

Fri 2/9/2018 - newsletter update

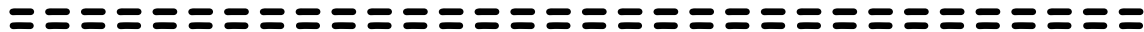
WHAT HAS CHANGED?

WITS (WALKING IN THEIR SHOES) International

providing supportive counseling and training to the international Christian expatriate community.

-focusing on the ministry of Lee and Carolyn Baas

February 2018 newsletter



Last month I met a mission director in West Africa. **Let's call him Sam.**

I had known Sam for many years. I first met him when he was working as a missionary in another part of the world. Sam couldn't keep up with his work. He was tired and he said that if he had to continue in his work for another month, he couldn't survive.

Our marathon meeting. Rarely will I meet with someone for more that 2 hours at one time, but the one hour meeting I had scheduled with Sam at 7 PM, lasted until 11:30 PM. He then went home and picked me up in the morning and we had another 2 hours together (I had to cancel one of my other morning appointments).

When I met Sam last month, he said, "Do you remember my first appointment?" I said, "Yes".

He continued, "You were God- sent. I had looked around for help and frankly I had given up on myself and on God. I knew I had to go back to my home country and get a different job. I could never be a missionary. You came at just the right time."

I reminded him that God had planned that because I had not scheduled that trip and I came to that country because of an emergency request to help another mission organization to resolve an issue between missionary staff. At a friend's request, Sam contacted me and asked me if I could see him.

And now, many years later, Sam was in a very responsible mission position. He was known as a great leader. His life and priorities were based on solid Christian principles. God had given him healing and direction.

Now, Sam wanted to know what needs of missionaries I encountered today. He asked, "Are the needs today a lot different than when you first met me?" Do you see any others that are in as bad shape as I was at that time?"

His question challenged me to review the last 18 years.

What were the greatest needs of missionaries at that time? Have the needs changed?

Was it harder to survive as a missionary in the past than it is today?

Have I had to re-think the way I work with missionaries?

I wrote some things down and I am sharing my reflections in this newsletter.

Before I share my reflections, let me note a few things.

“Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise” – Victor Hugo

“no condition is permanent” -popular motto on many buses and trucks all over the world

“We don’t learn from our mistakes unless we are willing to change.” – anon

“forgive as I have forgiven you” Jesus Christ

1. Problems don’t change – they come in different packages.
2. There are more second career missionaries now than there were before. This is a plus and minus bit. Some people come with more life experience – others with less multicultural knowledge. Some with a commitment to change the world – others with a commitment to change mission organizations. Some with very helpful organizational management skills – some with a desire to be a lone ranger.
3. There are more husband/wife (wife/husband) issues.
4. I have less requests to work with young children (many couples leave their field of service if their young children need help).
5. I have about the same number of request from high school aged teens – about an equal number of male and female.
6. More conflicts between organizations and missionaries and/or national church leadership.
7. And I hear more often than I like to hear, “You should have been here last month (or last week or ...sometime before when we really needed help”).

Lest this newsletter sound negative, let me emphatically say that we are very privileged to continue in this ministry and we are so thankful to God for His leading and directing us and providing us with good health. And we are so thankful to you for your prayers and financial support.

NOTE: This was going to be a newsletter which gave you more information about what we did last year but we are trying to avoid attachments or long letters. I will (d.v.) give you more information before the end of March.

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