

## Using Pharmacy as Your Mission Field by Mark Forbes

Many of us have been sitting in church or Bible study and have heard The Great Commission. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19 NIV). When many of us hear this, we often imagine missionaries or a mission trip in a developing country. What if God is calling you to use pharmacy right here in the states as your mission field? Whether you work in a hospital, retail, academia, the pharmaceutical industry or another field, there are always opportunities to glorify and keep Christ first.

Pharmacy can be a very stressful career: Customers complaining that their prescription isn't ready. It's the pharmacy's fault the physician's office didn't send the prescription yet. Nurses calling and wondering where their medication is. Physicians not understanding why we can't order medications that are on the national shortage list? These situations can be very frustrating for us as pharmacists and they make it difficult to keep Christ first in our practice. When we face these situations, we need to recall and apply the words of Christ. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (10:45, NIV). This verse is not only important for us as Christians but also as pharmacists. Most of us need patients (as well as patience!) either in a direct or indirect manner, in order to keep our practice. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (13:34, NIV). As pharmacists, we are there to serve our patients. Christ faced many difficult situations during His ministry, but He always kept others first and no matter the situation He always loved them. Even as He hung on the cross, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34, NIV). Having to deal with these situations can be very challenging. But they also present an opportunity for us to show others the love that Christ offers. What are some of the strategies that we can use in order to keep Christ first despite the challenges we face as pharmacists?

The first and most important strategy that you can implement is to keep your faith strong. Always remember to take time out of your day to spend with the Lord. In Philippians, Paul tells us this: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your

requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:6-7, NIV). In the first part of this passage, we are called to pray and present problems in prayer to God. A vital (but often forgotten) part of this passage is the instruction to pray with thanksgiving. We need to give thanks to God for His many blessings and the salvation we are offered through His Son Jesus Christ. One common mistake we often make is looking to God as a servant to fix our problems instead of looking to God as the Savior who has graciously redeemed us. Prayer and the Word of God are the most powerful weapons that a Christian has, so we should use them both consistently and confidently!

The second strategy is love, which is a common theme throughout the Bible. Love appears in the Bible over 500 times, but one of the most important scriptures is where Jesus gives us a new commandment. He says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if love one another.” (John 13:34-35, NIV). As Christians, we live in a very challenging time. We are often condemned for our faith or told to be quiet. One of the best ways to show others the love of Christ is to simply love people, even when they're unlovable. Showing others love and compassion can help calm a tense situation. It also may allow us the opportunity to speak with people about the Lord and share our faith.

Have you ever been at work when one of your pharmacy co-workers is in a bad mood and they bring the whole department down? Proverbs 27:17 (NIV) tells us, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” This verse can be applied many different ways. If we apply it to pharmacy, we can be the person who sharpens our fellow co-workers. Putting others before ourselves gives us the opportunity to bring a smile and joy to other people in the department. It can have a positive impact on our fellow employees and can boost up those who are feeling down. Being that light in the darkness can have a significant impact, not only on other employees but also on our patients. Other employees and patients are more likely to engage with you in a positive manner than if you appear to have a dark cloud over yourself. The love of Christ is the most amazing gift someone can receive. It gives us peace, power, and confidence which allow us to smile even during stormy times. Just as Jesus calmed the

sea for the disciples, as Christians we know Christ will walk beside us through any storm.

As healthcare providers, we understand the brutal nature of Christ's death on the cross. But we also know the miraculous healing power found in His resurrection. He went to that cross willingly, and took upon the sin of the world, so that we can have everlasting life with Him and our Father in heaven. The only thing He ever asks us for in return is a personal relationship. Christianity is the only major religion that offers you eternal life for free, without doing anything other than inviting Christ into your heart because you believe He is the Son of God and the only One who can forgive your sins. Sharing this love of Christ is a great joy for us as Christians. Yes, many people have been called to share the Gospel in foreign countries, but many are being called to serve in their local communities and to share the word through their profession. God uses our gifts and talents in many different ways... is He calling you to use Pharmacy to spread the Gospel?



*Mark Forbes is a pharmacist from Delaware and is currently the Director of Pharmacy at Jennersville Hospital. The greatest gift he has ever received was the love and forgiveness that is only offered through Jesus Christ. Having served on many international mission trips,*

*he has realized that there are just as many opportunities in the local community to spread the Gospel as there are in international missions. His favorite verse is Philippians 4: 6-7, NIV. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*