

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

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Welcome to this issue of *Your Call*. I guess many of you are heading back to school or starting a new year of residency. We at CMDA are praying this will be a good year for you and that you will sense the Lord's pleasure and blessings as you continue preparing for a life of service.

I trust you will enjoy the articles I'm sharing this month. As always, if you have a question, please don't hesitate to ask. susan.carter@cnda.org

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Amusing Ourselves to Death

by Rev. Stan Key

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle...David remained at Jerusalem. It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful" (2 Samuel 11:1-2, ESV).

Few books have given a more insightful analysis of our cultural obsession with entertainment than Neil Postman's classic *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. On the first page he warns of what happens to a nation when its citizens become addicted to "show business."

Today, we must look to the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, as a metaphor of our national character and aspiration, its symbol a thirty-foot high cardboard picture of a slot machine and a chorus girl. For Las Vegas is a city entirely devoted to the idea of entertainment, and as such proclaims the spirit of a culture in which all public discourse increasingly takes the form of entertainment. Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death.

King David would be a good illustration of what happens to someone who lays aside his adult responsibilities so that he can...well, amuse himself. His sin with Bathsheba began when he declined his duty to lead his troops into battle and rather stayed home in Jerusalem looking for "entertainment." He was in danger of literally amusing himself (and others?) to death.

Many years ago I came across a book by Amy Carmichael in which she recounted a very troubling dream. The verbal picture she painted haunts me still. In her night vision she saw a horrifying scene: Thousands of people were in a grassy field walking unknowingly toward a precipice. The chasm was as deep as hell. None seemed aware of the danger they faced as they walked calmly forward. Then one by one they fell into the yawning abyss, their screams echoing through the canyon. The horror of her dream was intensified by what she saw next.

Then I saw, like a picture of peace, a group of people under some trees, with their backs turned toward the gulf. They were making daisy chains. Sometimes when a piercing shriek cut the quiet air and reached them it disturbed them, and they thought it rather a vulgar noise. And if one of their number started up and wanted to go and do something to help, then all the others would pull that one down. "Why should you get so excited about it? You must wait for a definite call to go! You haven't finished your daisy chain yet."

Dear Lord, forgive us for making "daisy chains" while thousands around us are tumbling into hell. Forgive us for amusing ourselves (and others) to death! Let us hear the cries of the lost today. Let our hearts be troubled and deeply disturbed by the fate of those who don't know you. Deliver us from our addiction to entertainment and cast out the demon of sloth. Awaken us from our spiritual stupor and enable us to put aside our petty preoccupations so that we can join with you in working for the redemption of the world. Amen.

Point to Ponder: With the onslaught of social media, TV, movies and smartphones (and who-knows-what lying around the corner), how much of your life is devoted to amusement that leads to nothing?

Prayer Focus: Meditate on what is behind your drive to fill time with stuff that counts for nothing. Confess these petty preoccupations before God.

Empower the Future at CMDA

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

I half jokingly tell visitors, "I'm in charge of CMDA, but that doesn't mean I know everything that is going on!" It is so true. Yet, you know a lot less about CMDA than I do, so in this issue of the *Your Call*, I want to share a little about where we are currently and where we are going in the future, especially in missions.

CMDA has 45+ ministries, around 60 full-time staff and about 55 part-time staff. One reason we can do so much is that we have around 2,500 people, most of them healthcare professionals, who volunteer with us each year. Over half of those do so in missions. Global Health Outreach had more than 1,000 volunteers participate on 44 teams last year. The Continuing Medical and Dental Education Commission had over 100 members and teaching faculty volunteers and another 30 to 40 involved in children and spousal ministries. The Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons is a large commission and also mobilizes around 200 surgeons to help teach in 11 residencies in Africa. Medical Education International sends around 200 healthcare professionals in small teams to mostly difficult-to-access countries to share their expertise and their faith. Of course, you are familiar with the Center for Medical Missions (CMM), but you may not know that it does much more than just send you the *Your Call* every other month. CMM's goal is to throw fresh fuel on the fire of students and residents' call, walking with them throughout their years of training. CMM has trained 368 new healthcare missionaries who have graduated and are launching overseas as long-term missionaries. Each September, around 100 executives from mission organizations with health ministries attend CMM's Healthcare Leadership Summit to network, cross-pollinate and brainstorm together. Many students and residents serving on short-term trips or overseas rotations receive financial scholarships through CMM.

I hope you have attended the Global Missions Health Conference at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, which averages around 3,000 in attendance each November. Through its 125 workshops, four plenary sessions and 200 exhibitors, God continues to use this conference to mobilize countless people into healthcare ministry. This was once a local church conference that has now grown into the largest healthcare mission conference in the world. If you haven't registered for this year's conference you should do so now. It will be November 9 -11, 2017. You can learn more at www.medicalmissions.com/gmhc.

Of course, we promote healthcare missions on the 281 campuses where CMDA has student chapters. During one spring break a few years ago, more than 300 students from CMDA chapters in the Midwest participated on international short-term mission trips with teams formed and led by local physicians.

CMDA's Commission on Human Trafficking advocates with the government and professional organizations for more training for healthcare professionals in recognizing and rescuing trafficking victims. You can also complete our online continuing education course to help fight human trafficking.

Yes, we are passionate about healthcare missions, but CMDA does more than just missions. I won't go into all of that in any detail, let me mention a few of our lesser well-known outreaches: a malpractice ministry for physicians being sued, book publishing, an ethics hotline for bedside consults, a placement service for members to find practice sites and a new coaching ministry.

I learned during my missionary days how to pinch a penny and get lots of mileage out of it. Each dollar we receive

represents a stewardship responsibility to the donor. A year or so ago, I realized we had pinched as hard as we could. To take CMDA to the next level of effectiveness, we need to prime the pump with a \$10 million campaign we are calling *Empower*. It is focused on taking every aspect of each of CMDA's ministry to an entirely new level.

One of the most important things we want to do is increase our membership. Membership is influence into individual lives through a relationship. We are actively working with around 30,000 students and graduates. About 18,000 of those are CMDA members. Yet, we estimate there are 100,000 graduate healthcare professionals who could sign our statement of faith and become members. The *Empower* giving will fund a five-year campaign to double our membership.

Let me share what I envision for enhancing healthcare missions around the world.

- Triple our "big box" mission conferences for recruiting new missionaries - We know most of the Louisville attendees come from within a four to six hour drive. In March 2018, we are hosting the first *Remedy* mission conference in Orlando with an initial goal of 600 in attendance. We want this conference to grow as large as GMHC. We are already exploring a third conference on the East Coast and a missions conference has already begun on the West Coast.
- Expand the Center for Medical Missions (CMM) - I will complete 25 years as CEO of CMDA in 2019, and I plan to step down and focus my efforts into the Center for Medical Missions. Yes, back to my "first love." I want to build a team to provide coaching, mentoring, consultation to hospitals and clinics and ongoing training in the "soft skills" that healthcare missionaries need to be successful. Those include project development, strategic planning evangelism, management, administration, good governance, financial management, marketing, conflict resolution, burnout prevention and much more. Some of this will be done online with on demand training videos.
- Healthcare Mission Research - Despite being trained to use data in our medical decisions, there is very little data looking at what works and doesn't work in healthcare missions. That is beginning to change, but more needs to be done.
- CMDA Missionary in Residence - We have budgeted to build housing for a CMDA missionary in residence to work with CMM.
- Scholarship Funding - We are planning to raise \$500,000 to expand our endowment funds for resident and student scholarships.
- Umbrella Grants - Dealing with governments, parastatals and foundations requires time and expertise, but what if CMM could handle proposals and administration of umbrellas grants and medical mission outreaches could be sub-grantees?

Mission organizations are most often led by theologians. Yet asking non-healthcare knowledgeable leadership to manage healthcare outreaches is like someone asking me to run a commercial bank! That wouldn't work very well. CMDA is not a sending organization, but we want to come alongside those that are and help them to grow and be more successful in their healthcare ministry.

I believe healthcare missions is the key to completing the Great Commission. To get that task completed, we need to recruit and retain healthcare missionaries, run our ministries effectively, fund them well and employ great strategies.

An Annotated Bibliography of Resources Concerning Healthcare and Medical Missions

by Bruce Dahlman, MD, MSHPE

I've added another bibliography to our CMM webpage in hopes it will be helpful to you at some point in your ministry. <https://cmda.org/library/doelib/bibliography-of-medical-missions-2016.pdf> Bruce, the compiler of this bibliography, is interested in prioritizing the titles under each category. If you have any thoughts on what those should be, please email me and I will pass along.
Susan.carter@cmda.org.

7 Ways Your Short-Term Mission Trip Can Have Long-Term Impact

by Bryan Stoudt

For our team, it had been-quite literally-a mountaintop experience. We had enjoyed a week of medical missions together on a mountain in Central America. God had welcomed 137 new believers into His family and provided healing for many others through our very humble efforts.

But as I stared out the window on the plane ride home, I began to feel uneasy. How could we-how could I-take what God

had invested in our trip and continue to live that out back home? How could we apply it in our real, busy and broken everyday lives where we so often just survive?

There's no easy answer, but here are seven ideas that have been helpful to me that may be helpful to others returning from a short-term missions trip.

Expect Some Setbacks and Failures

Short-term trips take us out of our comfort zones, and while we are there outside the norm, we often experience a spiritual growth spurt. We learn new ways to rely on God and engage with people. But when we return, as fallen sinners it's natural to slide back into patterns of self-reliance or simply become overwhelmed.

Recognizing and turning from unhealthy pre-trip patterns is a sign of God's grace, but we need to have reasonable expectations for ourselves when we return. If we don't, we may despair and fall back into doing nothing at all once we fail to integrate our new spiritual lessons into everyday life.

Prayerfully Reflect on What You Learned

Think through some specific things that God showed you about Himself, about your host culture, about your home culture and about yourself. Perhaps you observed a particular injustice that grieved you. God sometimes lets us see the world's brokenness for the simple reason that we will become part of the solution. Ask God to "give you understanding in everything" ([2 Timothy 2:7, ESV](#)). Pray, raise awareness and continually have honest conversations with the Lord about what you've experienced and learned.

After Jesus sent out a large short-term team (72 people), they returned with joy and told Him enthusiastically how even the demons obeyed them in His name ([Luke 10:1,17](#)). Other trips in Scripture did not go as well, like Moses' interactions with the Israelites in the desert ([Numbers 11:10-23](#)). But awesome or awful, God wants to relate to us about the short-term trips we took. After all, through them we are further conformed into the image of Christ.

Set a Goal or Application Based on What You Learn

Setting a goal is one way to "not [only] love in word or talk but [also] in deed and in truth" ([1 John 3:18, ESV](#)). For example, I know I need to work on my Spanish and that simply continuing with free online apps isn't enough. I need to diligently seek direction from God in order to figure out what it means to pursue that practically and wisely (using the [SMART goal format](#) may be helpful).

Take an Interest in Others Rather Than Focusing on Yourself

After returning from a trip, you're naturally excited and want to tell others about everything you experienced. And there's certainly a place to tell others about God's awesome works ([Psalm 105:2](#)). But also be willing to look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others ([Philippians 2:4](#)). A friend of mine, for instance, said he often waits a day or two after a trip before sharing much with his wife because she's exhausted from holding down the fort in his absence.

When people first see you after your return, assume they're going to ask how your trip went. Some will ask to be polite, while others will genuinely want to know more. To serve others and honor God for what He did, sketch out a few good responses to this question that are appropriate to likely "audiences" before you return.

Pray for Your Host Country, Partners and Teammates

God invites us to continue deepening the trust in Him we cultivated on the field through growth in prayer at home. And through our prayers, God is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us" ([Ephesians 3:20, ESV](#)). Praying for the people and country you visited is also a great way to keep your entire family involved.

Stand in Awe of God and His Heart for the Nations

Ultimately, our short-term trips are all about God. Although "all the nations are as nothing before him" ([Isaiah 40:17, ESV](#)), "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" ([Habakkuk 2:14, ESV](#)). What an utterly amazing privilege that God has included us in His eternal plans for His world. Taking a moment to acknowledge that reality glorifies God and is good for us.

So Now What?

It's easy to look at a list like this and feel guilty or overwhelmed. But those feelings are not from the Lord, whose Spirit fills us with joy and peace ([Galatians 5:22](#)). With God's help and a little effort, a short-term trip can impact us and those around us for the rest of our lives. Ask God to help you think of at least one small step you can start taking today so His work in you will continue now that you're back.

Bryan Stoudt is a pastor serving healthcare students and professionals as area director for Christian Medical & Dental Associations in Philadelphia, where one in six of the nation's physicians come to train. After Jesus, his passions include his

beautiful wife Sharon and their four children, as well as coffee and running. He writes at bryanstoudt.com and loves to connect with readers online through Twitter and Facebook.

NEW BOOK: *What If There Were Windows in Heaven*

by Dr. Harold Adolph

In this book you will find inspiring and thrilling stories of a few of God's miracles observed over many decades of healing ministry to multiplied thousands around the world. It will encourage you to trust God more completely as it bears glad witness to God's unfailing faithfulness to provide, protect, guide and do the impossible.

Since 1966, Dr Adolph and his wife Bonnie Jo have served in Ethiopia, Liberia, Niger Republic, and the U.S. setting up a 200-bed surgical training center in South Central Ethiopia with a dedicated staff of expatriate and Ethiopian specialists.

Shame

by James Small, MD

"For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame'" (Romans 10:11, ESV).

We were on a Global Health Outreach mission trip to Nicaragua and had just heard the tearful testimony from a young woman who was clawing her way out of a life of prostitution. Christ had made the difference. She was so shame-filled that she asked for all the local men, acting as translators for us, to leave the room for her talk. It was a difficult time of great healing for her as she shined a light on the past that was redeemed. That evening it was my turn to do the devotion.

We just saw a woman trapped by shame. Tears welled up around the room as she shared her story.

Brene Brown said, "Guilt says, 'I made a mistake.' Shame says, 'I AM a mistake.'" As I look around this room filled with high achieving healthcare professionals, I wonder if anyone else, besides me, has ever felt shame.

Some of us hide it well, both from the world and from ourselves. But the world may see its ripple effect. Shame may show up as *perfectionism*: if I can just do it, learn it, say it perfectly, maybe this shame will subside. Shame can show up as *imposter syndrome*: if they ever find out who I really am or how little I really know, they'll laugh me out of the practice or even arrest me as a menace.

Anyone else ever felt these?

What can we do about shame?

Guilt can be useful as a corrective, but shame is destructive. What can we do?

I believe the only answer is God's infinite love.

My son-in-law Chris has a little ritual with his son Isaac at bedtime. As I spoke, I encouraged everyone to pair off and try it. Hold hands or put a hand on their arm, look them in the eye and say out loud to each other what Chris says to Isaac each night: "(Name), God loves you so much. There is nothing you can do to make God love you less. And there is nothing you can do to make God love you more."

Then pause for a moment and change roles.

My partner in this exercise, a nurse, had had a terrible day, having failed in the care of a patient while causing much pain, ashamed of having failed. Her eyes filled with tears as she heard the words, but then, after a moment, her face settled into peace.

I closed the devotion that evening with this: "Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so."

*Dear Father,
Let me leave it at the cross.
Amen*



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