

WESTERN CANADIAN
DISTRICT OFFICE

JUNE 2011



Ministry Spouses

Network Newsletter

ELIZABETH CHOTKA | MINISTRY SPOUSE COORDINATOR

It's Summer. Is it time to take your temperature?

Dear Friends:

I just got back from a short trip. When this opportunity came about a couple of months ago, my response was wow...I could really use some time to myself! I was very excited about the prospect of getting away.

So, for a few days last week I found myself in Costa Rica with no kids, no husband, no phones, no work and no computer. I couldn't converse with those around me because I was in a part of the country where not many people spoke English. This should have been blissful, right? Well, it wasn't at first. I'm a bit ashamed to tell you I was irritable. All I had to do was read a book and spend time listening to God's voice. It was silly to be annoyed and restless. There was no one to be annoyed with, except myself!

Sitting in this lovely tropical garden with my cool drink, I remembered a lecture given by Dr. Paul Stevens who is a professor at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. The topic was spiritual health. He suggested that the best time to assess the health of one's spirit was on a vacation. When he first started this practice, he was disturbed to discover that during times of stillness and solitude, he was less comfortable with being in the presence of His Saviour than when he was engaged in the daily routines of "ministry life." His comment was: "if you are having trouble being still on vacation, you are not being

honest about the health of your spiritual relationship with the Lord."

We live in a society that places a high value on productivity. We value success by our latest accomplishments and by whether or not we are getting things done. Since I pulled away from "life" for a few days last week, I've had to acknowledge I'm spiritually and physically tired. It's not healthy. I didn't know it before last

week and actually, no one else around me would probably have recognized it, either. From the outside, things look just fine.

In my irritated state I was forced to take my temperature. I needed to ask myself why I couldn't soak in some true rest. Was I so wound up in my

routines that I hadn't realized I was drained? There was another question that I needed to ask, too. What am I trying to avoid? Are there some unhealthy things in my spiritual life that God wants me to examine? Have I fallen into some unwise patterns that need to change? Maybe I'm the one filling my schedule full. A full day timer makes it easier to ignore the things in my daily life that are not healthy.

Mark Buchanan was the keynote speaker at our Banff Prayer Retreat a couple of years ago. About twenty years before this, Mark and I were classmates at Regent College and attended that same lecture I mentioned with Dr. Stevens. In his book: [The Rest of God](#) Mark says: "We are waylaid by endless demands and



TRANSFORM

join the movement!

Pictures from the rain forest!



stifling routines. Even our vacations have a panicky, task-like edge to them." Reading this line made me say "ouch!"

After getting back from my vacation, I realize I need a do-over! I've pulled Mark's book off my shelf and I intend to slow down and get comfortable soaking in some Sabbath this summer. For me, this summer I know that I need to relearn an old lesson. Has it been too long since you've been able to be still, too?

I shall be praying that over the next couple of months, we will all be able to find comfort in stillness and maybe make time to read a good book! May I suggest my friend Mark's to you?

Blessings

Elizabeth Chotka
Network Coordinator for Ministry Spouses
echotka@cmawdo.org

