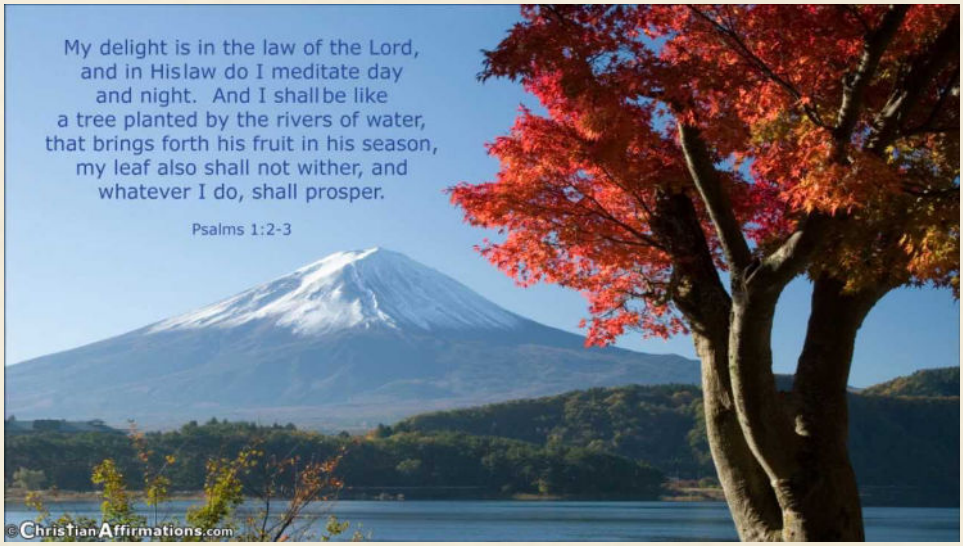
Christian Dental Society

Christian Dental Society News-Brief
November 2020



God is in Control

During this tumultuous time of living through a pandemic and recent elections, may we be reminded that man is not in charge, but **God is in control and it is Him whom we serve.** In Isaiah 33:22 it says, "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He who will save us." (NKJV)

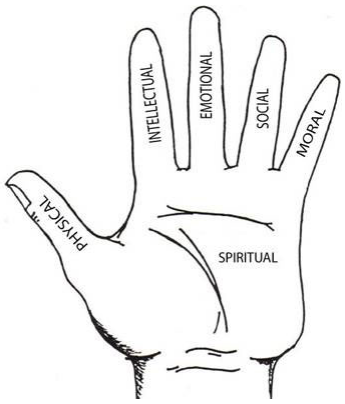
We can find peace in the **Supremacy of Christ** in Colossians 1:16, "For by Him all things were created: that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." (NKJV)

Congratulations

Congratulations go out to the **CDS's newest Board Members, Dr. James Carney and Dr. Blake Westra** who were nominated by the CDS Board on October 17th and confirmed by the CDS membership with 100% approval. CDS welcomes their leadership and their hearts for service to our Lord and Savior.

Christian Dental Society
PO Box 296 · Sumner, IA 50674 · (563) 578-8887 · www.ChristianDental.org

Upcoming JADA Article



Drs. Bob and Diane Meyer's mission article titled, "**Recruitment considerations for dental, short-term missions relating to the holistic development of dentists**" is now available online on the JADA website under "Articles for Press" which can be accessed on the link: https://www.jada.ada.org/article/s0002-877(20)30504-3/fulltext

Dr. Diane Meyer's 275-page doctoral dissertation theme utilized a diagram of a hand, shown above, depicting the Spiritual component of a person with fingers of the hand representing the Intellectual, Physical, Moral, Emotional, and Social holistic benefits Christian dentists receive by going on short-term, mission trips.

Detractors were also addressed, but most dentists reported that the detractors do not deter them from serving. Suggestions for short-term missions were also listed. The article is due to be published shortly in JADA. Check out the Supplemental Data, which lists recommendations for recruitment and volunteer opportunities both here and abroad.

Dr. Diane sincerely wishes to **express her appreciation** to all who participated in the 400 research instrument surveys as well as those 60 who participated in the personal interviews that provided information for this research study.

JADA Article Response

In the JADA November issue under Letters to the Editor there are two **responses from CDS members, Dr. T. Bob Davis and Dr. Robert Meyer, concerning a feature article** under Ethical Moment in the June JADA publication about dental missions. The authors of the article advocated for idealistic standards of care that may misrepresent the practical considerations of humanitarian volunteerism in the aspects of patient autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, and veracity.

Curtis Group: Our Marketing Arm

The Curtis Group, with Mark and Susan Curtis, designed the CDS website, the CDS globe/tooth/cross logo, and the cover of the CDS Mission Manual—all of which have received national award recognition. They currently manage and maintain the CDS interactive website, which is a large task. They format and distribute, via e-mail, CDS News-Briefs, handouts, correspondence, and publications. Mark and Susan consider the CDS a personal ministry and provide invaluable on-going support at no cost to the CDS.

The CDS has asked Mark and Susan Curtis for a biographical sketch as their lives are an amazing testimony to God's saving grace and how He leads us and blesses through service to others. May Mark and Susan's story encourage and inspire many to serve.



Mark and Susan Curtis

Mark and Susan have been married for 42 years and have two daughters and three grandchildren. Mark grew up as an atheist but found God through involvement with the Boy Scouts at a Lutheran church. After high school, Mark struggled with his faith in the secular atmosphere of University environments. He once again became an atheist because, as he put it, "I was too rooted in the logic of science to believe in that religion hogwash. Like many others before me, I was too smart for my own good."

In 1980, Mark and Susan found out they were pregnant (due in November). It was a joyful time. However, as so often happens, things soon went sour. His mother died in June and two weeks later, Mark was laid off due to the 1980 recession. Their daughter, Margaret, was born on schedule and, though money was extremely tight, they looked forward to Christmas.

Mark will never forget opening the door just before Christmas to find area church members on his doorstep as they delivered an unexpected Christmas feast basket. Mark couldn't help but ponder on the irony as he remembered his days in the Boy Scouts when, every Christmas, his scout troop would deliver Christmas baskets to the needy in his hometown.

For Mark, the death of his mother, his long-term unemployment, and the surprise delivery of a Christmas meal made him begin to question his life's path. He knew that he couldn't work in the manufacturing environment into which his education and previous jobs had led him. In fact, when he really thought about it, he had hated every day of work in the previous eight years. Mark began to look to trusted people and resources to help him determine his new pathway.

Oddly enough, even though Mark no longer believed in God, he still loved and respected the Lutheran pastor who had been like a second father during his Boy Scout days. At the beginning of February 1981, after seven months of unemployment and a three-month old daughter to care for, Mark requested a visit with him for career advice, with the stipulation that the pastor not talk about God.

The pastor told Mark that he did not see him as a manufacturing worker, but rather as a leader who could organize and inspire people, like Mark had done in his Boy Scout troop. He told Mark that he needed a "people" job where his skills could shine. As Mark was preparing to leave, the pastor apologized for breaking the "no God talk" rule and he suggested to Mark that he just "pretend to believe in God for three days and let's see what happens." Mark reluctantly agreed.

On the following day, Mark had an appointment at his alma mater's job placement office where dozens of covered clipboards each contained 8-10 sign-up sheets for interviews being conducted by 8-10 different corporations. However, as Mark noted, "they weren't really hiring, just interviewing."

Picking one clipboard at random, Mark opened it and was shocked to find that the top sheet was for a position with the Boy Scouts of America. In that moment, Mark realized that there was someone watching over him and he wasn't in this alone.

With his new-found confidence, Mark simply closed the clipboard, got in his car and drove to the local Boy Scouts office. There, he told his amazing "miracle" story to the only man in the building that day, the BSA Council Executive and the only person with the power to hire new scout executives. As Mark related, "I thought he was going to throw me out the door along with my crazy ramblings about God and miracles." Instead, Mark began his new position with the Boy Scouts on February 14th. How fitting.

Mark oversaw hundreds of volunteer leaders in dozens of small towns across middle Minnesota. He was instrumental in launching new Cub Scout, Boy Scout and Explorer Scout units in towns that hadn't seen a local presence for many years. Mark says his work was, "so enjoyable that I couldn't wait to get out the door every morning." Just like his pastor had predicted.

Mark loved working for the Boy Scouts but eventually became disenchanted with some of the professional leadership who didn't share the same enthusiasm that Mark had. After seven years, Mark left. Knowing how unhappy and powerless Mark felt, Susan had found a classified ad for an advertising executive. She knew that this job would be perfect for Mark. So, "she cut it out of the newspaper and taped it to the refrigerator door where she knew I would see it at least twenty times a day," chuckles Mark. Long story short, Mark worked at a local advertising agency for the next four years..

In 1992, Mark formed the Curtis Marketing Group with a high-end dental lab that marketed internationally as his first client. Within a short time, Mark was introduced to multiple dental practices across the country through this connection. Because of the dental lab's cosmetic product line, all of their new referred clients were high-end cosmetic dentists. As an example, one client in southern California charged $97,500 for a full-mouth reconstruction (half down and the balance due before completion).

From the very beginning of his work with dentists, Mark vowed that he would NOT create logos using extracted molar characters, dental floss or toothpaste that spelled words, a cowardly lion, etc. Everything went well for the Curtis Group and they won many national design awards for their clients and brought in huge dental cases for them.

Soon, Susan joined him in the business. Susan was a full-time, early childhood, special education teacher for nearly 20 years. However, when their daughter was in junior high school, she was having some medical issues and Susan took a year's leave of absence. A year later, she had to make the decision as to whether or not she was going back to teaching. At the same time, Mark had a virus attack his heart (which was not a common thing medically back then).

Only after many months of treating him for anxiety disorder (he continually woke up in a cold sweat and gasping for air), an alert, and brave, nurse told an examining doctor that she had heard a rattle in Mark's lungs after the doctor proclaimed his lungs to be "perfectly clear." After an MRI scan, Mark was rushed to the hospital. Because he hadn't been diagnosed correctly months before, his heart was barely functioning. He was very ill and the doctors did not think he would survive. It was a rough couple of months, but Mark and Susan are fighters and with the help of God, they made it through.

Susan felt that God was telling her to stay near Mark, so she chose to come to work with him rather than go back to teaching. Because of that decision, some wonderful things happened for her. She was able to spend more time with Mark and their two daughters and precious time with her father before he passed away. And, she had more time to invest in her faith life. Service mission had always been a passion of Susan's and she now had the time to help organize, fund-raise, and go on mission trips with the youth from their church. She went on mission trips to Jamaica, Mexico, Alaska, the Virgin Islands and a sister church in northern Minnesota that ministers largely to a homeless Native American population. Sadly, though, because of a debilitating physical condition (remnants of football and wrestling), Mark was not physically able to travel on mission trips with Susan.

However, as Susan relates, "Mark couldn't go along but he was instrumental in getting us there." Mark supported the mission trips in many ways from grilling brats for fundraisers in a 4th-of-July's 98^{o} heat to giving money-raising, temple talks. Mark says he has a rule when it comes to church. If he is asked to do something for the church, he never says 'no' if he is physically able to do what is asked. Susan explains, "We both have a passion to give and service missions are just one of the many ways we are able to do that."

Through it all, Mark continued to create ads, brochures, and websites that brought in new patients for his cosmetic dentistry clients. However, Mark remembers the night in 2009 when he sat on the edge of his bed and said to Susan, "Honey, if I died tomorrow, the one thing they would be able to say about me is, 'He sure helped sell a lot of people a lot of porcelain crowns they didn't really need.'" In that moment of introspection, he realized that he desired to do more for people in real need of dentistry, and more for his own soul. As Mark said, “I put the universe on notice that I was ready to do more.”

In the summer of 2010, Mark and Susan brought in a new dental client named Dr. Denny Scharine. Curtis Group designed an unobtrusive but personally meaningful "fish" logo for Dr. Denny which won a national design award from Graphic Design USA. Soon, Dr. Denny asked them about doing a little project for an organization of which he was the current president, and, although Mark and Susan had never heard of the Christian Dental Society, they became excited as Dr. Denny told them about the international missions that brought both much-needed dentistry and the all-important presentation of the Word of God to impoverished communities around the world.

Mark says he will never forget the photo that grabbed ahold of him by the collar and shook him up. It was of an old building in Peru located on a dirty city street. But, most importantly, it was the picture of “over a hundred men, women and children standing in line from the building’s door, around the block and down the street” as they waited for needed dental care. This really resonated with Mark.

At the time, the CDS was going through difficult times and there was even speculation that it might not make it through an ongoing downturn. Membership was extremely low and new member recruitment was happening at a molasses pace. Curtis Group launched into action and decided to become the needed marketing arm of the CDS.

The overall image and brand presentation of the CDS was dated and it did not look like the amazing organization that Mark and Susan had come to know. They began with the logo and developed the "tooth of the world" concept (so much for vowing to never use an extracted molar in a design). Mark had made that vow when all of their clients were dentists who could save any tooth as long as they put a porcelain crown on it. However, Mark surmised that many of the mission patients wanted nothing more than to have teeth extracted so they could get out of the pain they may have endured for years.

After the logo and stationery, Mark and Susan tackled the website and the newsletter. Their goal was to make the CDS look like an organization that was vibrant, healthy, relevant and with plans to do even more in the future. Once again, the national design community approved of what the Curtis Group had done when they presented a national design award for both the CDS logo and website design.

Through the following years, the Curtis Group worked with many presidents of the CDS to push the organization ahead and were honored with official acceptance onto the CDS Advisory Council. They formatted the first email newsletter and made it easy for the CDS to get out pertinent announcements about available mission trips.

More inspiring mission trip photos and stories kept coming and Mark once told Susan that he was the luckiest CDS member because he got to go on every mission. It has taken some time, but, today the CDS really is everything that Mark and Susan envisioned, due in a great part to their many innovative and generous efforts.

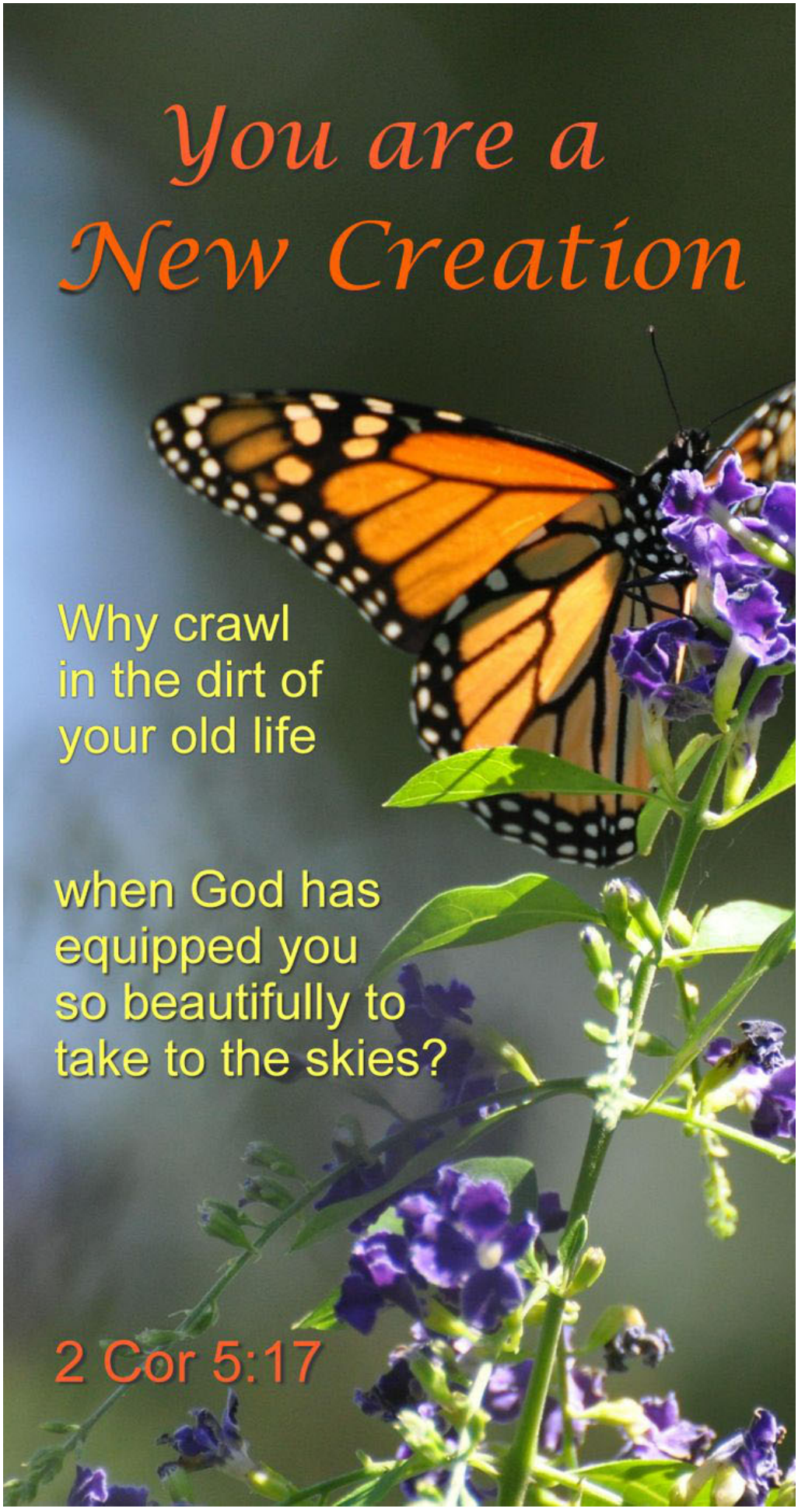
In 2019, when Mark asked the current CDS Executive Director, Dr. Bob Meyer, how many mission trips had been undertaken in the last year, Mark said the number astounded him. In fact, when Mark sat down and did some math, he discovered that there was a new CDS, member-supported mission, leaving for some destitute part of the world on an average of every 18 hours (before COVID-19). The Curtis Group and the CDS have come a long way, helping innumerable, desperate people to get the dentistry they needed and to receive the Word of God which brings an even greater impact.

Mark says that "Susan and I have become rich from our relationship with the CDS. The stories of doing dentistry on cardboard boxes with chickens and goats in the 'operatory,' the membership challenges and our joy in overcoming them, the photos and the relationships we have grown into... all have been of more value to us than any fee, however exorbitant, that we may have charged the CDS organization. This is our turn to say, 'Thank you!' to the CDS and to every CDS member for enriching our lives beyond what we had even imagined."

As told by Mark Curtis
Curtis Marketing Group
(320) 363-0210
mark@curtisgroup.com
www.CurtisGroup.com

P.S. Mark would like to extend an offer to all CDS members who might need Curtis Group's services. As Mark related to Bob Meyer, "I would be happy to offer a significant discount on our services to all members who might need a new logo, website, Facebook presence, or who might like to simply see a tripling of new patients within four months." Mark added, "We can't guarantee that your designs will win a national design award, but we'll certainly try."

P.P.S. When challenged on the "triple your new patients" boast, Mark said, "If I can't triple your new patient count in four months, I will return all program fees you paid to Curtis Group."


You are a
New Creation
Why crawl
in the dirt of
your old life
when God has
equipped you
so beautifully to
take to the skies?
2 Cor 5:17