

Better Together!

Cru's Steve and Judy Douglass on their leadership journey

CLA PRESIDENT AND CEO TAMI HEIM recently interviewed Steve and Judy Douglass of Cru/Campus Crusade for Christ International about their shared pursuit of excellence in ministry. Married for 40 years, Steve and Judy have served Christ together via the ministry of Cru throughout their life together. They have three married children and seven grandchildren.

Steve Douglass is president of both Campus Crusade for Christ International and Cru, as the ministry is known in the United States. Douglass came to the ministry after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard Business School. Over more than four decades of service, he has held a variety of positions, including executive vice president and director of U.S. Ministries. In July 2001, Douglass took over as president of Campus Crusade for Christ International from founder Bill Bright. He is the author or co-author of several books, including *Managing Yourself* (Here's Life Publishing, 1978), *How to Get Better Grades and Have More Fun* (Here's Life Publishing, 1985), *How to Achieve Your Potential and Enjoy Life* (Thomas Nelson, 1987) and *Enjoying Your Walk with God* (New Life Publications, 2005). His radio program, *Lighthouse Report*, airs daily on 800 stations.

Judy Douglass leads women's resources in the office of the president for Cru. She is a graduate of the University of Texas with a degree in journalism. She has served as editor of a magazine for college students, and another for adults, and has authored or edited several books including the *Loving a Prodigal* eBook series, *Until Everyone Has Heard: The First Fifty Years of Campus Crusade for Christ International* (Campus Crusade for Christ International, 2001) and *Letters to my Children: Secrets of Success* (IMprint edition, 2012). Her passion is encouraging God's children — especially his daughters — to become all they were created to be. In 50 years on staff with Cru, she has done that through writing, editing and speaking. Connect with her through her *Kindling* blog at (JudyDouglass.com).

You've just celebrated the blessing of 40 years of marriage. What has it meant for you both to be able to serve God together at Cru?

STEVE: Our 40th anniversary was a wonderful time of reflecting on all that we've had the privilege of being a part of. We pinch ourselves reflecting on all that God has called us to do.

One of the things that I'm most grateful for is that, in marrying Judy, I married somebody who was wholeheartedly committed to the Lord first and then to the Great Commission. That makes the kinds of things we have to talk about, the sorts of issues that we have to resolve in terms of time tradeoffs so much easier because we have the same criteria. That's been noticeable from the very beginning of our relationship, but particularly as we first got married.

During our honeymoon we actually had a brief planning time for where we wanted to go with our lives together. Now, you know, most

people think a honeymoon is strictly romantic, and it certainly was that. But we really were thinking about what God wanted to do with us together. I never would have imagined I would be doing what I'm doing, but then we were thinking of how to make good use of the strengths God has given each of us. That's something our planning times in the subsequent years have focused on as well. God has gifted Judy in different ways than he's gifted me.

JUDY: I have loved that we're partners, that we were able to do this together and that both of us are totally committed to each other becoming all that God wants us to become and doing all that God created us to do. We're always looking for ways to encourage each other. We talk about issues in the ministry... the great things that are happening, the opportunities and the challenges. Together we bring our God-given strengths into that and consider how we can maximize not only our contribution, but the ministry as a whole.

After we were married we kept getting more responsibility. Until we had children, I was totally involved with Cru's publications, but as Steve would get a new responsibility, I would say, "All right, Lord, how do I come alongside him in that responsibility?" God would give me some specific ways that I could do what I was doing in the ministry, but also really enhance what he was doing as well.

It's also the thought that we are partners, and that we come at it in different ways. He's the planner, the engineer, a really logical thinker. We joke that I taught him everything he knows about emotions. So I've been able to help him see the people side of things. He would focus a lot on the facts, but he's learned to think about the impact on people. And I've learned to think more strategically. We help each other grow and hopefully help each other lead better in the ministry. It's just such an incomparable privilege to do this together.

As you lead together how do you both stay personally recharged in your own walks with Christ?

STEVE: The first and most important thing in walking with God is to pray continuously. David said, "I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken." (Ps. 16:8) One of the things I learned from Bill Bright is that, when anything came up, he just prayed. So I seek to pray even more often than when something comes up. But I also talk to God continuously.

The second thing relates to exercise. I walk most every morning if I'm in town and sometimes even if I'm elsewhere. I do several things on the walk. Two of them are to listen to the Word of God and to pray. One of the things that has kept my walk fresh is absorbing several chapters of Scripture. Sometimes if I'm in the shorter epistles, I might listen to more than one letter.

There's just something about the word of God washing

over me and filling my mind with what God says. On the way back I'll shut off the Scripture and pray through some of the people and things that I need to pray for, not the least of which is myself and Judy and the kids and the people who work with me. It's a discipline that brings those things to mind most every day.

The third thing is that I journal because I'm kind of an achievement oriented person, and to have some evidence of the day's progress spiritually is helpful to me. Otherwise, what I have learned may not stick with me.

And the final thing I'll say, and this may seem a little less spiritual, but I tell you what, it's really important. Getting enough sleep is a major contribution to being spiritually and physically refreshed.

JUDY: I would agree with a lot of that, though I'm not nearly as structured as Steve. Since I'm an introvert in an extrovert's job, one of the things that has been most important to me is at least twice a year, sometimes three, I go away to the beach — usually for about a week. I have friends with beach houses, and they let me use them. The first half of my day when I'm there is with the Lord. It's listening to worship music. It's reading Scripture. It's taking long beach prayer walks. And it just revitalizes me in ways that I don't get any other way. It has been a hugely important part of my hearing from the Lord when I need to make decisions or praying about things with our family or things in the ministry. Those times are just treasures for me.

To what do you attribute Cru's global impact? What are some keys to pursuing ministry excellence?

JUDY: I would mention three things that are related. One is a willingness to share and not have to hold on to things that we developed or that God has given us, not thinking we have to get all the credit for it. Therefore I think that God will keep giving us things as long as we keep sharing them with others.

A second is a willingness to try new things. We're willing to step out and try things that others maybe haven't

done yet. For example when I was just a young person I worked on Cru's magazines, *Collegiate Challenge* and *Worldwide Challenge*. Back then most Christian publications were mostly black and white, and not too creative. We, and a few other periodicals, came in with this group of young people out of journalism schools and some creative artists. We started doing these magazines that helped change a lot of what was happening in Christian publishing. It was really fun to see that we could have an impact. We were all under 30, and we were getting to influence a lot of the Christian world.

The third thing is we strongly emphasize walking in the power of the Spirit and not trying to do it on our own. And I think that leads to a lot more success. We're trusting God to give us all that we need to do it.

STEVE: I'll pick up on that point. I have a profound awareness and appreciation that it is God who causes things to happen, period. We get to participate. But I don't have any illusions that our cleverness or anything that we've done, by itself, has somehow made us successful or significant.

God raises up. God puts down. God gives opportunities. All we have to do is redeem them. I have a profound sense that I am not worthy. Bill Bright said the same thing. None of us is worthy to do what we're doing and see what we're seeing. Our ministry has seen hundreds of millions of people indicate decisions for Christ. How do I explain that? Well, there's only one explanation — God.

It's God who gets things done. He causes the outcome. He creates fruit. Our job, in the final analysis, is to sense God's opportunities and redeem them. It's a matter of stewardship. *"Apart from me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5b) But with God's power we can do anything He asks us to do.

A second thing I will mention is as leaders, we all need to improve in important areas. That's what ultimately yields a level that you might call excellence. You don't usually start there. You get there over time as God gives grace and teaches you and allows you to learn and have more impact.

A third contribution to ministry excellence is teamwork. The people in Cru have worked together toward the purpose of glorifying God and helping to fulfill the Great Commission. It's a team effort. It's God working through a whole group of people exercising different gifts to accomplish his purpose. We believe that we are just a small piece of all that God is doing. And it's important that we play our role and share anything that we possibly can with the rest of the body of Christ.

For example, the *"JESUS"* film. Almost three years ago, we released the *"JESUS"* film media app. Now you can download or stream the film on your smart phone. Anyone who has a projector that can pick up that digital signal can show the *"JESUS"* film anywhere, in any language we offer. Ultimately, it's about the whole body of Christ working together.

A fourth contribution to ministry excellence is partnership. One of the most encouraging things I've seen happening in the body of Christ in the last 15 or so years is the extensive cooperation. The results are stunning. God is moving today like I've never seen before in my 46 years of full-time ministry. If we just work together, fulfilling the Great Commission is within our grasp. And that is an exciting prospect for the two of us, who've been called for a lifetime together to help fulfill the Great Commission. ●

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