MAP Celebrates 65 Years of Bringing Medicine to the World

The need was widespread and heartbreaking: Mission hospitals and clinics all over the world lacked the medicines and supplies they needed to treat their patients. Missionary doctors did their best, but they needed the medical supplies and medicine they knew were available in the US but were seemingly impossible to find in remote parts of the world.

Ray Knighton had heard the stories in his role as administrator of the Christian Medical Society (CMS). And he’d mentioned the need to those he met. So one day Art Larson, from Schering Drug Co., called Ray and told him he had shipped 11 tons of medicine to Ray’s Chicago office. Ray was shocked. “You did what?!” he famously responded. Ray had no warehouse and only a small office. The donation filled his entire office and the hallways.

But when he let doctors on furlough know the medicine was available to take back to their hospitals, they came to pick it up and take it back to where it was urgently needed. The need was obvious and the response was soon overwhelming. The Medical Assistance Program was officially created as part of CMS.

A timeline of significant events in MAP’s history can be found on pages two and three of this newsletter or online (www.map.org/history). But the early years of MAP’s work were characterized by rapid growth and incredible partnerships. More pharmaceutical companies became donors. An increasing number of mission hospitals and doctors became established partners in dozens of countries where trusted, top quality medicine was almost impossible to procure. And individuals began to donate as well, as grateful doctors and patients told their stories.

As MAP’s mission grew, a warehouse was established and both the storage and shipping of medicine became more complicated. In 1965 MAP legally separated from CMS and by 1966 was established as a separate nonprofit corporation.

Over the years, MAP complied with government agencies including the Federal Narcotics Bureau, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure that all medicines supplied met the highest standards and were appropriate to meet the needs in country. MAP was also one of organizations that formed the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO) as well as a founding member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and a founding member of the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations (PQMD).

Over the years, the mission of MAP hasn’t changed. It has become more and more efficient in its work, earning top ratings from Forbes, CNN, CNBC, the Better Business Bureau, GuideStar, and others. If anything, the work has become more focused.
65 YEARS OF HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

1954
A truckload of medicine is dropped off at the Christian Medical Society's office in Chicago, Rayington. It is the first truckload of medicine to reach 11 international mission stations.

1965
A 50th anniversary celebration is held in New York City.

MAP International partners with the Billy Graham Association to provide disaster relief for hundreds of thousands of people affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia.

1979
MAP launches its first Medical Mission Pack program to serve humanitarian medical mission teams.

1985
To improve its operational efficiency and access to open ports, MAP relocates its headquarters to a modern facility in Minneapolis, MN.

1993
Dr. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States, serves on MAP's Board of Directors.

2001
With the fall of the Taliban, MAP initiates medical and health supplies to help people in Afghanistan.

2005
More than 250,000 people perish when a tsunami strikes Indonesia. MAP provides more than $100 million in medicines and health supplies to help those injured and to prevent the spread of disease.

2010
MAP provides aid to Haiti following the devastating earthquake that hit the country.

2014
An outbreak of Ebola virus in Liberia captures global attention. MAP responds by sending more than 3 million personal protective health suits to front-line health workers.

2016
CNBC names MAP International as one of the top 50 global charities changing the world.

2017
The organization receives the Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar, the world's largest source for information about non-profit organizations.

2018
MAP International is awarded the Platinum Seal of Transparency by GuideStar, the world's largest source for information about non-profit organizations.

MAP Provides Disaster Health Kits for the U.S. Navy's Hospital Ship Comfort

When the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort departed on May 6, 2016, for the Western Pacific, it carried the work of more than 150 MAP International volunteers who shipped 7,500 MAP Disaster Health Kits (DTHKs) to the hospital for medical supplies.

MAP International's signature DTHKs provide antibiotics, surgical supplies, and other essential items to prevent the spread of illness for people caught up in disasters. Many of those feeling the impact of disaster in Venezuela have gone without both medical care and basic health supplies for weeks or even months.

The DTHKs will be used to support medical teams in Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Vincent, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago for working visits.

MAP Hosts 3rd Annual Bill Foege Global Health Awards

The third annual Bill Foege Global Health Awards, presented by MAP International, were held on Thursday, June 6, 2019, in Atlanta, GA. The awards, named in honor of Dr. Bill Foege, were presented to five exceptional leaders in global health.

The honorees were:
- Dr. Michael H. Lu, President and Chief Executive Officer of PATH
- Dr. Aylward, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Ambassador Andrew Young, Jr., former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and former Mayor of Atlanta
- Dr. Edilberto de la Cal, President of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

For every dollar you contribute, you help MAP International provide more than $68 in donated medicines and health supplies to people in need. With just $10 million in total expenses, MAP International receives generous donations of medicines and health supplies and has relatively low expenses. Last year alone, we were able to provide nearly $523 million in medicines and health supplies with just over $10 million in total expenses, including $7.6 million in program expenses.

Did You Know?

MAP supports the work of many global health organizations, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.
“We have a perfect job for you as president and CEO of a nonprofit,” the recruiter had said.

“What nonprofit?” I asked.

“MAP.”

“Who uses a map? Everyone uses GPS.”

She clarified, “No, it’s not about maps. It stands for Medical Assistance Programs.”

I was not interested and I told her so.

That evening, I told Sook Hee about the call. “What did you tell them?” she asked. When I told her what I’d said, she asked, “Aren’t you going to at least pray about it? They’re a Christian organization. What if God wants you to go there?”

She was right to exert a little pressure. Together, we prayed on the spot.

My attitude began to shift. Maybe this was a perfect fit for me. After all, I’d had nineteen years of business experience, much of it with pharmaceutical companies, followed by thirteen years of nonprofit experience. I knew a lot about fundraising. I had learned much about giving aid to needy families, not to mention having the personal experience of being on the receiving end of medical assistance from abroad.

I agreed to an initial interview for the position and that interview led to several more. Their search was very thorough. Long story short, it was a match all around.

The job of any managerial leader consists largely of solving problems and I shouldered the primary responsibility for that at MAP. Starting in 2015, we had to take a hard look at the organization’s ongoing financial viability and make some difficult decisions. As part of our strategic planning process to focus MAP on the core mission that we do really well—acquire and dispense medicine and health supplies—we decided to consolidate our efforts. MAP used to maintain a presence in eight other countries, with paid staff and overhead expenses, but we now have transitioned out of direct implementation of country programs, relying instead on local entities, each of which can be its own boss. This is much more sustainable all around and it will enable us to expand our distribution into more countries, serving more people with the same resources. Each partner organization provides “boots on the ground” to distribute the medicines and medical supplies efficiently.

Over the years, MAP International has earned a reputation for being a proficient organization that delivers high-quality medicines and medical supplies to needy people with remarkably low overhead. This is a reputation I intend to maintain!

Sometimes, people ask me, “Would you rather not have had polio?” Of course, I would rather not have had it! Who would want it? But I’m glad God allowed me to get polio for a purpose. I believe I was “saved to serve”—rescued by Him and positioned to represent the Lord to people who can receive what I have to offer because I speak from first-person experience. I intend to keep reaching out to others as long as I have breath.

It’s advantageous for me to be a Korean-American adoptee who had polio and experienced the downside of life in a developing country like Korea in the 1950s. I was forced to deal with the overt discrimination against people with disabilities, such as the idea that you are being punished by God or your parents did something wrong. When I reach out, people listen to me. Whether I am dispensing medicines in a Third World country or speaking about God at a Christian conference, I do not come across as a privileged American. I am privileged only in that polio has been one of the crutches of my success. I’ve leaned on it, overcome it, and I’ve become stronger for it.

My success in the corporate world was the other crutch. The money and position it brought me didn’t make me happy. It was only when I let go of it and made Jesus my Lord as well as my Savior that I could follow His plan for my life. With Him leading me and listening to His still small voice, I have found true happiness.

Getting older has slowed me down somewhat, especially since shoulders are not meant to be weight-bearing joints for a lifetime on crutches, but I can still travel to other countries and I can still speak out for MAP and for God. When people ask me, “Are you going to retire?” I can only reply, “Well, we’ll have to see what God has planned for us.” Sook Hee and I would like to retire someday, but we will never retire from being fruitful in serving our Lord, even in our golden years.

Excerpted from The Crutch of Success by Steve Stirling. ©2019. Used by permission. To learn more about this book go to www.map.org/Steve.