

# 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



## August 2015

Welcome to this issue of *Your Call*. Many of you have started back to school, so we are asking the Lord to give all of you a great school year. I know the CMDA's student chapters are having their welcome events. Be sure to invite your friends and, if they are interested in missions, show them how they can sign up for the *Your Call* e-newsletter. It only comes every other month now, so I hope they will not think it fills up their inbox too frequently.

When you are ready to do an international rotation, remember that CMDA does have some scholarship funds to assist. Of course, you have to complete an application and an award requires a recommendation from your pastor, but we are happy to assist you in attaining your international rotation goal if you will take these steps. Visit [www.cmda.org/scholarships](http://www.cmda.org/scholarships) for more information. I've received very few scholarship requests in recent months so funds are available.

GHMC - Are you planning to participate in this year's Global Missions Health Conference? If so, you will want to register soon as the price increases closer to the event. This year's conference is a little earlier than normal on November 5-7, 2015. This is the conference that is held at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Students are welcome to stay in church family homes, so they do the best they can to keep registration fees low for students. You can learn more at [www.medicalmissions.com](http://www.medicalmissions.com).

You will want to read all the way through this e-newsletter. Dr. David Stevens' article is going to be a little challenging, but his point is very important. Then Dr. Thornton's article on dealing with fear is a great follow-up.

Here is What's Ahead:

[Whole-hearted or Hole-hearted?](#) by Rev. Stan Key

[The Doctor Must Die](#) by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

[What About My Fears](#) by Dr. Phil Thornton

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## Whole-hearted or Hole-hearted?

by Rev. Stan Key

*"Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of the men...who came up out of Egypt will see the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-not one except Caleb...and Joshua...for they followed the Lord wholeheartedly" (Numbers 32:11-12, NIV 1984).*

A nasty rumor is going around, and it is my goal to squelch it! It seems many in the church today have been led to believe that one can be a follower of Jesus Christ without being fully devoted. Do you buy into this rumor? Can you make only a partial surrender to Christ and simultaneously sing "It Is Well With My Soul?" Does Jesus' demand of the rich young ruler (*sell all that you have and follow me*) not apply to you? Pews in American churches are filled with people who sit content in pious sentimentality, imagining that they are spiritually secure when in reality they are hanging by a slender thread over the pit of hell.

This rumor needs to be exposed for the damnable lie that it is. Any church or ministry that spreads such false doctrine promotes a false sense of security among those who are, in reality, on the road to ruin. Surrendering *some* of one's life to the Master is not enough. And even those who give Him *most* of their lives fall short of what the gospel requires. Jesus gave His all, and He demands nothing less in return. His call to discipleship is unequivocal: "...any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33, NIV 1984).

The Old Testament tells the tragic story of how God's people, though redeemed from Egyptian bondage, never entered the Promised Land where their inheritance lay. They wasted their lives doing laps in the wilderness. They had enough faith to get out of Egypt but not enough to get into Canaan. Why? Because they did not follow the Lord with all their hearts. Out of two million people, only Caleb and Joshua crossed over into their inheritance. What made these two different? They followed God wholeheartedly.

Dear friend, if you find yourself stuck doing laps in the wilderness; if you had enough faith to get out of Egypt but not enough to get into the life of victory, if your walk with Christ is one of spiritual mediocrity, let me suggest the reason why: partial commitment, incomplete surrender, a divided heart, double-mindedness.

Don't trust in a rumor; only the truth of the gospel will set you free to be and do all that God created you to be and do. You cannot call Him Lord if you refuse to do what He says. Jesus is Lord of all or He will not be Lord at all! Today is the day. Now is the time. Get unstuck. Give God all your heart. *"For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chronicles 16:9a, NASB).*

Go possess your inheritance!

Point to Ponder: Does your church preach that one can be partially committed to Jesus Christ and yet be secure in his/her salvation?

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## **The Doctor (Nurse, Physician Assistant, etc.) Must Die**

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

Some sermons stick in your mind! I still remember Dr. David Thompson's provocative title, "The Doctor Must Die," from when he spoke at the Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville years ago. (Hey, if you haven't registered for this year's GMHC, do it today at [medicalmissions.com](http://medicalmissions.com).) His sermon was both challenging and prophetic, considering what has happened with epidemics, terrorism, civil wars and other challenges impacting missionaries around the world.

The remaining work to be done takes us back in history to the days when missionaries going overseas packed their belongings in long wooden boxes custom built for them. They were their coffins! They knew there was a great chance they wouldn't come back due to untreatable diseases, travel dangers and physical attacks from those they came to serve. Yet, they went anyway.

Fast forward 100 to 200 years and missionaries face the same things. I just got my riveting copy of Kent and Amber Brantly's book, *Called for Life*, chronicling their time in Liberia and his near-death experience when he contracted Ebola. Along with everyone else, he thought he was going to die. Just a year and a half before contracting Ebola, Kent and Amber were at CMDA's headquarters in Bristol, Tennessee to attend our New Medical Missionary Training conference where we taught them how to thrive, not just survive, as healthcare missionaries. We covered a variety of topics including burnout, stress, cross-cultural healthcare delivery, ethical issues in healthcare missions and much more. We learned, laughed and prayed together. I commissioned them just a few weeks before they left.

Everything looked fine when they arrived in Liberia, but the most important thing that was going to sustain them during incredible difficulties was that this doctor and his wife were already dead.

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Tammy King was a young missionary nurse who traveled to Kenya to serve at Tenwek Hospital. Her focus at the hospital was the premature nursery. The Kipsigis people have one of the highest rates of multiple births in the world. One out of every 25 births is a set of twins, triplets or quads. That means a lot of premature babies.

Using homemade isolettes heated by light bulbs on rheostats, tender loving care and excellent nursing, Tammy saved many of even the severely premature. She loved those babies and their mothers loved her. She trained her staff and together they did a remarkable job under very difficult conditions. God's grace and her compassion showed through.

She didn't often get away from the stressful battles she fought every day, but the last time she did, it was good she was already dead.

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Mary (not her actual name) is a young missionary surgeon who has been serving in Africa less than two years. Her colleagues were thrilled when Mary arrived. Her dedication, expertise and love for the local people and her passion for sharing the gospel made her a valuable team member almost overnight. Her latest blog was entitled "The C - Word," so I was expecting to hear a great medical story of some challenging cancer surgery she had done or about a patient with

cancer who came to Christ.

Instead she wrote:

*As a surgeon, I have spoken the word "cancer" countless times. To my patients, to their loved ones, in academic discussions with my colleagues and in hearing the sad news of others. I have learned to speak about cancer without emotion and without fear because, after all, like a broken arm or a bean in the ear, it is a clinical problem that I am working to solve. Even when it involves sharing difficult news with a patient or hearing of the tragic diagnosis of a friend, it does not consume me, and rarely does it change me. **This week, however, I have heard and spoken the word "cancer" more times than I can recall. And all of them in regard to me.***

*One week ago, I was a missionary surgeon in Africa. Today I am a young woman with advanced breast cancer. The word "cancer" has become very personal. Life forever changed.*

I was floored with the news. Why, God, why?

And then, as I prayed for Mary, I thanked God she was already dead.

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Doug and Ruth had a challenging time during their first term. They are both physicians and parents to young children. They spent more than a year learning the local people's heart language, but greater challenges awaited them when they finally arrived at their mission hospital. The veteran missionary doctor had decided to leave. Doug, with no experience or mentor, was put in charge of a rural hospital in a sometimes hostile culture. For example, mobs of inflamed family members form following the unexpected loss of a patient.

Doug and Ruth are such great communicators that we invited them to return to be missionaries in residence during one of CMDA's New Medical Missionary Training conferences. God helped them through each step of their difficult first term, and, with joy in their hearts, they shared about God's grace for every situation with a room full of soon-to-be missionaries.

Shortly after that conference, they learned that the government had decided to take over their hospital. What they had poured their lives into was now gone.

More tragic news soon followed. Ruth found she had anaplastic metastatic cancer of unknown origin. A long period of aggressive chemotherapy followed as thousands prayed for this young family and especially for Ruth. I prayed too and also thanked God that Ruth was already dead.

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No, I'm not morbid.

Kent Brantly almost died from Ebola in the midst of the horrors of an epidemic he put himself at great risk to fight while he was thousands of miles from Amber and his children. Many prayed and God spared his life.

Tammy King, just miles from her hospital, swerved to miss a child who ran out from the bushes onto the road in front of her. When she braked as hard as she could, her car flipped end over end. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Mary, with breast cancer already throughout her body, is getting a central catheter placed this week and starts her chemotherapy and all its ramifications next week. She would be thrilled to have you join her prayer team.

Ruth responded to her chemotherapy and miraculously they can find no vestiges of her cancer. She and Doug are thankful.

During one of our training conferences, a number of nervous missionary families were heading to West Africa and the epicenter of the Ebola epidemic only weeks after Kent had been air evacuated to the states. As I commissioned them, I said this, "If you die before you go, you don't have to fear dying after you get there."

That is not an original thought. That was what Christ said in Matthew 16:24-25: "*Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it'*" (NIV 2011).

Jim Elliot, who was martyred in 1956 as he and four others tried to take the gospel to the unreached Auca Indians in Ecuador, summarized verse 25 in a way that mobilized a generation of new missionaries, "*He is no fool to give what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.*"

Kent, Amber, Tammy, Mary, Doug and Ruth died to their own desires before they ever arrived on the mission field, giving

themselves and their families' bodies and souls into God's hands. Through their death or suffering, they were ready for God to use them as He saw fit to spread the gospel around the world.

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William Borden was the heir to a huge milk pasteurizing business that covered the U.S. Borden Milk is still sold today, but they had a near monopoly in the early 1900s, and he was destined to take over the business from his dad. It was a business that would have made him a billionaire in today's terms. But on a trip around the world that he received as a high school graduation present, God called this young Christian man to be a missionary. His father opposed his decision, so William wrote in his Bible, "NO RESERVES."

He went to Yale University and started a Bible study with his roommate during his freshman year to reach his classmates with the gospel. By his senior year, more than 90 percent of the students in the university were in Bible studies and he personally had won the most incorrigible student to Christ. He volunteered in local homeless shelters and even brought drunks and homeless people off the streets to stay in his dorm room. He still graduated near the top of his class and was highly recruited and wooed to go into business with other companies if he didn't want to run the family business. He wrote two more words in his Bible, "NO RETREAT."

God had laid Western China on his heart, which was largely Muslim and unreached. On his way to his mission field assignment, he stopped in Egypt to learn Arabic. He fell ill with meningitis two weeks after his arrival. His last written words were added to his Bible a few hours before his death, "NO REGRETS."

His dedication and sacrifice ignited the Student Volunteer Movement. With the cry "I will replace Borden!" on their lips, and the commitment of "The evangelization of the world in this generation" in their hearts, more than 20,000 university graduates risked life and health to travel to almost every corner of the world. That is why there are more than 100 million Christians in China today and the gospel has spread across sub-Saharan Africa.

Here is my point. The work still to be done is risky, and God does not promise you safety, health or success. He is looking for "dead" men and women who will answer His call to sacrifice everything-their lives, their health and their safety-and walk into the unreached dangerous areas where the gospel has never been heard so the Great Commission can be completed.

The time to die is now. Your time to go will come.

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## **An Open Letter To Future Medical Missionaries** **What About My Fears**

by Phil Thornton, PhD  
Global Impact Missions

Fear. Fear is what we feel when we face an impending danger, evil or pain. When the threat is real, fear is good. If we didn't feel it, we couldn't protect ourselves from legitimate dangers. Other fears may simply be products of a hyperactive imagination or a personality plagued by exaggerated worry. In either case, whether justified or irrational, fear can be paralyzing and keep us from fulfilling the ministry to which God has called us.

Each time CMDA sponsors a training event for future healthcare missionaries, participants are asked what fears they are facing as they prepare for missionary service. As I have reflected on those conversations, three broad categories of fear stand out:

1. Fear of physical harm (to me or my family, especially children).
2. Fear of failure in doing my job (failure being defined in many ways).
3. Fear of not living up to expectations (of those whom I serve, of those who support me, of my family and friends, of myself).

First, let's acknowledge that there is a genuine fear which should characterize all Christians. The Bible teaches that reverential fear of Jehovah is wisdom (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10), the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7) and something we should choose (Proverbs 1:29). It is that which drives us to obey God in spite of the consequences (Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:1-2). It means being satisfied with nothing less than the will of God in our lives (John 4:31-34). Nehemiah was a man dominated by Godly fear (Nehemiah 5:15; Job 1:8). The same was true of the early Christians in the New Testament church (Acts 9:31).

With regard to the three categories of "fear" mentioned above, what encouragement can we find in Scripture?

### **Fear that comes from living in a dangerous world.**

There is certainly no denying that we live in a violent and dangerous world. One has to only look at the news each day to confirm that observation. But Scripture reminds us that God is not unaware of the dangers which surround us, and thus He assures us that:

- "He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber" (Psalm 121:3, ESV).
- "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" (Matthew 10:29, ESV).

But what about the increasing antagonism toward the Christian faith in many areas of the world? Again, God says that the plans of terrorists and hostile nations do not succeed apart from God's permissive will.

- "The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples" (Psalm 33:10, ESV).

Having noted these promises of God, let's be very clear. They are not promises that persecution and even death will never befall God's servants (Luke 21:10-18). Quite to the contrary, the history of missions is written with the blood of martyrs. But why, you ask, would God call us to serve Him in a dangerous place, then not protect us from harm? Like the people of Israel we may be tempted to say, "...*The way of the Lord is not fair...*" (Ezekiel 18:25, NKJV). Inadequate though it may seem in the moment of distress, be reminded of the words of Isaiah:

- "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:8-11, NKJV).

*(Note: The book of **Job** would be an excellent study on this topic. Suggested Resources: The Wiersbe Bible Study Series: Job, Waiting on God in Difficult Times; Trusting God in Times of Adversity by Kay Arthur; Let God be God by Ray Stedman.)*

And so we find ourselves struggling to keep two things in balance...

#### **1. The promise**

- "With the LORD on my side I do not fear. What can mortals do to me?" (Psalm 118:6, NRSV).
- "In God I trust; I am not afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me?" (Psalm 56:11, NRSV).
- "So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:6, NRSV).

#### **2. And a reality**

- "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings..." (Philippians 3:10, NASB).

*(Some helpful resources on suffering: Why Suffering?: Finding Meaning and Comfort When Life Doesn't Make Sense by Ravi Zacharias; Making Sense Out of Suffering by Peter Kreeft; When Life Comes Undone by T.J. Addington.)*

Perhaps the real question is not why do bad things happen to good people, but rather do we really believe God is in total control?

- "Nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39, NKJV).

### **Fear of failure**

Those in the healthcare profession are among the most highly motivated people in the world. You have overcome all kinds of obstacles in order to attain the status of physician, dentist, nurse, physical therapist or.... You have faced the question of potential failure, and you have overcome! But now a new challenge looms large. It is the challenge of living in, and doing healthcare in, another culture. Suddenly your most oft repeated phrase is, "I have never seen (done) this before!" You realize that all your training has not prepared you for what you are facing.

Is it possible that this is the very place God wants you? Is it possible that you are now in a position where God can more powerfully work in you and through you than you ever thought conceivable! Why...because you are dependent on Him in a

way you have never before experienced. In *When Life Comes Undone*, T.J. Adington writes: "When all is stripped away, when all of our resources are exhausted as eventually they are, there is one answer we have had all along: God is there. He is with us and we can trust Him!"

- "But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7, NRSV).
- "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, NRSV).
- "He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless" (Isaiah 40:29, NRSV).

These Scriptures and others like them remind us that our success or failure in ministry does not depend upon our training and knowledge alone, but rather on His divine enablement. This being true, **is it possible that our fear of failure lies not so much in questioning our abilities but rather in doubting the Lord, His Word and His provision?**

- But Moses said, "The people I am with number six hundred thousand on foot; and you say, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month! Are there enough flocks and herds to slaughter for them? Are there enough fish in the sea to catch for them?'" The LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's power limited? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not" (Numbers 11:21-23, NRSV).

When we walk in obedience, the only way we fail is if He fails.

- "But their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper" (Psalm 1:2-3, NRSV).
- "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock" (Matthew 7:24-25, NRSV).

### **So what is the key to overcoming the fear of failure?**

Keep your eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he walked upon the sea (Matthew 14:25-31)! Learn to lean on Him and not on your own adequacy.

- "Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Corinthians 3:4-5, NRSV).

In his first Inaugural Address on March 4, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said to a nation in the grip of an economic depression, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Why? **Because fear paralyzes you, fear is contagious and fear paralyzes others.** In the Gospel of Matthew we read how a storm arose and was about to sink the boat. Jesus was asleep. The disciples went to Him and awoke Him saying, "...*Lord, save us! We are perishing!*" (Matthew 8:25, NRSV). Jesus responded in verse 26, "...*Why are you afraid, you of little faith?*" (NRSV). It seems obvious from Jesus' words that fear and faith cannot live together in the same heart.

Thus, the real question becomes, *which will it be: faith or fear?* Paul tells us in Philippians, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*" (Philippians 4:6, NKJV). Isaiah sums it up in this way: "*Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand*" (Isaiah 41:10, NASB).

### **Some "Fear Not" Passages**

- Genesis 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; 35:17
- Exodus 14:13
- Numbers 14:9; 21:34
- Deuteronomy 1:21; 3:2,22; 31:8
- Joshua 8:1; 10:8,25
- Judges 6:23
- Ruth 3:11
- 1 Samuel 12:20
- 2 Samuel 9:7; 13:28
- 1 Kings 6:16; 17:34
- 1 Chronicles 22:13; 28:20

2 Chronicles 20:15,17; 32:7

- Psalm 55:19; 64:4
- Isaiah 10:24; 40:9; 41:10, 13f; 43:1,5; 44:2; 51:7; 57:11
- Jeremiah 10:5; 46:27f
- Lamentations 3:57
- Joel 2:21f
- Haggai 2:5
- Zechariah 8:13, 15
- Malachi 3:5
- Matthew 10:26,28,31
- Luke 5:10; 12:7; 18:4;
- 1 Peter 3:14
- Revelation 2:10

### Some Resources on Dealing with Fear

- *Fearless: Imagine Your Life Without Fear* by Max Lucado
- *What Are You Afraid Of* by David Jeremiah
- *Freedom From Fear* by Niel T. Anderson
- *Fear of the Lord* by John Bevere
- *Finding Peace* by Charles Stanley
- *When I Am Afraid* by Edward Welch
- *Fear Not Tomorrow, God Is Already There* by Ruth Graham
- *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear* by Scott Bader-Saye
- *Don't Be Afraid* by Rabbi K.A. Schneider
- *Running Scared* by Edward Welch

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