

Addressing a Global Pandemic: Spiritual Anemia Amongst Cross-Cultural Workers

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Opening Questions:

How is it with you soul?

How are you increasingly moving from self-sufficiency into a transforming relationship with the Trinity?

Is your spirituality such that others would want to emulate it?

Problem

What I see again and again is that folks in so-called full-time ministry have a spirituality that is woefully insufficient to who God has called them to become as men and women, let alone to accomplish the task at hand.

“Data”/Stories

- NYT article
- Quotes from NA care providers
- Personal work with field leaders & their teams
- Personal debriefing of over 400 field workers over the past 7 years

2 compounding observations here:

1. Compulsive busyness driven by any number of reasons: core identity issues (ID, self-worth); driven by a sense of duty to tend to all needs around them; lack of permission to rest and care for one’s self. **PERMISSION.**
2. Profound lack of know-how in regards to deeper spiritual practices.

Observations and personal conclusions:

- We know how to manage life in our own culture - we have “good-enough-to-get-by” spiritual practices.
- We become so deeply enmeshed in our work that we neglect what disciplines we practiced prior to the field.
- Take this further: In other cultures (stressors, spiritually oppressive darkness, lack of spiritual fruit) - our spiritual practices simply do not get us by.

- We are seeing consequences and those consequences are impactful globally on the individual. We all see physical, emotional, spiritual and relational breakdown on a consistent manner. Its feels like a crisis a minute.

Defining Terms

Anemia - formal definition: lack of red blood cells or hemoglobin that results in weariness or pail appearance. Adapted: lack of spiritual practices that results in holistic weariness.

Thinness - lacking of depth or thickness or substance.

Deficient - lacking of some key element.

A VISION

A Paradox:

Argument: We are not sending folks to a spiritual retreat, we are sending them to do a spiritual work. This is true: Lay down your life, called to deny self, follow Christ to calvary.

Case Study:

First Year: Spiritual Formation

Second Year: Continued Spiritual Formation and a relevant skill learned (e.g. nursing)

Ongoing Rhythms of the community and worker from three years onward:

1 day a week

1 week a month

1 month a year

1 year in 6

Personal Application:

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Annually

Revisit opening questions.