

# 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



## May 2016

Welcome to this issue of *Your Call*. I guess many reading this have completed another year of training. I trust those of you who have the summer free will be able to find a job or opportunity that will be meaningful in preparing you for the work the Lord is leading you toward. If you are serious about a career in healthcare missions, whether here or abroad, I trust you are investing time in preparation. That could mean reading healthcare missionary biographies, participating in a missions conference or camp meeting, going on a short-term mission trip or even serving on your church's mission committee. As Dr. Stevens says, the flame will go out if you don't keep adding fuel. You can find many healthcare missionary biographies in the [CMDA Bookstore](#).

This is the final call for participating in **2016's Pre-field Training for New Medical Missionaries**. If you are almost ready to leave for the field, you will want to sign up for the July 13-17 training which will be held in Abingdon, Virginia, just a little ways up the road from CMDA's national headquarters. Participants will travel on July 13 and the training will start immediately after breakfast on July 14. All the presenters have spent significant time in the field. There is always plenty of time for questions. We anticipate having a few "resource" missionaries present to give participants even more opportunity to learn and prepare. The training will end about 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 17. If participants fly in, they will want the Tri-Cities Regional Airport (TRI) which is about 45 minutes from the retreat center. Return flights should be scheduled after 3 p.m. on the 17th. To learn more and register, visit [www.cmda.org/orientation](http://www.cmda.org/orientation).

### Global Missions Health Conference

If you have not yet registered for this year's Global Missions Health Conference, you will want to do so soon. This is the largest MEDICAL mission conference and is life changing for many who attend. As well as great plenary speakers, there will be more than 100 breakout sessions. The difficulty is there will be more classes than you can possibly attend. In addition to CMDA chapters and training opportunities, this mission conference is listed as one of the most influential resources in calling people to the mission field. You can learn more and register at [www.medicalmissions.com](http://www.medicalmissions.com). The conference dates are November 10-12, 2016. Load up a car and go. Housing is provided for students.

You will need to read all the way through this issue as there are awesome opportunities for those who do, including a free book you need to read this summer and possibly a trip to Thailand.

Included in this issue:

[The Be-Badditudes](#) by Rev. Stan Key

[Looking for Volunteers: Opportunity to Serve Healthcare Missionaries and Learn From Them](#)

["Picking Your Team"](#) by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

[Will You Help? Take Survey and Get Free e-book \*Preach and Heal\*](#)

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## The Be-Badditudes

by Rev. Stan Key

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*Matthew 5:3-20, DSV (Devil's Standard Version)*

Blessed are those who have their act together and are spiritually with it, for they illustrate what God's reign in this world really looks like.

Blessed are those who are healthy, wealthy and happy, for they've found the true meaning of life.

Blessed are those with power, money and influence, for they already possess the earth.

Blessed are those who are saved and satisfied, for they don't have to be bothered by conviction of sin or calls to full surrender.

Blessed are those who have received mercy from God and others, for they know it is more blessed to receive than give.

Blessed are those who get everything their hearts desire, for they are themselves as god.

Blessed are the winners and those who always get their own way, for this is what it means to be a child of God.

Blessed are those who use godliness for personal advancement, for they have learned how to serve two masters and inhabit two kingdoms at the same time!

Blessed are you when you are popular and everyone thinks your religion is really cool. Blessed are you when many flatter you and say nice things about you. Rejoice and be glad! It just doesn't get any better than this.

You are the sugar of the earth: be sweet and nice to everyone all the time. This is what godliness looks like. Don't offend people by your words or actions. But if sugar loses its sweetness, how can it be made sweet again? It's just white powder, worthless, good for nothing. You might as well throw it away.

You are the mirror of the world, a reflection. So fit in and conform. Don't stand out as different. Act like the people around you. Reflect popular opinion, don't try to shape it! And never point out other people's sin. Let others see how your thoughts and actions are a mirror reflection of their own, then they will see your good works and praise your God in heaven for making you this way. Your life will reassure them that they too can profess godliness and yet live like the devil.

Don't think that I came to lay a bunch of moral obligations on you. I came to abolish the law, not to fulfill it! Truly, truly I say to you, everyone jot and tittle of the law, all those ethical demands of God, it's all gone, passed away. Therefore, whoever preaches that you have to obey God's moral law will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever puts those demands aside will be called great. For I tell you the truth, unless your righteousness is less than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

*"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right."* —Charles Spurgeon

Point to Ponder: A half-truth is more dangerous than a lie.

Prayer Focus: The ability to discern right from wrong and truth from error.

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## **Looking for Volunteers: Opportunity to Serve Healthcare Missionaries and Learn from Them.**

Paul Halverson, MD, has announced that applications are being accepted for four Academic Assistants (three medical and one dental) for the 2017 CMDE Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand February 12-23, 2017. This opportunity is open to students and/or residents interested in healthcare missions and looking to interact with existing healthcare missionaries from around the world.

The deadline for applications is September 1, 2016, with selection by October 1, 2016. Please address any questions you may have directly to Dr. Halverson at [phalvers@yahoo.com](mailto:phalvers@yahoo.com).

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## **"Picking Your Team"**

by David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethics)

If you are called into career missions, it is never too early to begin thinking about the mission agency you will join. It is a big decision, and you want to have enough time and information to choose wisely. The process can be easy or more involved.

It was easy for me. In my third year of college I was talking to my father, who knew many missionaries around the world, about my need to get some experience working in a hospital. I had been called into healthcare missions, but my experience in the nuts and bolts of medicine had peaked at dissecting a cat in college. I didn't know how I would do in the

blood and guts arena.

Dad said, "Of all the missionary doctors I know, I have the greatest admiration for Dr. Ernie Steury in Kenya, who your mom and I have supported since his first term of service in 1959."

I was able to go and spend a summer in Kenya with World Gospel Mission's student program, then called "Summer Career Corp." We helped with all sorts of ministries from running a Christian bookstore at the national fair to painting IV poles, but I got to spend a number of weeks at Tenwek Hospital where Ernie taught me to scrub and first assist, let me deliver my first baby and took me on a hunting safari with his family to shoot meat for the hospital. I came back "hooked." I wanted to grow up and be just like Ernie Steury, and I wanted to go help him with the overwhelming needs at Tenwek.

The way to get there was to go with World Gospel Mission, as that organization had started the hospital. I figured if it was good enough for Ernie and the other missionaries, it was good enough for me, and I didn't even look at another agency.

As a missionary, I learned it was a great mission board with lots of ways of doing things that would have attracted me if I had set down to compare agencies. Instead, I signed up knowing very little. I just knew God had called me to Tenwek.

If you don't know the specific place where God is calling, your decision will take a little more work. Here are the 10 things you should consider when picking a mission sending agency:

1. Focus - If you have felt a specific call to India or the 10-40 Window, the first thing you should do is look at agencies ministering in that part of the world. You can eliminate groups not working where you are called. For example, you don't need to take a close look at Central American Mission if you feel called to Africa. If God is calling you into the 10-40 Window, a mission agency that only works with Alaskan Indian Tribes won't meet your needs.
2. Strategy - You obviously need to look at agencies with the type of ministry strategy God has called you to do. Many mission agencies don't have healthcare outreaches. If they do, do you want to be in a hospital-based program, doing community health, researching or teaching? Maybe you want to do all four. Do you want to be part of a pioneer mission group reaching the unreached, or do you want to be involved in building and strengthening the church where it is already established? Do you want an agency with healthcare as one of its multiple strategies, or do you want an agency that is totally focused on healthcare missions? Also, you should examine your talents, abilities and passions and look for agencies that can utilize them. Most of the population growth in the world will be in urban areas, but there are still huge needs in rural areas. Is God calling you to the challenges of urban ministry? Does the agency you are looking at employ urban strategies?
3. Makeup - If you are a female physician who will have young children, you may want to work in a mission healthcare ministry where there are enough staff members so you won't have to take too much night call or even work part-time. Does the mission agency have an outreach that needs your specialty? If you are a neurosurgeon, you won't be working in a bush hospital. Your agency will need a large multi-specialty hospital to support your infrastructure needs. If you are an ophthalmologist, you may want to look at agencies like Christian Blind Mission that specializes in that area or find a group that has or wants to start an eye ministry.
4. Theology - This can be a significant issue. I served with an agency that didn't accept candidates who did not share its theological position. If you grew up a Methodist and participate in that tradition, the Southern Baptist (IMB) mission board may not be interested in you and vice versa. On the other hand, there are interdenominational mission agencies that focus on just the key tenets of evangelical faith and accept missionaries from a wide variety of faith backgrounds. Know where you stand and make sure you are a match with the agencies you are considering.
5. Experience - Does the agency know what it is doing from long experience, or is it newer, cutting edge and forging new paths? What fits best with your personality and interest? I know of a small board that recruits students just out of college and is led by leaders in their 30s. Their passion and strategy is living with the local people in urban slums at almost the same economic level. They have a history of success but a short experience. They are making lots of mistakes and learning as they go. Their focus is incarnational. This agency is attractive to the young, single and passionate, but it is a little harder for families to work with this group. They don't focus on healthcare since they don't want to establish clinics or hospitals. There are no healthcare missionaries associated with the group, but they would like to begin working in community health, which would integrate well with their strategy. No one in leadership has any experience in community health, so if you join this group, you will be the "expert" and have lots of freedom in developing your outreach.
6. Support - Denominational mission groups are often supported by their churches through regular giving or special appeals. Individual missionaries are expected to represent the mission but are not responsible for raising their own support. "Faith" mission agencies train and work with their missionaries to raise the support they need. They establish the level of support you will need based on their usual salaries and benefits, specific country parameters, the size of your family and travel and shipping costs. You are told how much you need to raise, and then they teach you how to raise the funds through speaking, writing appeal letters and doing personal solicitation. Don't rule either one in or out. I worked with a faith mission and loved it. I had wonderful opportunities for ministry during "home assignment," as I built close relationships with individuals. I felt I had better prayer support through a faith mission

and some of our supporters traveled to Kenya to help us build our house or do other projects. Pray about which type of agency God wants for you.

7. **Success** - Organizations are either growing or involuting. Of course, every organization goes through cycles, but if you see a pattern of fewer and fewer missionaries, ministries closing, assets being sold or frequent leadership changes, be careful. The agency may be dying a fast or slow death. You don't want to board a sinking ship. Also look at how effective is the agency in accomplishing its goals. Are people coming to the Lord? Are its national churches growing? Are national leaders being trained? Is the mission moving into new countries or new fields of ministry? Have they done effective healthcare ministry?
8. **Management Style** - I'm very entrepreneurial. (The joke around the office is that my staff dreads hearing me say, "I have an idea!") My sending agency had a very decentralized management style. Budgets were developed from the bottom up so we could prioritize our needs at the local level. Once in the budget, we could raise money for that project, building or equipment if we thought it was important. We could raise extra money from our own supporters in our "ministry" account and transfer it to any approved project. For example, I saw the strategic importance of a strong media department at headquarters and transferred money to that department to help them get the equipment they needed. I could even help other missionaries who were low on support. Faith missions more often operate this way, whereas denominational agencies have a more centralized management style that can be more difficult for an entrepreneurial missionary to operate. There are exceptions. My sister and brother-in-law were in a faith mission, any money they raised that was left in their ministry account at the end of year was emptied out into the general budget for the administration to decide where it would be used. It wasn't a deal breaker, but they didn't like their system because the money often didn't go back to the seminary ministry they had given their lives to serving.
9. **Culture** - Every mission group has its own culture. Some foster close relationships among their missionaries, while others have a difficult time doing that due to size, geography or other factors. Others place people in teams, while some utilize more "lone rangers." Some prescribe how parents will educate their children on the field. Others allow parents lots of choices. Some have great field leadership and others do not. My mission realized that the missionaries most often needing a vacation break were the ones not taking them, so they established a "vacation fund" for each missionary and almost mandated they take some time off to renew and restore. The missionary no longer could use the excuse, "I can't afford it." This policy put a lot of oil in the gears to reduce interpersonal conflict and improve our local ministry culture. A visit to the agency's healthcare mission work on the field of a few weeks to a month will tell you a great deal about its culture.
10. **Openness** - Will the mission let you experience their work through short-term missions? Will they answer your questions completely and accurately? Will they let you ask questions of missionaries on the field? Be careful if everything seems too rosy. Every mission agency has problems and challenges. If they won't share theirs, warning bells should go off.

One of the best ways to really understand a mission agency is to have an honest talk with missionaries on furlough who are serving with that group. Ask specific questions and, if possible, find someone who will be doing what you want to do. Even so, realize they desperately want you to come to help, so it is impossible for their answers to be completely unbiased.

Most importantly, pray God will lead you to the agency that will maximize your impact for the gospel. God will give you direction on this important decision. There is no perfect agency and the bottom line is, "Whom does God want you to serve with?"

*"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5, KJV).*

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## Will You Help?

**Take Survey and Get Free e-book *Preach and Heal***

As you may know, CMDA is a co-sponsor of MedicalMissions.com and the Global Missions Health Conference (GMHC) in Louisville, Kentucky every November. One purpose of CMDA, as well as the GMHC website and conference, is to support those who want to begin a journey into healthcare ministry, whether across town or across the world, whether to a safe neighborhood or a dangerous place. Please take a five to 10 minute survey so we can learn how people may explore moving for ministry or missions. Your input will help CMDA and also help develop the GMHC website and future conferences.

A report on the survey will be shared in a future edition of *Your Call*. At the end of the survey we will give you the e-book *Preach and Heal* by Charles Fielding, MD. Please begin the survey by clicking on this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LRGWNKV>

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