

## Pharmacists and Medical Missions by Mary J. Ferrill



I was asked by a friend to write an editorial for a secular journal on why I feel pharmacist involvement in medical missions is important. I instantly thought that this would be an easy subject to write an editorial about if it were to be placed in *Christianity & Pharmacy*. I instantly knew at that point that I would write the secular version and then write a very different version for our journal. For the secular version, I decided to focus on six reasons why I think all pharmacists should participate in medical missions. I did subtly slip in the words “faith” and “blessed” (we’ll have to see if the words make the final cut) in the article. The six reasons I listed are:

1. Develop an appreciation for the US healthcare system.
2. Observe that the pharmacy education and training you received in school and on the job provide you with the skills to do so much more than what the law in most states allow.
3. Witness unique diseases and conditions.
4. Teach you to be innovative and think outside the box.
5. A means by which to experience interprofessional team work.
6. To give back to others for the blessings you have received.

I also mentioned that, under the proper circumstances, the benefits I mentioned above can translate into life-changing opportunities. I put in a plug for CPFI and its website as a place to assist in planning the pharmacy component of a trip.

I’m sure you can appreciate how very different

the article would be if it were to be published in *C & P*. I would start with the Great Commission (I always state that it wasn’t a suggestion but a command, see Matthew 28:20 below) that our Lord and Savior gave us in three separate books (some might argue 4, especially to support medical missions) of the Bible. Another point I would make on this subject is that the entire Bible is important since it is God’s Word, but when a concept is there in three (or four) places, God is really trying to get our attention. All verses below are from the NIV translation.

- Matthew 28:18-20, “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”
- Mark 16:15, 16, “He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
- Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- Luke 10:9, “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”

I couldn’t mention the Bible in the secular article, so instead for point number 6 above I mentioned President Kennedy and the Peace Corps (I thought that would get the attention of the Baby Boomers and make the newer generations search the internet for the analogy). I also appealed to the politically correct concept of a global community and that as pharmacists we are uniquely trained to provide medical services (or the Christian version, Luke 12:48b, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”).

Another aspect that I didn’t want to mention in the secular article was that as Christians, it is totally pointless to serve on short term medical missions if Jesus does not go before and with the team. It is often frustrating how little medically that can be done for patients but providing them with the Good News of

eternal salvation is what’s important. That is why I include Luke in the list of Great Commission verses. As Christians serving on short term medical missions, the medical clinics are what we do to get the people to us, we meet their needs and we earn the right to be heard.

The final thought that I would like to leave with you, if you think my *C & P* version of the editorial was more compelling, then please continue to support CPFI. CPFI is the only Christian pharmacy organization and it provides a platform to speak about Christian pharmacy and our roles as Christian pharmacists. If you are reading this editorial, then you probably already support CPFI, but if not, would you consider joining or making a donation so this organization can continue to produce this publication? If you are a member, would you consider telling other Christian pharmacists about CPFI and convince them to donate and contribute? I would love to be able to continue to edit this unique and much needed publication for many years to come. Thank you for your support.

*Dr. Ferrill completed her Pharm.D. at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Pharmacy and then two ASHP-accredited residencies in Drug Information and Clinical Pharmacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She spent 10 years in California as a professor at the University of the Pacific School of Pharmacy. The Lord called her and her husband to Palm Beach Atlantic University School of Pharmacy in 2001, to Wingate University School of Pharmacy in 2003 and back to Palm Beach Atlantic in late 2005. The Lord has assigned Mary and her husband a new role at California Health Sciences University College of Pharmacy in Fresno California where Dan serves as Dean and Mary is the Special Assistant to the Provost. Dr. Ferrill was on the Board of Directors of CPFI for 6 years and was the Editor for the CPFI publications, *Christianity & Pharmacy Journal* and the *Faith Script Newsletter* for five years and returned as the editor of *C & P* in 2015.*



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