient. Hebrews 11 lists some heroes of the faith who "...conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised..." (Hebrews 11:33, NIV 2011). However, it ends by saying that others were tortured, jeered, flogged, chained, imprisoned, stoned, sawed in two and killed with swords (Hebrews 11:35-38).

On the one hand, the Evans family had their theology of risk tested when seven armed robbers forced their way into their walled campus and went from house to house robbing and beating families and even killing an African worker. They were also caught in the crossfire between government troops and rebels trying to overthrow the government, but they survived. When Jewel asked their 15-year-old daughter if she thought they made a mistake when they decided to stay, she replied that she would not even consider leaving after that happened because they had counted the cost and made the commitment to stay.

On the other hand, Nate Saint and the four others who were killed by the Auca Indians in Ecuador in the 1950s did not survive. Nate was criticized by some for not trusting the Lord when he had his wife Marj note his position every five minutes when he was flying. Nate wrote, "I wouldn't be here if I weren't trusting the Lord...I'm concerned about safety, but I don't let it keep me from getting on with God's business. Every time I take off, I am ready to deliver up the life I owe to God. I feel that we should be quick to take advantage of every possible improvement in carrying out the job before us" (*Through Gates of Splendor*, 1981, p. 48).

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