Christian Dental Society News-Brief
July 2019

". . . that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work." (Colossians 1:10). The measure of a person is not what they do on Sunday, but rather who they are on Monday through Saturday.

The ADA meeting in San Francisco (and the CDS annual meeting) is about a month away. Please make plans to attend. Our CDS board meeting will be on Friday, September 6, from 1-5 p.m. at St. Patrick Church (756 Mission Street between 3rd and 4th Streets, just NW from the Moscone Convention Center) followed by a banquet with a fabulous Philippine buffet meal starting at 5:30 p.m.

Music will feature **pianist, Dr. T. Bob Davis**, who has published 14 CDs. **Drs. Anthony and Naomi Wong, American, short-term missionaries since 1987,** have formed their own non-profit called Friends of Grace and will be our keynote speakers. They travel often too difficult-to-reach countries like Iraq, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and many others. **Dr. Mike Kahler, who has been going to San Andres Itzapa in Guatemala** for decades on a yearly basis, and has set up a dental clinic, will share his heart and tell us of opportunities there.

The meal will be a **home-cooked, Philippine dinner catered by "Hapan Pilipino"** restaurant featuring strawberry walnut salad, pansit miki-bihon noodles, steamed rice, chicken barbecue, beef caldereta, fish fillet excabeche, vegetables, and a fruit platter medley for dessert. It would be appreciated if you could stop by the **CDS booth #3138** and sign up for the banquet. Cost: $30 at the door and students pay only $20. Dress is casual.

Normally the CDS meets informally on Thursday evening at the ADA meeting for fellowship and food on Thursday evening, but this year the opening ceremony will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, so we will encourage members to go to that. For those still in San Francisco on Saturday, we will have an evening social, and the location and the time to be announced at the CDS booth and during Friday's Mission Banquet. Questions to Dr. Meyer at 719-351-2152.



St. Patrick Church

The CDS exhibited with **Dr. Andrew Wall and Dr. Bob and Diane Meyer**, at the Pacific Northwest Dental Conference in Bellevue, Washington on June 20-21. Dr. Bob Meyer spoke, to a "standing-room-only" Christian Dental Fellowship breakfast on Thursday morning, June 20th at 7 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. On June 27-29th, **Dr. Jonathan and Amy Spenn** hosted a CDS booth at the Florida Dental Meeting. The CDS will be exhibiting next at the ADA meeting in San Francisco on September 5-7, at the Southwest dental conference in Dallas on October 10-11, and at the Greater New York meeting on December 1-4. Please stop by if you are attending any of these meetings.

This month, the CDS would like to share about **two organizations who train indigenous people** to provide basic dental care and extract teeth, where there are no dentists, in conjunction with local churches. This summary was written by Dr. Jonathan Spenn, who has worked extensively with both organizations. He actually met his wife Amy on a training mission trip when she worked for mPower and now they both work for I-Tec. **Thank you, Dr. Jonathan for this enlightening historical perspective.**

Steve Saint went to live among the Waodani tribe of Ecuador as a child after his missionary father and four others were killed (made famous by a book by Elizabeth Elliot and a movie called *Tip of the Spear*.) In the 1990's when the Waodani asked Saint to move there and help them, their three main requests were for help with aviation, dental, and medical services. Steve went on to tell them that there were missionaries down in Ecuador that could provide these services for them. The Waodani replied, "We don't want missionaries. They only come

when it is convenient for them, not when we have a problem. We want you to teach us these things so that we can offer these services to our people." Hence, the idea of training indigenous people in technical skills was birthed.

Steve Saint had the visionary and pioneering spirit to implement such an idea but he did not have the technical expertise to provide dental and medical training for the Waodani. Thankfully, God already had a partner for Steve in mind.

Dr. Charlie Vittitow, a dentist from Louisville, KY, had become frustrated with short-term dental missions. Dr. Charlie was especially discouraged after an experience in Jamaica where the line of waiting patients was longer when he left than when he had started. The man responsible for crowd control came to Dr. Charlie in tears: "What do I tell all of these people waiting in line now that you have to leave?"

That experience in Jamaica led Dr. Charlie to pursue a different way to do short-term dental missions. Dr. Charlie and Steve Saint teamed up in 2004 to conduct their first dental extraction training in Ghana. The following year, they conducted a similar dental training in Hyderabad, India. These initial, two trainings proved to be quite fruitful as their students from these two trainings continue to use their dental skills to this day.

After seeing the potential impact of training indigenous Christ-followers, Charlie started mPower Approach, a ministry based in Louisville. mPower continues to conduct extraction and hygiene trainings around the world, with the goal of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Steve Saint began a ministry called ITEC (Indigenous People's Technology and Education Center) in Dunnellon, FL. ITEC originally focused primarily on developing portable dental equipment and other technologies that indigenous Christians can use as door openers to the Gospel. They occasionally provided dental training. ITEC has grown significantly over the past few years. The dental program is now under the leadership of Dr. Craig Hunter and Dr. Jonathan Spenn and ITEC conducts dental trainings in various parts of the world on a regular basis.

Dr. Spenn shares just one brief story to enlighten about how these two ministries are impacting others. In January 2017, ITEC conducted an extraction training in Paynesville, Liberia. Liberia is country of four million people with only five dentists. One of the students trained at that time was Stanley Wright. Stanley is part of a ministry called "Wordsower Liberia" based in the remote jungle town of Zwedru. Since his training two and a half years ago, Stanley has seen over 450 patients and extracted about one thousand teeth. During this time, Stanley was (to our knowledge) the only provider of extractions for the six counties in southeast Liberia.

In June of this year, ITEC returned to Liberia to train some new students in extractions. Stanley served In the valuable role as an assistant instructor. Two more students from Zwedru (Badio and Prince) were trained in extractions. At their clinic in Zwedru, they continue to provide extractions and share the Gospel with their patients. Since receiving the training last

month, Badio and Prince have started to take on the majority of extractions. Stanley is able to mentor them as well as handle the more difficult cases. The eventual goal is for Badio and Prince to replace Stanley at the dental clinic in Zwedru so that Stanley can take his dental skills and the Gospel to other parts of Liberia.



Dr. Jonathan Spenn with I-TEC trainees in Zwedru, Liberia

The trainees in Zwedru are shining examples of what both ministries hope to see. The shared goal of both mPower Approach and ITEC is for indigenous Christians to play a significant role in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). By training mature national believers in dentistry, they are able to serve their own communities throughout the year, addressing both their physical and spiritual needs. It is both humbling and inspiring to see how the Lord uses them to grow His Kingdom. If interested in helping I-Tec or mPower, check out their websites at www.itecusa.org or www.mpowerapproach.org.

If you are inexperienced in dental missions and would like to join a family-friendly trip to gain an understanding of how short-term, portable dentistry can be done safely and comfortably in the developing world, there are some excellent opportunities from seasoned CDS couples.

1. Dr. Bill and Suslee Sasser have a trip to Quito, Ecuador on October 4-12, 2020 working with Global Health Outreach in Quito. Contact Dr. Bill Sasser at drbillsasser@gmail.com or phone at 843-345-5025.

2. Dr. Bob and Diane Meyer have a trip to the Dominican Republic on January 4-11, 2020 working with One Child Matters in Santiago. If interested contact Dr. Bob Meyer at bdmeyer@comcast.net or phone at 719-351-2152.

3. Dr. Gaye and Nita Cheatwood have a trip to Oaxaca, Mexico on January 13-20, 2020 working with Dental Vision Mission in Puerto Escondido. Contact Dr. Gayle Cheatwood at gacdds@prodigy.net or phone at 760-554-2820.



A salvation skit from Oaxaca, Mexico with a team of 70 dental, medical, eyeglass, and evangelistic team members working together.

4. If you want to mentor U.S. dental students to Jamaica for a week, the CDS has recently added an informational handout about Jamaica student trips on the CDS website (www.christiandental.org) To access, click on the first picture under "View Opportunities" and then click on the "Jamaican Opportunity." Last year**, Dr. Jim Carney, Dr. Bill Griffin** and other leaders from the CDS led 15 mission trips to Jamaica with over 450 participants to help the under-served in Jamaica and the same is happening this year. Contact Dr. Jim Carney at jamescarney1@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions or would like to proceed with the registration process.

5. If you have a trip where you would like to mentor others, please let Dr. Bob Meyer know at bdmeyer@comcast.net and we can add it to the next CDS News-Brief.

If you have a dental mission story or opportunity you would be willing to send out to our CDS members, please contact Dr. Bob Meyer at bdmeyer@comcast.net.

If you have pictures or short stories you would like to publish on the **CDS Facebook, send them to Diane Meyer at 719-216-2217.**

If a person cannot be a Christian in the place where they are planted, they cannot be a Christian anywhere. **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).**