Charles Cobb DVM has spent two weeks of his vacation each year for the last 22 years going on mission trips to Honduras with CVM. Most of those years he has served as team leader for groups of 10-20 veterinarians and veterinary students. About a month ago I called to talk with him to see how his last trip went and to get his advice on a new leader for another Honduras trip. He had recently retired so when he answered the phone I asked him how retirement was and he told me one of the vets where he worked had an emergency come up and needed time off, so he had offered to cover for a month while they were out. I then went on to ask him if he had any ideas of people who could lead another Honduras mission team. He said he would love to consider it now that he was retired and had more time. Wow, what a servant!

At the decision crossroads of life, what is it that motivates your choices? Power, money, security, or could it be service? What will bring you true greatness? The story in Mark 10:32-45 gives a great example of the tension that we all experience in what motivates us. The story starts with the disciples on the road to Jerusalem with Jesus when He pulls them all aside and begins to prepare them for what is going to happen regarding this trial, death, and resurrection. As he finished, James and John, two of His closest disciples ask Him if they can sit at his right and left hand in glory? That would for sure be a position of importance or greatness in their mind but Jesus explains to them that greatness does not come through position or power but through service. He emphasizes this by saying whoever wants to be first must be a slave to others. Then He speaks of Himself in saying that He did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. We see later on in the Bible that James and John did learn this lesson as they went on to serve others and even to the point of death for James and exile for John.

I love working with CVM as I am encouraged frequently by many amazing people that serve in such unselfish ways. Let me share a couple more examples with you.

Dan Paulo, DVM, served on the CVM board for a number of years and completed at least 24 mission trips for CVM in the last 38 years. He also has completed a number of other trips with his church. About 4-5 years ago he had some heart issues but after surgery within the year returned to leading trips and at the age of 75, completed another trip in March. Through the years whenever we needed help Dan has been a frequent person that we could turn to.

Tom Juergens, DVM took his first mission trip to Mongolia and has not missed a year since. At first, he started sharing his vast knowledge of veterinary medicine with the young Mongolian veterinarians and sharing his testimony. As the years progressed, the young Mongolian vets that he mentored became some of the most respected equine doctors in the country and do most of the teaching. Dr. Juergens did not only have a passion for their professional life but also that they may grow in their personal relationship with Christ. Dr. Juergens recently wrote about the equine trainings that they give around the
country, “At the end of the last day I have the opportunity to share the Gospel in a 30-minute talk to these Buddhist veterinarians. It is always our prayer that their hearts would be open to the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.” For the Mongolian veterinary leaders who have come to faith in Christ, he encourages them with a 3-day spiritual retreat. After a bout with cancer last year John returned to Mongolia this summer for his 20th consecutive year.

Service is not just something we do on a mission trip but it is a lifestyle of loving others as we love ourselves (Math 22:39), something we do 24/7 in our marriages, in our families and our communities. Paul in Ephesians 5:22 challenges us to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Christ pursued us, first loved us, and even died for us as the example of ultimate service. It is through His example and power that we can really serve. I would like to encourage you to listen to the story of Drs. Katie and Brant Carpenter who raise their family in Nocona, Texas where they have their veterinary practice. I hope their life of service encourages you. You can find this story on the Christian Veterinary Mission YouTube page under Katie’s story or at the following link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hke-j-YQbhg

Dr. Katie Carpenter balancing service to clients and her family.

I hope the story of Jesus and his disciples in Mark 10 and some of these CVM stories will encourage you in your life of service as it does me. The passion and desire to give up selfishness for serving others is what Christ called greatness. Msgr. Frank C. Wissel, in an article called “Achieving Greatness Through Service To Others” said it well when he said: “That’s the kind of greatness God wants for us. Passionately involved, genuinely invested in caring about people, and doing our best to serve them.” We are all blessed to have the amazing opportunity to be a conduit of God’s love through service and the opportunity to lead others to righteousness of faith in God and the blessing of following His ways.

Blessed to serve,
Brad

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