

Global
Outreach

NOW THAT YOU'RE HOME



*A Review Guide
for recently returned
Cross-Cultural Workers*



Global Outreach

Golden Hills Community Church

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*Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.
Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship before you,
For your righteous acts have been revealed.*

Revelation 15:3, 4

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WELCOME HOME

It is great to have you home again!

If you've come straight from the airport, your first question will most likely be "Where's a bed?" Sometime after that, though, you will probably begin to wonder what you are supposed to do next. First of all, the priority for the next couple of days is for you to rest as much as you need and also for you to spend some extended quality time with the Lord. Do make sure that you take time for this.

For all returning workers, (Short-Term and Long-Term) the purpose of your Personal Review is for you to have a chance to think through and talk through everything that happened during your placement. It is for this reason that we have sessions for sharing and discussion.

Also, we want to help give you some direction as to your next steps. This will consist of discussing how to integrate what you have learned into your life back home and how you can use your experiences to mobilize others.

Please read through the attached Debrief Questionnaire right away (if applicable) and begin thinking through some of the questions. You will have free time to fill it in. We would like you to return it to us before you go home.

Thank you so much for being part of the GO mission program this year. You are appreciated.

God bless you and lead you on with Him.

Department of Global Outreach

ADJUSTING BACK HOME

DEBRIEFING triggers the re-entry process. It can also be seen as an end and a beginning.

- an end to a foreign experience, the beginning of feeling foreign;
- an end of a trip, but the beginning of another journey;
- an end to being/feeling special, but the beginning of being ordinary with a special heart for God and for people;
- an end to being stared at, but the beginning of looking at people and the world through different eyes;
- an end to simple living, but the beginning of a different lifestyle;
- an end to crowded housing, but the beginning of having space for God and for people;
- an end to eating foreign food, but the beginning of friendships with foreign people.

(From: Lisa Espineli Chinn, Interaction, Inc.)

TYPICAL DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS

1. The most significant lesson God taught me was...
2. The area of life where I saw the greatest change was...
3. My view of God has changed (how)?
4. My idea of spending money has / has not changed. Explain
5. My values have been challenged or changed. In what ways?
6. I would like to incorporate some of the positive customs, habits or ways of the culture into my lifestyle. Explain how.
7. My short-term experience has affected the direction of my life. Explain how?
8. My short-term experience has affected my view of God's heart for the nations. Explain how.
9. What role do you think God wishes you to play in cross-cultural ministry?
10. How would you feel if you were unable to return in the future?
11. How would you know whether or not you should apply for future trips?
12. The short-term experience affected my relationships with my family. How?
13. My marriage has been enhanced or challenged by...
14. The most difficult thing for our marriage was...
15. The most difficult thing for our children to cope with was...

TIPS FOR ENTERING LIFE BACK HOME

- **Don't expect too much from other people**

People may be too busy to listen to you as much as you expected. Not even your close family and friends will be as excited about your trip as you are. Remember, they had their own experiences while you were gone. Keeping your expectations low allows you to be pleasantly surprised by those who show great interest.

- **Share briefly**

People do not want to hear everything that happened. Stifle the tendency to take them through a day-to-day account. They'll lose interest about midway through the second day.

A photo-journal available for loan is a good way round this, especially if short captions (including the funny ones) are stuck on the front of the photos. A written account can be inserted between the photos along with maps etc. Readers are then free to dip in as much as they like. It also makes a great personal souvenir.

- **Be careful about value judgments**

Upon your return, you may tend to be judgmental about the values in American culture. We all need to re-evaluate our lifestyles from time to time, but it is not up to us to determine others' convictions for them. Do not argue with people about values. It is counterproductive and alienates them. The Holy Spirit is far more effective than a critical spirit. Let people see a changed life.

- **Do not be critical of other's spirituality**
God may be teaching others in ways you do not understand. Just because you went on this trip and learned what you did does not give you the right to be critical of others.
- **Don't let a little depression take you by surprise**
Sometimes you may long to be back in the country. You may ache to be back with some of the nationals who became your friends. And, believe it or not, you may even want to be back with some of your team-mates! Expect those feelings and be prepared for them.
When feelings of nostalgia hit you, you may experience a little depression. Others go through it too, so call another short term worker and talk with him or her about what you are feeling. Remember, you are not alone. Doing something active can help balance out your feelings. Try going for a walk and a pray, or even play sport with friends.
- **Be cautious about negative reporting**
Things may have happened on your trip which was not to your liking. They are fresh in your mind now, but time may give you a different perspective on them. If you are very critical and negative in your reporting, you do a disservice to others and the short-term missions program. Share the tough experiences in light of what God taught you through them.
- **Try to stay in touch with one or two individuals you met on your trip**
Receiving a letter may help you remember the good experiences you had.

- **Contact your prayer partners and financial supporters**

Of all the people back home, these will be the most interested in your trip. We suggest you make this contact as personal as your situation allows. Thank them for their prayers and support.

Ask them to pray for you as you re-adjust to 'life at home'.

- **Develop some realistic, practical applications for yourself**

Avoid making unreasonable demands on yourself, like 'I am going to pray for every missionary in that country for an hour every day.' Think through some realistic ways of integrating your experiences into your daily routine at home.

MORE THOUGHTS ON CONFLICTING VALUES

A few examples of value conflicts for returning STWs are given here to stimulate your thinking.

- **Preoccupation with materialism**

The desire for material comforts and possessions is a dominant theme in your home culture. Are you prepared to face this fact if you are returning from a culture where people are content with little or have only the basic necessities of life? Has your sensitivity to basic human needs been heightened by your experience abroad? What response might you have to affluence, waste or over-indulgence?

Suggestions

- Do not be too quick to condemn; realize that others have not had the same exposure to another way of life. Their preoccupation with their world, as they know it, is only natural.
- Be prepared for sensory bombardment if you have become accustomed to simplicity in choice and lifestyle. An over-abundance of goods, choices etc, can be overwhelming at first.

- **Stress on time and achieving goals**

You are re-entering a culture where the emphasis is on getting things done NOW, and where the establishment of relationships and friendships is often subordinate to achieving goals. Are you prepared for a faster pace, for success to be related to achievement? How much importance do you place on building relationships? How might you respond to superficiality in relationships?

Suggestions

- Realize that it is YOUR ideas that have changed; do not anticipate that others will view things as you do.
 - Prepare yourself to accept the fact that you will have to make the adjustments back to your own cultural ways of doing things, *not vice versa*.
 - Do not be offended if colleagues and friends rush past you or seem to have no time to relate. It is most likely a manifestation of your culture rather than disinterest in you personally.
 - Attempt to pace yourself, so that you are not immediately caught up in a busy or rigid schedule.
- **Doing things the 'best' way**

It is natural that every culture values its own way as best. This is often referred to as ethnocentrism. Upon returning home, you may question some of your traditional ways.

Is bigger, better, faster and more accurate *really* best? Do other cultures have something to offer us? Expect to receive blank stares or an air of disapproval from others if you question traditional ways.

Suggestions

- Refrain from a self righteous attitude, and do not be too quick to sell your point of view or judge others for their ethnocentric stance.
- Share your perspectives, but at the same time avoid becoming involved in arguments.

- **Personal worth and recognition**

Possibly one of the most difficult areas is that of personal fulfillment. Was my service valuable? Will anyone recognize my contribution, my sacrifice? Will I be just another fish in a big pond? Quite likely you are returning from a position where you were the focus of attention, where you felt needed, accepted and loved. What will the situation be like now that you are home?

Suggestions

- Do not expect to be in the limelight for long after you return. Some may ask to see your photos, or ask you speak, etc, but soon you will be back to ordinary citizen status.
- Realize that your worth and recognition comes first of all from God. View your service as service to *Him*, not something to gain recognition and praise from others.
- Do not allow yourself to feel hurt or sorry for yourself when people do not notice you or your service. GOD DOES!
- Look for ways of meeting others' needs: this will help you take the focus off yourself.

RE-ENTRY SHOCK

WHAT IS IT?

Re-entry shock is like culture shock in many ways – only in reverse. **Culture shock** is associated with a sense of disorientation brought on by a new and unfamiliar environment. **Re-entry shock** is precipitated by returning to a setting presumed to be familiar, but which is now seen in a different light.

It is the unexpected nature and subtlety of such change that often causes stress for returning STWs. A once familiar and comfortable environment no longer appears the same. Something has changed. But just what has been altered is not always easy to define.

Suddenly, we find ourselves out of phase with our own culture. Reactions come in the form of bewilderment, dismay, disillusionment and perhaps even irritation or anger.

Somehow, 'things are just not the way they used to be', 'nobody seems to care', 'nobody really understands.'

There are several contributing factors to re-entry shock. One is the element of not anticipating change and consequently being unprepared to cope. Another factor centers round value conflict. Values once taken for granted, and even highly cherished, now seem of lesser significance or of little importance at all. Your way of thinking, your manner and your response to many situations have changed, but often these changes are not apparent until you are back in your own culture.

COMMON SIGNS OF RE-ENTRY SHOCK

What are some of the common signs of re-entry shock? How can they be recognized?

Some common symptoms include:

- Disorientation – a feeling that you are out of place, do not fit in, feeling like a guest in a foreign land

- Uncertainty in interpersonal relationships – unsure of proper mannerisms, greetings, social etiquette, dress, etc
- Feelings of loneliness or isolation
- Restlessness – a desire to ‘get away’ or to return as soon as possible to the host country
- Feeling that nobody understands your experience or that nobody cares
- Feeling tied, immobile
- Critical attitude toward home country – waste, extravagance, wrong way of doing things, etc
- Loss of identity – just another brick in the wall
- Unusual emotional responses
- Frustration over inability to get things done, to get around, to keep up with the pace
- Inability to communicate new ideas, concepts freely
- Feeling of superiority
- Feeling of dissatisfaction
- Defensive in responses
- Retreat, withdrawal, lack of concern, apathy
- Confusion over inwardly conflicting attitudes and responses
- Rejection of overseas experience, desire to forget or even not talk about it

HINTS ON MAKING YOUR RE-ENTRY A SMOOTH LANDING

- Anticipate that the re-entry process will be a positive and fruitful experience.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to rule over every situation, your attitudes and responses.

- Realize that some stress during re-entry is normal. It is an indication that your mind, body and emotions are attempting to readjust.
- Expect the effects to be only temporary.
- Not all will experience re-entry shock to the same degree or in the same way. Those who have made previous returns may notice less effect. Be sensitive to these differences of the other people in your group.
- Do not assume that successful adjustment to in-depth involvement with nationals abroad increases your chances of easy adjustment back home. Often the opposite is true. The following formula illustrates factors that tend to make readjustments more difficult.

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{length of time} \\ \text{in host culture} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Degree of identity} \\ \text{with host culture} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Degree of changes} \\ \text{in your own culture} \end{array} \\ = \\ \text{Amount of reverse cultural adjustment needed}$$

- Because of your experience abroad, it is easy to become more discerning and therefore more critical of your own culture upon return. Be alert to this fact. Guard against making hasty judgments and comments about situations, circumstances or relationships that may strike you as being wrong.
- Remember that frequently it is the 'little things' which can be quite disquieting. Just trying to cope with traffic that flows 'the wrong way' may temporarily throw you off balance.
- Be honest with people. Allow them to help you readjust by letting them know some of the stress you are experiencing. Be discreet, sharing in a positive and loving manner. They will understand.

TELLING YOUR STORY

How are you going to communicate your experience effectively when you return?

- **Take advantage of your arrival.** People will be most interested in your experience the first few times you meet them. Initiate getting together with those with whom you would like to share specifically.
- **Your opening sentences will be the most important so prepare them well.** They need to grab attention. If you succeed, your listeners will want to learn more, and will then begin asking you questions. Simply saying 'It was great' does not tell the listener anything. Never start with an apology or complaint, i.e. "I'm sorry I didn't bring my photos."
- **Paint verbal pictures.** As you go from the opening sentence into your story, it should be something people can picture. You breathe life into it by adding details such as feelings, smells, sights and sounds. Basically you should answer the questions: who, what, where, when and why. Be careful not to use words that you learned in the country, or 'missionary' jargon, as your listeners will not understand what you're talking about. Remember - they were not there!
- **Illustrate your story.** Don't be afraid to act out a situation using facial expressions, bodily gestures, voice reflection etc. Consider putting together a Power Point to break up a presentation.
- **Focus on people.** Listeners' hearts are touched by stories about people. Remember - mission is about sending people to reach people. Tell different incidents describing thoughts, emotions, responses and reactions. Don't forget to include humour and to challenge your listeners to future involvement in some way. Remember many people will only be interested in the food and bugs. So try to guide the conversation with your stories.

- **Give a moral.** Every good story has a moral. So tell lessons you learned. Be honest, but don't labor negatives as that is what the listeners will go away with. Even trials and negatives can be recounted in a positive manner so watch your attitudes and voice tone as you speak.
- **Prepare different responses.** Write a one-sentence answer to 'How was your short term?' Then write a three-minute, five-minute and fifteen-minute response to the same question. Each should be an expanded version of the previous one with the fifteen-minute response being a series of stories and events. Then these can be used anywhere, anytime and with anyone, including impromptu meetings and church services or classes. Always end by inviting your listeners to hear more.

SERVING AS SENDERS

INTRODUCTION: THE GO GOAL

Our goal is to provide cross-cultural workers with an opportunity to learn what is involved in sharing Christ cross-culturally and to discover their personal role in world evangelism.

Do you feel that you learned what is involved in sharing Christ cross-culturally?

What has God been saying about your personal role in world evangelism? To serve as a go-er, or to serve as a sender?

HOW TO SERVE AS A SENDER

- Read Romans 10.13-15
- Do you have anyone whom you could serve as a sender?

TYPES OF SUPPORT

- **Moral**
 - Who gave you moral support during your trek? How did they do it?
 - Did anyone help confirm your call or counsel you about going?
 - Did your church or fellowship group commission you?
 - Some examples of moral support:
 - Encouragement
 - Active listening
 - Confirming the person's call
 - Counseling
 - Commissioning
 - Enabling spiritual growth.

- **Logistics**

What are ways that a sender can give practical support?

- Managing business affairs e.g.:
 - Money – taking care of financial support transactions
 - Taxes
 - Health-care
- Managing personal details e.g.:
 - Sell car, look after house, vote by proxy
 - Visit family members on behalf of missionary
 - Arrange college student's housing during school breaks
 - Procure home-schooling curriculum
- Ministry needs e.g. Send Bibles, clothes, computers

- **Financial**

- Who supported you financially during your time away?
Were you surprised and encouraged by their generosity?
- What is your view of financial support of cross-cultural workers? Is it merely an obligation, or is it a joy? Read 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8
- How do you choose whom to support? How do you decide how much to give?

- **Questions to ask before giving:**

- Is your donation being used for what they say it is?
- Is the project or 'missionary' service really hitting a decisive point in the battle for souls?
- What is the field-use ratio of the Mission's funds?

- **Living a sacrificial lifestyle to free up funds.**

- Did the cross-cultural workers on the field live a sacrificial lifestyle? If so, what did they give up?

- Should those in the USA live a sacrificial lifestyle? Why or why not?
- How can *you* live a more sacrificial lifestyle? What are some practical things you can do?

- **Prayer**

- Prayer for more harvesters:
 - Read Luke 10.2.
 - What does Jesus command His followers to do?
 - What does Jesus then do in Luke 10.3?
- What to pray for missionaries:
 - Read model in Colossians 1.9-12.
 - What are some of the prayers that come from this passage?
- Fasting:
 - Have you ever fasted and prayed? Why? / Why not?

- **Communication**

How can we communicate with cross-cultural workers, even those who live in remote areas?

- Letters / Email / Telephone
- Photos
- Care packages
- Personal Visits

- **Re-entry**

- Who can you talk to when you are feeling some re-entry stress?
- Who can help you cope with reverse culture shock?

- What are areas in which to help a cross-cultural worker re-adjust to life in the USA?
 - Professionally
 - Materially/financially
 - Culturally
 - Linguistically
 - Nationally/politically
 - Educationally
 - Spiritually

For further help we recommend Serving As Senders Neil Pirollo
ISBN 1 -880185-00-8

GOING AS A GO-ER

What are you going to do with what you have just experienced?

Choices: *go as a go-er* or *serve as a sender*.

If going as a go-er, you need to get your personal life together

- Passionate growing love for Jesus
- Passionate growing love for people
- Proven at-home and cross-cultural experience
- Perseverance
- Appropriate skills
- Love for the Church
- Basic Bible knowledge
- Study the host nation
- Ready for anything
- Link up – tying the church and mission agency
- Maintain clear communication with Global Outreach Leadership – do not act independently

Choosing a mission – checklist for mission

- Statement of faith
- Countries
- Track record – impact on world evangelism. How is the agency doing?
- Size – big or small both have advantages and disadvantages
- Goals and management – do they have a clear direction or are they 'stuck in the mud'?
- Type of work – do they have a speciality?

- Leadership – don't be afraid to ask others what they know about the leaders.
- Organization – how are things governed?
- Origin – how and when did it get started?
- Standards – what are the qualifications to join?
- Turnover – how many years does the average worker stay with the mission?
- Personnel sources – where do workers come from?
- Finances – how are finances collected, distributed; salary, faith mission?
- Style – are you comfortable with the people in the mission?



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