

# Your Call

Keeping you focused on God's call for your life

An e-newsletter encouraging and equipping you for a career in medical missions



Center for  
**Medical Missions**  
A ministry of Christian Medical & Dental Associations

## March 2018

Can you believe it is almost spring? I'm excited about that, and I guess you are too. Have you enjoyed spring break yet? Local schools are on spring break this week. Of course, those of us in residency or already working don't really get a spring break, but if you do, I hope it was/is a great one. I believe it pleases the Lord when we take time away from our routine, especially when we use it to spend extra time with Him.

Will I see you at this week's Remedy mission conference in Orlando? I hope to have a chance to say "hi" to everyone who comes. Of course, for that to happen you will probably need to come by the Center for Medical Missions' booth in the exhibit area, as I seldom get away from there. Please join us in praying that this will be a life-changing conference for many, and that it will pass on to the many who those people will reach for Christ around the globe.

I do want to mention that there will be a second pre-field training for new medical missionaries August 2-5 this year. If you will be heading to the field within the next 12 months, you will want to put this class on your schedule. During the four-day training we introduce issues that can become stumbling blocks to new medical missionaries—things like various religions' impact on health and healthcare, conflict resolution, dealing with so many deaths, resilience, bioethical issues in limited resource settings and prevention and management of burnout. This training is specifically for medical missionaries as time has proven their career differs vastly from church planting or educational missionaries. Information and registration information for the next pre-field training will be available online at [www.cmda.org/missionarytraining](http://www.cmda.org/missionarytraining) after April 15. If you have questions before then, please email me at [susan.carter@cmda.org](mailto:susan.carter@cmda.org).

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## Doing the Walk

by Rev. Stan Key

*"Enoch walked with God..." (Genesis 5:22, 24, ESV).*

Nothing describes the essence of biblical religion more than the call to walk with God. And no one illustrates this better than Enoch. His life story is told in just four short verses (Genesis 5:21-24), and yet his example illuminates the entire biblical drama. Though Enoch's life was short compared to that of his contemporaries (he lived only 365 years), his impact for good was infinitely greater. What made the difference? Not his education, abilities, good looks, family, wealth or connections. Only one thing distinguished Enoch from everyone else: he walked with God.

- **It was a distinctive walk.** In a long and monotonous genealogical list of names (Genesis 5), Enoch stands out from all the rest. For others in the list, the only thing we are told is that Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared and Methuselah lived a long time, had children and died. That's it. But Enoch was different. He walked with God. And like Noah (Genesis 6:9) and Abraham (Genesis 17:1), this made his life impact human history!
- **It was a sanctifying walk.** When Adam sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, he was terrified at the thought of walking with God. So when God came for their evening stroll, Adam hid among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8). When we walk with God, we cannot walk with sin. The one walk nullifies the other. This explains why God said to Abraham, "...walk before me, and be blameless" (Genesis 17:1).
- **It was an intimate walk.** "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The reason Jesus gave the all-encompassing invitation "Follow me" was so that He could establish friendship with those He came to save. Christianity is a relationship long before it is a religion. The only way to know God is to walk with Him.
- **It was an adventurous walk.** Doing the walk will lead you to places of mind-expanding discovery, heart-throbbing beauty and white-knuckled adventure. No one suffers from boredom when they walk with God. Peter even got to walk on water! So come on, get out of the boat and get started! "...no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9, Berean Study Bible).
- **It was a homeward walk.** When you walk with God there is a destination in mind. You aren't walking in circles! He is leading you home. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him (Genesis 5:24, ESV). I imagine it this way: One day as they walked along God turned to Enoch and said, "Hey, we're closer to my house now than we are to yours. Why don't you just come on home with me?" And he did.

Over and over in the New Testament, we are invited to do the walk. "Follow me," Jesus said (Matthew 4:19). And Paul often used this language when he spoke of Christian discipleship. "...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1, ESV). The joy of salvation is discovered only as we step out by faith and walk with God.

*"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to **walk humbly with your God?**" (Micah 6:8, ESV).*

*“A fundamental mistake of the church today is that it takes as its basic goal to get as many people as possible ready to die...it aims to get people into heaven rather than to get heaven into people...They have found ways of being “Christian” without being Christlike.” – Dallas Willard*

Point to Ponder: Is the Christian life a destination or a journey?

Prayer Focus: For someone you know who is no longer walking with Jesus.

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## **Mission Prep**

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

In healthcare, prep is important.

I did many surgeries in Africa. We didn't have an anesthesiologist, so almost all major surgeries from the abdomen on down required me performing a spinal block before inserting a needle into the central nervous system to put in an anesthetic. I took great care to sterilize the injection site. That was just part of the complex preparation for surgery.

I was already wearing scrubs, a mask and a cap. After cleaning my fingernails, I vigorously and completely scrubbed my hands and arms up to my elbows, dried them with a sterile towel and put on a sterile gown and double gloved my hands. The circulating nurse prepped the patient's abdomen as the anesthesia took effect. A staff member was giving oxygen, monitoring the level of the block and watching the patient's blood pressure. I then applied sterile drapes.

My scrub nurse had already scrubbed and put on her surgical gown before draping both instrument tables, opening packs of surgical instruments and then organizing them in a logical order. She had avoided contamination as she opened packages of sponges, lap gauzes and sutures. Once I had the sterile handle on the light, I adjusted its focus, double checked the level of the anesthesia, prayed with my patient and asked for the scalpel. Surgery was ready to begin.

You have to know a lot more besides the surgery technique if it is going to well.

The same can be said of being a healthcare missionary. There is no doubt you will be well prepared with your knowledge of healthcare. Okay, I can hear you saying, “I've never seen a case of malaria or treated a child with a partial bowel obstruction due to round worms. I worry about all the WTDs (weird tropical diseases, as we called them). I will need to diagnose and treat.” That is the least of your challenges. You do know how to learn medicine. You've spent years adding to your knowledge, and in these days of ubiquitous internet, the knowledge you need is only a few clicks away.

But you need other prep to do healthcare missions well, and much of it you will have little or no knowledge or experience unless you actively seek learning opportunities. In the business world,

they call these things the “soft skills,” but they are critical to your success. Even now you should be working to begin learning these skills that will prep you to be a better missionary.

Learn to be a leader. It is an essential skill to bring about all kinds of change. Sure, some people seem to be born to be leaders, but most leadership skills are both caught or taught. Take a brief course in leadership. Add some leadership books to your reading list. Find one or two good leaders to spend time with to model yourself after. Ask a good leader to be your mentor. Look for opportunities to provide leadership by teaching Sunday school, being involved in a campus organization or leading a service team. On the mission field, you will find your leadership skills will be further developed as you influence people to go from where they are to where they need to be in your clinic or hospital, with your fellow missionaries or in the church or community.

Enhance your communication skills at every opportunity, especially if you don't consider yourself a good communicator. Read books, watch training videos and mentally critique both good and poor communicators. Apply what you learn by accepting teaching and speaking opportunities, and then ask for constructive feedback afterwards. Learn to share your testimony, lead a Bible study and preach. Communication skills will enable you to share the gospel, inspire people to serve with you, train your overseas healthcare team and much more.

Don't forget to enhance your writing skills as well. You will regularly communicate with your financial and prayer supporters, perhaps write for your mission magazine, keep a diary of your experiences and communicate through correspondence. My father, an evangelist, told me as we started our missionary service, “Dave, you will have as much ministry in the U.S. as you will have overseas.” He was right. With good communication skills, the Holy Spirit will use you as a conduit to open people's eyes to the Great Physician.

If you become a professional employee in the U.S., it is likely someone else handles the management and administration. In healthcare missions, you will be leading a healthcare team early in your career in the workplace. Over time that will be happen in your mission agency. In my experience, the ability to lead, manage staff, develop systems, administrate finances, motivate people and problem solve are essential skills to develop if you are going to be successful. If you are still in undergrad, take a basic business course. If you are further along, look for online opportunities or begin reading. I didn't take a business course in my undergrad years, but after I got to the field I attended CMDA's Continuing Medical and Dental Education Conference early in my career. I knew my deficit and eagerly picked a stream where a missionary hospital administrator taught me administrative skills. Realizing how vital they were to what I was asked to do, I continue my education by reading.

Missionary life gives you numerous opportunities to mentor others. One of the OB/Gyn faculty members from my residency traveled to Tenwek Hospital to help for a couple of weeks, and he brought his family who lived with us during their stay. Heading up the hospital the first morning, he paused, turned and said to me, “I feel like I'm starting my internship again.” He was, in the sense he knew little about missionary medicine, but there was more than that going on. You will have the opportunity to have a profound effect on students, residents and graduate doctors who serve with you on a short-term basis. I'm still amazed when I see someone who came to Tenwek to help decades ago. Almost all of them share a story of how God worked in their life profoundly during

that time. Often they will say something like, “Dave, you remember that day we were making rounds on...” or “...that difficult surgery...” or “...that meal we enjoyed in your home...,” and then they will go on to quote something I said or the gist of a conversation. They then add, “That was a turning point for me...” or “God spoke to me about...” or “That conversation changed my life.” I always have to confess I don’t remember it, but when people are out of their comfort zone, when they are watching you intently, tuned into everything you have to say and having their faith stretched, you have incredible opportunities to mentor.

It is not too early to be looking for a mentor and being a mentor to others. It should be a lifelong habit to make sure someone else’s iron is sharpening yours and you are sharpening others. A few months ago, I had an hour-long conversation with a middle-aged mission executive who wanted some advice. That has now developed into a monthly mentoring call that is blessing to me, and it is also blessing him. The only thing you will take to heaven with you...is other people. Learn now to invest in others through meaningful relationships.

Lastly, and most importantly, is your spiritual prep. It is easy to let your spiritual engine oil run low without adequate Bible study, prayer, fellowship and witnessing during your busy training days. You are smart, disciplined, organized and self-sufficient. That is how you got to where you are now. You will get by, for a while, by ignoring the warning light on the dashboard of your life. But sooner or later, everything will overheat and seize up. You can’t put your spiritual growth on hold. You are either growing or regressing. Now is the time to develop good spiritual disciplines that will sustain you your entire life. Let me warn you, it won’t be easier when you are on the mission field. Frankly, it will be harder, and you won’t last long without a close, growing relationship with Christ. I’ve seen it again and again.

I know you’re busy. I know you don’t have much time, but don’t get so focused on the urgent that you forget the important on your road of preparation for missions. There is more to being a great healthcare missionary than healthcare.

*Note from Susan: A couple books that will be helpful in your missionary preparation are: Beyond Medicine: What Else You Need to Know to be a Healthcare Missionary by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics) and Servant Leadership by David Stevens and Bert Jones. Both these books can be purchased at [www.cmda.org/bookstore](http://www.cmda.org/bookstore) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

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## **New Medical School with Full Scholarship**

The University of Illinois and Carle Hospital (Champaign) have begun a new medical school in Champaign. The first class—starting this fall—will receive a full scholarship for all four years!

<https://medicine.illinois.edu/admissions/tuition-fees/>

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## Assessment of International Rotation Experience Resident

– Author and Country of Service not Shared Here

This experience was absolutely invaluable. Clinically, I experienced the tension that exists when resources and infrastructure are lacking while I watch a patient suffer from disease. I was also challenged by the struggle of balancing cultural humility and medical necessity—respecting “the way things are done” while also striving to encourage improvement. At the same time, I have started to make beautiful relationships with wonderful staff. We have discussed cases together, disagreed and agreed on management plans, and ultimately learned together. Through these interactions, I’ve learned how to approach their views with both respect and curiosity, which has been a valuable lesson for me to take home. I can honestly say that I’ve not only found colleagues but friends. With that said, I hope to continue to foster these relationships as I plan on returning to \_\_\_\_\_ in the near future. I was actually able to share my faith a little bit with a few of the non-medical staff, but with the busyness of the hospital, these opportunities were rare with the medical staff. There was another younger volunteer here who did not grow up with church and with whom I was able to have a couple of good conversations about church and beliefs in the supernatural.

Overall, this rotation was extremely valuable for my clinical growth and my spiritual growth. I think it has spurred on many ideas and questions for what my future career will hold in regards to medicine and global health.

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## Interested in an International Rotation?

You will find two handbooks to help you find just the right site at [www.cmda.org/internationalrotations](http://www.cmda.org/internationalrotations). The first handbook is for individuals from a variety of healthcare professions. The second is specifically for nurses.

CMDA also has scholarships available to assist in making your dream of an international rotation come true. The Westra Scholarship is for medical/dental students, the Johnson scholarship is for residents and the Tami Fisk scholarship is for those wanting to serve in specific countries of Southeast Asia. There are other scholarships available at [www.cmda.org/scholarships](http://www.cmda.org/scholarships).

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## Training Opportunities

**Christian Health Service Corps** offers courses on global health and tropical medicine, community health evangelism, and disaster and refugee response. Courses are one to two weeks long and held at CHSC headquarters in Northeast Texas. CME/CEU is offered for most courses. Find dates and information at <http://www.healthservicecorps.org/training/>. Contact Laura Smelter MD, Director of Training ([laura@healthservicecorps.org](mailto:laura@healthservicecorps.org), 903-962-4000), with questions.

**Equip International** also offers courses for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners



and nurses.

- **Missionary Medicine for Physicians (MMP)**

MMP is designed specifically for physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners—this five-day course provides diagnostic and treatment principles for those who choose to work in remote, developing areas where sophisticated instrumentation and lab tests are not available. A valuable course for short- and long-term medical missionaries.

- **Missionary Medicine Intensive (MMI)**

In this two-week course, students will gain the knowledge and hands-on experience to diagnose and treat illness and injury in remote locations. MMI is one of our most popular courses; attended by lay people, nurses and other healthcare providers. Utilizing clearly defined procedural techniques, students will leave with the skills to save lives and bring healing to hurting communities. The course will place special emphasis on tropical illnesses. Recommended for short- and long-term missionaries, mission team leaders or indigenous missionaries. No prior medical training required!

- **Community Health Evangelism (CHE)**

One of the best strategies for proclaiming the love of Jesus among the poor, CHE is being utilized by hundreds of Christian churches and organizations in over 125 countries around the world! CHE teaches local community leaders how to identify their own needs and how to mobilize the community to use local resources to achieve positive—sustainable—results. Lives and communities are transformed from the inside out as people come to Christ and work together to address local needs. Interactive, practical and life changing, we highly recommend for all short- and long-term missionaries!

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## What Are You Holding?

by Jenilee Goodwin

(from [www.velvetashes.com](http://www.velvetashes.com), November 5, 2017)

I love the concept that God is holding us in the palm of his hand.

The comfort we have in the knowledge that he holds us is both miraculous and invaluable. Knowing that God is holding all of the pieces of our lives encourages us that no matter what comes our way, God has it in his capable hands. This is a truth that we can stand on wherever we are in the world, whatever situations are facing us each day.

I can look back over the years and see the songs, words, verses and moments that remind me how God holds us.

The words of the song “Held” by Natalie Grant brought our family through a very rough season when we lost my husband’s younger brother 9 years ago. Casting Crowns’ song called “Just Be Held” spoke peace to my very un-peaceful heart when we were living in France, going to language school and adjusting to life overseas.

Isaiah 43, Psalm 91, Psalm 139 and so many other beautiful Scriptures speak life into these times. The promises of being held continued to resonate in my heart through our first term.

Even now, in this time of being stateside for a year-long furlough, I'm resting in the incredible fact that he is holding me and I can just be held by him. But in believing that he holds us, there is another question to consider.

What are *we* holding?

**More personally, what are *you* holding?**

What are you clinging to in this moment?

What are you clasping tightly in your palm?

What are you wrapping your fingers around *loosely* yet still not having the strength to fully open your hands and let go?

- A sticky team situation where you are sure you were right
- A tough marriage moment when you made a mistake
- A differing opinion with a friend or neighbor
- A to-do list a mile long
- A hurting child
- An unfulfilled dream

It could be hundreds of things. Hurts, passions, rights, loves, divisions, or callings—things you are holding in your hand rather than allowing God to hold it for you.

I've been living this out as we go through our first furlough and head into our second term overseas.

I've been thinking about how much motherhood will change for me as we begin a season of boarding school for our girls, how open-handed my mothering hands must be over the coming years. I'm lost in the midst of packing lists, shopping for four years, doctors' appointments, organizational reporting and stateside life. I'm healing from certain situations during our first term, both physically and spiritually.

Through all of these things, I know God is holding me, but how tightly am I holding all the other things happening in my life?

Am I giving them to the One who is holding me? Am I allowing Him to use, craft, build, heal and engineer it all?

Recently, while scrolling through my newsfeed, I came across a post written by a pastor's wife at one of our supporting churches. Her post was my post. Her words spoke directly into this theme as I was preparing to write.

She was recapping her husband's sermon after a very sad, difficult time at their church. Her husband asked some great questions about what we are holding: What are you holding in your



hand? What are you holding in your heart? Are you allowing God to use what is in your hands to establish what he is doing in your heart?

She goes on to say:

*"We ALL hold something...From the job you have, to the clothes you wear, to the money in your bank account, to your funny and witty personality, to your tender heart towards the outcast, to your compassion for children, to your unashamed honesty, to your gift of friendliness, to your skill with a sewing machine or with a piece of wood, to your intelligence, to your voice, to the members of your family, to your knack for organization...we ALL hold SOMETHING. In fact, I would say we ALL hold MANY things. Don't let your blessings, your tragedies, your circumstances, your gifts, your talents, your abilities, and your possessions sit idly by. Use them to 'establish' what God has placed in your heart."*

What a beautiful connection!

The things we hold, in our hands *and* in our hearts, can be used by God to establish what He is doing in us.

So, ask yourself these questions. Consider where you are in the "being held" process. Are you allowing God to hold you AND the things you are holding? Are you giving him access to the things being held in the quiet places of your heart?

*What are you holding?*

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