

Missionary Marriage Issues

Ronald L. Koteskey

Member Care Consultant
GO InterNational

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Ronald L. Koteskey
122 Lowry Lane
Wilmore, KY 40390
USA

ron@missionarycare.com

www.missionarycare.com

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Preface

Why write a book about issues in missionary marriages when so many books about marriage are available? The reason is because married couples living in cultures other than their passport one face some issues that make marriage more difficult than it is for people remaining at "home."

During one year two divorces occurred in missionary families our church supported. The next year another divorce occurred. All three divorces involved people 40-60 years of age, one with empty-nesters and two in families with three children at home in each. A single-mom in her thirties with two children registered for one of Ron's courses, and it turned out that while in language school her husband had left her for a national woman. We received a call to help a couple in their twenties because the wife was considering divorce to marry a national man. As you read this book, you will see that these issues go clear back to the beginning of the modern protestant missionary movement in the eighteenth century.

This book is written in short, independent chapters, not in any particular order except that "What about Dorothy?" is the introductory chapter and "What about Charlotte?" is the concluding one. Some are issues covered in *What Missionaries Ought to Know* but covered in more detail here. Some are not faced by people remaining in their passport culture; others are just more likely faced while living in a different culture.

Thanks are due to Bob & Norma Jean Erny who have read each chapter as it was written. They were each married more than 40 years to their first spouses, and after those spouses died, they married each other giving them more than century of marriage in three marriages. Thanks also due to Art Nonneman and Yvonne Moulton who read the entire manuscript.

Chapter 1

What about Dorothy?

Replying to some of his critics, Paul said, “Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas?” (1 Corinthians 9:5). As this indicates, some early Christian workers took their spouses to other cultures as they served there. Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18 are good examples in Scripture where this was done.

To find a well-documented account of a married couple serving cross-culturally recently, we have to move forward in time about 1700 years to the beginning of the modern missionary movement. We also have to move several thousand miles from the Middle East to central England.

Wife of a Shoemaker

Dorothy was born into a farming family in England in 1756. Her family attended a small country church, and it was there that Dorothy met William who was apprenticed to the village shoemaker. Like most young women in her day, Dorothy could not read or write; however William read continually and became a prolific writer as well. All seemed to be going well when they married on June 10, 1781, as the war with the thirteen colonies in America was coming to a close. Two and a half years later William and Dorothy inherited the shoemaking business when the shoemaker died, and their marriage seemed to be off to a good start. They were two

Christian young people who grew up in Christian families, attended the same church, married, and set out to serve Christ in business in their village.

Wife of a Pastor

However, things changed within a few years when William began preaching in village churches. Four years later (1785) they moved to Moulton where he became an ordained minister. Four years later (1789) they moved to Leicester so he could teach school during the day, work as a shoemaker, and preach seven times every two weeks. Still the family struggled financially, at times coming close to starving. During this time they had six children, and two of those died at the age of two. Up to this point they were a rather “typical” struggling pastoral family.

However, William became more and more burdened for the “heathen” overseas as the years passed. In 1792 he published a pamphlet about the obligations of Christians to convert “heathens” in the different nations of the world. Later that year he became a central figure in the formation of a new missionary sending agency. Soon William volunteered to go to India as a missionary, and he wanted to take Dorothy and their children with him. Here are events during the first half of 1793:

- January 9: William and his friend John were appointed as the agency’s first missionaries.
- January 16: Knowing that Dorothy was reluctant to go as a missionary, Andrew (representing the agency) met with a friend to lay plans to talk with Dorothy. She refused when they met with her.
- February 1: France declared war on Britain.
- March 17: William preached his last sermon in England.
- March 26: Dorothy, William, and their three sons (Felix, William Jr., and Peter) said their goodbyes, not knowing when they would meet again.

- April 4: William, John, and 8-year-old Felix departed on a ship to meet up with a convoy for India, but they were delayed six weeks on the Isle of Wight because of the war (Dorothy remained at home).
- About May 3: Dorothy gave birth to a son and named him Jabez (because I bore him in sorrow).
- May 22: Still waiting for the convoy, William and John learned of a Danish ship soon to sail for India. William wanted to see if Dorothy would go.
- May 24: After traveling all night William, John, and Felix arrived for breakfast. They pled with Dorothy during the meal, but she still refused to go.
- May 24: On their way to ask someone for more money, John suggested that they go back to talk to Dorothy, but William refused. John said he was going back alone. William said he could, but it was a waste of time.
- May 24: John met with Dorothy and told her that "...her family would be dispersed and divided forever—she would repent of it as long as she lived..." Dorothy agreed to go to India on the condition that her sister come with them too. Dorothy and William then convinced Catharine to go with them, packed, sold other possessions, said goodbye to family and friends, and raised money for travel in less than 24 hours.
- May 25: The whole family, including 3-month-old Jabez left for Dover!
- May 30: Representing the agency, Andrew wrote a fund-raising letter saying, that William's "heart is happy, having his family with him. An objection against the Mission is removed, of its separating a man from his wife..." Andrew went on to say that if William had not "taken his family he must have come home again in a few years. Now there will be no need of that. He will live and die in the midst of 100 millions of heathens..."

Andrew also concluded that God had prevented the departure so that William's family might accompany him so that "all reproaches on that score might be prevented."

John was pleased. William's heart was happy. Andrew, the agency, and supporters were satisfied.

What about Dorothy?

Wife of a Missionary

The couple thought they barely had time to catch the ship, but it was more than two weeks late. June 13, 1793, they sailed from England with four children under the age of eight, one of them only six weeks old. They sailed for nearly five months without a single stop in a port and arrived in India on November 11, 1793. During the few days remaining in that year they lived in two places, first in Calcutta where Dorothy and Felix became ill with dysentery (which lasted a full year) and then in the Portuguese community of Bandel.

1794 was a year of moving, loss, and stress. In January they lived in Manicktullo which William thought was too civilized. In February-April they began to build a home in the Sunderbunds which was characterized as a "malarious uncultivated district" in which tigers had killed 12 men during the previous year. In May they began a three-week river trip to their next home, but Dorothy's sister remained to marry a man she met there. June-July they lived with acquaintances in Malda, and William commuted to Mudnabatti to work. In August the whole family moved again to be near William's work. Their son Peter (age 5) died there in October. Following are quotes from William's letters and journals during the next 12 years.

- 1795: "You know that Dorothy sent a letter express yesterday to me.." (in the letter she accused William of being "unfaithful" to her).
- 1796: "If he goes out of his door by day or by night, she follows him; and declares in the most solemn manner that

she has caught him with his servants, with his friends, with Mrs. Thomas, and that he is guilty every day and every night.”

- 1797: “Some attempts on my life have been made.... I am sorely distressed to see my dear children before whom the greatest indecencies and most shocking expressions of rage are constantly uttered.”
- 1798: “Dorothy is as wretched as insanity can make her almost and often makes all the family so too.”
- 1799: “...such a time of wandering up and down and perplexity as we have never had.”
- 1800: “Dorothy is stark mad.”
- 1801: “She has been cursing tonight in the most awful manner, till weary with exhaustion she is gone to sleep.”
- 1802: “Dorothy is quite insane, and raving, and is obliged to be constantly confined.”
- 1803: “Dorothy is as bad as ever.”
- 1804: “Dorothy is if anything worse...”
- 1805: “Her insanity increases, and is of that unhappy cast which fills her with continual rage or anxiety.”
- 1806: “Poor Dorothy grows worse, she is a most distressing object.”
- 1807: “My poor wife remains a melancholy spectacle of mental imbecility.” Much more is available in James Beck’s (1992) excellent book, *Dorothy Carey*, published by Baker Books.

What about Dorothy?

During their years in India the family moved from one site to another. They had little or no contact with other Europeans during that time. They had no Indian converts in the first seven years, though some expatriates from other countries were converted. They were often in danger from flooding rivers, tigers, jackals and other things. They repeatedly had

many diseases including dysentery, malaria, and other parasites. Several times they actually thought they were going to die.

On December 12, 1807, William wrote a colleague that “...it pleased God to remove my wife by death. She had been in a state of the most distressing derangement for these last twelve years...” Dorothy, the woman who had expected the life of a wife of a shoemaker in England, died at the age of 51 after 14 miserable years in India.

Dorothy was the wife of William Carey, widely acclaimed to be the “father of modern missions.” No one can question the commitment, dedication, effectiveness, and discipline of William Carey—but what about Dorothy? What about their marriage relationship? How did this marriage of the “father of modern missions” influence those of missionaries that followed? Did William learn anything from this sad ending? Did mission agencies learn anything from it?

We will return to this story repeatedly in future chapters as we consider missionary marriage issues. (To find out immediately what the people involved learned, read the “What about Charlotte?” brochure, the conclusion to this series.)

Chapter 2

I Don't Want to Go!

Dorothy is a prime example of a spouse who did not want to go as a missionary. She told her husband she did not want to go. She told the agency she did not want to go. She told a prospective teammate she did not want to go. She refused to go repeatedly over a four-month period—even when William and their oldest son left for the field without her and the younger children. She finally consented to go after repeated meetings and essentially being threatened by another member of the team.

What happened?

As one might expect, Dorothy did not have a good experience as a missionary and tried to sabotage the work William was doing. She and William obviously did not have a happy marriage and a nurturing home for their children while they served on the mission field.

Another missionary couple was present during some of their disagreements, and the visiting husband wrote, “She has uttered the most blasphemous and bitter imprecations against him, . . . seizing him by the hair of his head, and one time at the breakfast table held up a knife and said, ‘Curse you. I could cut

your throat . . . you rascal . . . God almighty damn you.” Before she was confined, she followed William through the streets raving and railing against him.

Of course, Dorothy was an extreme case in that she became mentally ill and had to be confined most of the later years of her life. She even tried to kill William a couple of times while serving in India.

Could such a situation happen today?

Of course, it could (Never say “never.”), but it is much less likely today than it was 200 years ago. Several factors are in place to prevent such a scenario today.

- Many agencies have developed criteria for screening people with mental problems.
- Such agencies also would refuse to send someone who did not want to go.
- Member care departments provide counsel and medication to those who are mentally ill. They also provide marital counseling to couples who have conflict.
- Many cultures have a very different view of mental illness and people in them would take a dim view of such lengthy confinement.

However, even with these safeguards, similar problems do occur, and some are unnecessary tragedies.

How could it happen?

Though it is unlikely that a spouse would be told that her family would be “dispersed and divided forever” if he or she did not go, more subtle pressures often exist. Knowing that their families and supporting churches have invested time and money in them, spouses who do not want to go may still feel great pressure to do so anyway. Although this can happen in any situation, it is more likely in the following ones.

- New agencies. As was the case with Dorothy, many new agencies do not have policy manuals that would prohibit such overt pressure on a spouse to go.
- Agencies emphasizing goals. Although most agencies set some target goals, some take the position that such goals must be met. If their goal is 50 new missionaries during the next year, they accept people who they probably would not take under other circumstances and exert pressure on prospective missionaries to go.
- Churches. Although some mega-churches may support many missionaries and have member care for their missionaries, other smaller churches sponsor two or three couples overseas without any of the “infrastructure” needed to care for them.
- Independent missionaries. Some people are so determined to go that they just go on their own, pressuring their spouse to go with them. Though they may have several “supporting churches” who give to their own personal tax-exempt organization, they may have no one to turn to when things go bad.

Could it happen later in life?

Dorothy had never served as a missionary, and she did not want to become one. We do not know exactly why, but we can surely make some educated guesses when we realize that she had three children, was pregnant, and was about to begin a five-month sea voyage. People today also may not want to go for similar reasons. However, even people who have served as missionaries may not want to return.

- Those who have served as a married couple may not want to go back after they have children because of living conditions, educational systems, and so forth.
- Those who have older children may not want to return and leave their children in college in their passport country.

- Those who have grandchildren may not want to return and leave their grandchildren.
- Those who have aging parents may want to remain where they can spend time with or care for those parents before the parents die.

Could it happen to other family members?

Such differences between husbands and wives obviously have an impact on their marriage. However, even when both of them want to go, their offspring may say, “I don’t want to go!”

- Elementary children. Thinking about leaving their friends, changing schools, leaving their pets, leaving their rooms, and so forth, many children do not want to go. If parents handle this right, most children (even those who do not want to go) readily adjust to the new situation—and then do not want to return to their passport countries.
- Teenagers. Adolescents give similar reasons for not wanting to go, but they are more likely than children to fail to adjust to the new situation. Adolescents have different cognitive capacities and do not hesitate to argue with their parents—more likely to continue agitating after they go. They tend to do something that will strike at their parents’ ministry. For example, boys tend to break the law and get in trouble with the police while girls tend to act out sexually and may become pregnant.

What if the person doesn’t say so?

Sometimes people do not say they do not want to go, but they use all kinds of passive resistance to hinder going, behaviors commonly called being passive-aggressive. Rather than openly refusing to do something, they just hinder getting the job done. Here are a few of their traits.

- Resistant to suggestions
- Critical of authority

- Repeated failure of simple tasks
- Forgetting obligations
- Resentfully stubborn
- Sullen sarcasm
- Sulking sabotage
- Complaining procrastination
- Willful incompetence
- Intentional inefficiency

These people may be aware of what they are doing and do it purposely. However, they may not realize what they are doing or why. Any of us are less excited about participating in something we really do not want to do.

What can we do about it?

The best solution to a difference between husband and wife is for them to talk and pray together, alone and perhaps with a counselor, until they can come to some agreement. However, they may not be able to reach an agreement that is acceptable to both. Then they are left with four options.

- Both stay. One option is that they serve a mission agency in some capacity in their passport country, with neither of them going to serve in another culture. This enables them to be involved in missions without the stress of cross-cultural living. The problem may be that the one wanting to go may resent having to stay at home and the one not wanting to go may feel guilty for keeping the other home.
- One goes and the other stays. This was the option that Dorothy and William first chose to do, but they could not do so because of the war prohibiting travel. This allows both of them to live where they wish, but it results in separation of the couple for long periods of time. For a relationship to flourish, people must spend time together.
- Both go. This is what Dorothy and William did with Dorothy feeling forced to go. The problem with this

solution is that the one forced to go may continue to balk at every step and may greatly resent the pressure.

- Both stay and then go. If the problem with going is related to something that will change over time, perhaps a delay in leaving will resolve the problem. For example, if the problem is that one feels responsible for dying parents, the couple may be able to take care of the parents for a few years, then go to another culture.
- Promote the positive. When children do not want to go, emphasize getting things they (not you) want. For example, talk about the new friends, good food, etc. (not another visa in their passport, learning the geography of a country, etc.)
- Leave one behind. Sometimes teenagers prefer to remain in their passport country with the family of a friend. For example, they may not want to leave close friends or may want to graduate from their hometown high school.

Whatever you do, keep talking, negotiating, and compromising until everyone involved can live with your solution. God does not require you to sacrifice your marriage or your family to serve him in another culture.

Chapter 3

Not Called, but Willing

Mary said, “I feel like God is calling me to teach in an international Christian school overseas.”

“That’s wonderful, Mary” you exclaimed as you turned to her husband and said, “What about you, Bob?”

Bob replied, “I don’t have a missionary call, but I’m willing to go along so that Mary can obey God’s call.”

Though such conversations commonly occur today, they would have been quite meaningless a little over two hundred years ago when William and Dorothy Carey became missionaries. During the late eighteenth century, nearly everyone interpreted the “great commission” in the final chapters of Matthew and Mark as being given to the apostles who heard it and carried it out. That command was for them alone and did not apply to anyone since then.

It was William Carey and other English Baptists who began to reinterpret these passages in the 1780s. On May 12, 1792, his radical book, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, was advertised in the *Leicester Herald*. In that book he asked whether or not the Great Commission was still binding, surveyed the book of Acts, presented detailed data on the state of the world relative to the gospel, and countered objections to the missionary enterprise.

That book and William Carey’s life brought about major changes in the way Christians viewed people in other countries

who were not likeminded. Today people around the globe commonly talk about having a missionary call in which individuals feel they must go into another culture and tell the Good News.

Who is called?

This question has had a broad spectrum of answers during the last two centuries.

- No one. The Great Commission was given to the people who were there when Jesus spoke, and it applied only to them.
- Everyone. The Great Commission applies to everyone, even people today. Thus, everyone is responsible to spread the Good News to every people group.
- Only people who receive some kind of “call” from God. People who receive this special summons from God are to leave their culture and to spread the Good News as God has directed. Other people remain in their passport cultures as supporters.

Why is the “call” a marriage issue?

It is not an issue if no one is called or if everyone is called because everyone is the same. However, if or when one spouse feels called to leave the passport country to spread the Good News and the other sees no reason to leave home, this becomes an issue. If they stay at home, the first spouse is frustrated because he or she may feel guilty for not obeying God. If they go to another culture, the second spouse may resent it when he or she gets beyond “vacation mode” to the time when culture shock and the stress of living in another culture set in.

What does the Bible say about a call?

The Bible does not mention a specific “missionary call” as such, but it is helpful to consider how the first people to serve cross-culturally in the book of Acts came to do so.

- An angel told Philip to go to a particular road (Acts 8:26).
- While Philip was on his way, the Spirit directed him to the chariot (Acts 8:29).
- As Saul (Paul) was traveling along a road, a light flashed around him, and Jesus told him to go into the city (Acts 9:3-6).
- In a vision the Lord told Ananias that he had chosen Saul (Paul) to go to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).
- While they were worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit told the church in Antioch to set Saul (Paul) and Barnabas apart for the work to which God had called them (Acts 13:2).
- During the night Paul had a vision of a man who begged him to come and help (Acts 16:9).

Note the variety of times of day, settings, people involved, spiritual beings involved, senses involved, and so forth. God does not “call” people in any one way. He does so through many different means.

How are people called today?

Since there is disagreement about who is called and God calls in such a variety of ways, there is no generally accepted definition of how people are called. However, the following are often found in descriptions of one’s call.

- Following some crisis experience some people have an inner persuasion that God has chosen them for some particular purpose they feel compelled to fulfill.
- Church leaders, mentors, mission leaders, and peers who know persons well verify that these individuals are people God is likely to call into service, often considering the attributes listed in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

- Often individuals can point to particular passages of Scripture that support their calls into cross-cultural ministry. God uses Scripture to affirm the call and guide them in decisions made after the call.
- Called people have ongoing ministries in the local church in evangelism, discipleship, education, counseling, or other such areas. People who do not do these things within their own culture are not likely to do them in another culture. The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.
- Preachers preach, teachers teach, and the called person has some idea of how he or she as a missionary will “mish.” They will know what they are to do.
- Called people are eager to prepare in terms of education and experience to fulfill their call. Paul went to Arabia for three years of preparation after his call and before his active ministry.
- Called people have a great concern over others being lost in sin. Though humanitarian service is good, the essence of missions is the salvation of the lost.
- Called people usually are called to some particular task, people group, place, and so forth rather than just seeing great needs in other places.

Of course, no one is perfect in all of these respects, but research has shown that people who have definite calls are much more likely to serve for a longer time than those who go for other reasons.

Are there false “calls”?

People have a variety of reasons for thinking they should become missionaries, and some mistake these for a “call.” Here are some of those reasons.

- Earning God’s love. People who believe that they are not loved may think that sacrificing to become a missionary will win God’s approval.

- Penance. People feel guilty and try to pay for their sin by serving in difficult or dangerous places.
- Family pressure. Parents who feel guilty for not obeying their call may encourage their children to become missionaries.
- Travel. People who want to see the world or have adventures may seek these through missionary work.
- Going home. People who grew up overseas may be looking for a way to get “home” and find it through missions.
- Quotas. Some churches or mission agencies set goals to send a certain number of missionaries in the next year, and people may go to meet that “quota.”
- Meeting needs. Some people are concerned about meeting needs of poor people overseas and go on the basis of a purely humanitarian motive.

The list can go on and on, but people who go for these reasons often do not last long on the field. Many return home, but others remain and become “high maintenance,” taking up the time of those really called.

What can a couple do?

Making sure that both husband and wife have genuine calls before beginning missionary service is a good way to avoid this conflict and stress in their marriage. It may also prevent their causing problems in the missionary community in which they work.

Two misunderstandings are possible. First, the one who feels called may have a “false” call, and after a brief period of time may become a casualty. Second, the one who does not feel called may have a genuine call and become an effective missionary. Thus, couples need to consider both of these.

The couple should examine carefully the “call” of the person who claims to have it. People who have the false calls mentioned above are not evil people trying to sabotage the missionary enterprise. Many of them are sincere in their desire

to serve. They really do want to please God, to atone for their sins, to please their parents, and so forth down the list. However, when difficult times occur, their lack of a genuine call makes it impossible for them to weather the storm. Then they have problems themselves and/or become problems to others.

Likewise, people who do not believe they have a call may really have one and not recognize it. These people may have heard missionaries tell of their dramatic call to service or have read in Scripture about the calls of Philip or Paul. Though they may have prayed for missionaries and given to missions, they have never seen a vision, heard from an angel, or been blinded by a light and heard from Jesus as they traveled down the road. Their burden for the lost and compassion for those who have never heard may be part of God’s call.

Since people may not be conscious of some of their motives, talking with a counselor who knows about God’s call on people’s lives may be helpful. Talking with an understanding missionary who can help sort things out may be even more helpful. In no case should they go until both have the same call or one has a specific call to service and the other is called to serve wherever his or her spouse is called.

Chapter 4

I'm Marrying a National!

Living as a single person without adequate social support in another culture can be very lonely. It is common for people to marry someone they meet while serving in their host culture, and it has been so for many years.

Dorothy Carey's sister, Kitty, had agreed to help Dorothy with her children in India, but that did not last long.

- November 11, 1793, Kitty arrived in India.
- February 6, 1794, Kitty met Charles Short.
- November 15, 1794, Kitty married Charles.

A year and four days after she arrived in India, she married a man from her passport country, a man she had known for nine months.

Though William Carey's marriage to Dorothy was undesirable, he remarried soon after her death.

- December 8, 1807, Dorothy died.
- May 8, 1808, William married Charlotte.

Five months after Dorothy's death, William married a cross-cultural worker from Germany, a woman he had tutored in English eight years earlier while living in India.

Just as singles do marry expats from their passport culture and expats from other cultures, they frequently marry nationals from their host culture. Such singles have usually lived in the culture for some time and have developed an understanding and appreciation of the host cultures even though they are quite different from their passport cultures. Though the

couple realizes they are different because of their cultures, they are "sure" that their love will overcome any problems that arise because they are not from the same culture.

Don't opposites attract?

People may initially be attracted to others who are different, but in long-term relationships, similarities are much more important. Differences may change from attractive, to tolerated, to annoying, to grating, to destroying a relationship. Understanding and appreciating a culture is quite different from internalizing it. It is easier to adjust to differences between families in the same culture than it is to adjust to the deeply held values found in different cultures.

Differences that complement each other, such as one person being talkative and the other a listener, are relatively easy to adjust to. However, deeper cultural values, such as male vs. female roles or honesty vs. saving-face may be very difficult to live with. The single woman may be attracted to the macho male in her host culture but may not like the way he treats her after marriage. The single man may be attracted to the way the woman in his host culture avoids hurting anyone but may not like her lying to him to do so after marriage.

What does the Bible say?

The Old Testament forbids cross-cultural marriages for the Israelites.

- Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons (Deuteronomy 7:3).
- You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves (Nehemiah 13:25).
- Also see Joshua 23:12 and Ezra 9 (whole chapter) among others.

These prohibitions were for religious reasons, deeply held cultural values. The reasons given were that intermarriage would result in people changing their concepts of and relationships with God and with false gods.

- For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods Deuteronomy 7:4).
- Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Nehemiah (13:26).

Of course, when marrying a national, people may say that they are both Christians. However, maintaining a marriage relationship when the couple has disagreements between deep cultural values of any kind is often very difficult. Marrying a national is not sinful, but it makes marriage more difficult. People may be very unhappy in such a marriage and be tempted to look for companionship outside the marriage.

What problems may occur?

Would any of the following disturb either you or your spouse-to-be? Since at least one of you will have to live in a host culture, that one will probably experience some, if not all, of the following.

- Your children do not really know your parents, their grandparents.
- Family members, such as grandparents and cousins, are not able to communicate well with your children.
- You do not celebrate your culture's holidays and observe its traditions.
- You have to explain jokes and/or ask for them to be explained.
- Your children grow up with a different set of cultural assumptions than you have.
- You experience discrimination because of the ethnicity of your spouse.
- Your children grow up with gender roles you do not approve of.

- Etc....

What can we do?

Five things are absolutely necessary.

- Have at least one language in which both you are fluent. Explain a subtle emotion to your spouse-to-be, and ask him or her to explain it back in different words.
- Do not assume anything, especially things you would call "common sense." Remember that you have much less in "common" than couples reared in the same culture.
- Do talk about every aspect of your future life together. Include at least the following aspects: spiritual, financial, marriage and sexual expectations, family, friends, gender roles, children, leisure, communication, and conflict resolution.
- Do not avoid talking about any subject. If your spouse-to-be says it is not important, press for discussion. If he or she refuses to discuss something, treat that as a red flag!
- Remember that what your in-laws think of you is extremely important. In many cultures their opinions may be of great importance to your spouse-to-be.

Are men and women alike?

Men marry national women and women marry national men, just as was the case in the OT cross-cultural marriages. Member care providers have observed that men tend to be more satisfied with their cross-cultural marriage than are women. This may be a result of the roles women are expected to play, especially if they live in their husband's culture. Here are examples.

- A woman may be attracted to a Latin macho man because he seems to be more like a Biblical "head of the house" than do many sensitive men she has met in her passport culture. However, when his attitude turns out to be real machismo

with full emphasis on male superiority, she may realize that even in him it is the old male chauvinism she despised in her own culture.

- A woman may believe she would be happy living with the convert she marries in the Middle East. However, when she actually lives there as his wife, she despises having to cover her entire body and being unable to express affection at all outside the privacy of her home.
- Even though a woman married to an African man is not forced to walk ten steps behind her husband, both of them may feel uncomfortable walking together when all the other women are behind their husbands.

What about TCKs?

Notable exceptions to women not being as satisfied in cross-cultural marriages are Third Culture Kids (TCKs), especially those who have grown up in their husband's culture. If the woman has internalized parts of that culture, she may be comfortable with women's roles there—perhaps more comfortable than with roles in her passport culture.

The same is true of female TCKs who grew up in cultures *similar* to their husbands'. For example, a woman who grew up in one tribe in an African culture may be happy with a similar role expected of her in another African culture. Similarly, one who grew up in one Latin country may be happy in similar Latin American countries.

Conclusion

Cross-cultural marriage adjustments often are more difficult than those in which both husband and wife are from the same culture. These marriages have an extra level of differences to work through.

- All husbands and wives have to work through differences between them as individuals.

- All husbands and wives have to work through differences between their families of origin. One marries a whole set of family traditions and expectations, not just an individual.
- In cross-cultural marriages the couple has to work through not only individual and family differences but also the much deeper cultural differences.

This does not mean it cannot be done, only that it is more difficult, often much more difficult. The cultural assumptions are much more central to our persons than people may expect.

Even more disconcerting are times when previously agreed upon items change.

- You find out that your spouse is more interested in working on a permanent resident card (Green Card in the USA) than on the marriage.
- Your spouse does not want to live in your passport country.
- You find out that you do not want to live permanently in your spouse's country.
- Your spouse does not want to join your agency as agreed upon.

Cross-cultural marriages are difficult, but not impossible. Two people more interested in giving than in receiving are able to make them work. Just be prepared to be the one who gives.

Chapter 5

This Is No Honeymoon

Even though agencies try to create realistic expectations during orientation, some missionary candidates think that their missionary service will be like a wonderful “honeymoon.” Though that may be the case for a short time, reality soon sets in.

When Dorothy Carey set sail for India, she was under no such illusion. As shown in the first brochure, she did not want to go. Unfortunately, reality was as bad as she thought it would be (or worse). She was on a ship for five months without stopping at a single port. During the first year on the field she had dysentery most of the time, and she lived four different places, at times with another family. She lived with the constant threat of malaria and attack by tigers. Her sister, who had promised to help her, left to get married. Near the end of the year, her five-year-old son died. Surely she would have said, “This is no honeymoon!”

Fortunately, most people do not have such a difficult time. We may ask questions such as: Is there a honeymoon period in missions? Will becoming missionaries have an effect on our marriage? If both bride and groom want to be missionaries, wouldn't it be good to spend the early years of their married life on the field? Does having children when beginning mission work have an effect on our marriage? Do men and women react differently?

Honeymoon Stage

During the early days or months of living in another culture, while still in “vacation mode,” a person experiences interest, fascination, joy, and enthusiasm living in another culture. This may last for days, weeks, or even months.

However, when the inevitable difficulties with language, people, housing, and food arise, people may become critical, frustrated, resentful, and angry. Simple tasks become daunting challenges, and disillusionment sets in. This post-honeymoon time is very hard on marriage relationships, resulting in lower satisfaction in marriages.

Though thousands of missionaries have experienced this over the last couple of centuries, it was not until the end of the twentieth century that Christopher Rosik at Link Care studied this change in marital satisfaction systematically. Over a twenty year period he gave couples the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) three times:

- First, while they were candidates (before serving as missionaries),
- Second, four years later, after their first term of service in another culture,
- Third, an additional four years later, after their second term of service.

He analyzed the data comparing gender, length marriage, and ages of children (if they had any). The MSI has a measure of overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the marriage. Rosik found that satisfaction with their marriage declined significantly during the four years between the first and second times they took the test (during the first term), and it remained lower four years later the third time (during their second term).

Just Married!

Of course, a similar phenomenon occurs in any marriage. During the early days or months after the wedding, while still in the “honeymoon stage,” a person experiences interest, fascination, joy, and enthusiasm for married life. This may last for days, weeks, or even months.

However, when the inevitable difficulties from different expectations, different backgrounds, and daily “drudgery” tasks of living arise, newly-weds may also become critical, frustrated, resentful, and angry. Maintaining the relationship may become a daunting challenge, and disillusionment may set in. This post-honeymoon time may be hard on a marriage.

If a couple marries and leaves very soon to serve in another culture, the early days may be wonderful. Then if the two “honeymoons” end simultaneously, the following days may be dreadful. The couple may confuse cultural adjustments and marriage adjustments. The resulting disillusionment may cause them to leave the field, perhaps even the marriage. Even if they do not leave the marriage, their marriage may be damaged.

Married, no children

In addition to the general overall measure of satisfaction, the MSI has nine measures of satisfaction for specific areas of marriage. Rosik found the same pattern of declining satisfaction during the first term of service and continued lower satisfaction during the second term in three areas.

- Affective communication: The amount of affection and understanding expressed by their spouse.
- Sexual dissatisfaction: The frequency and quality of intercourse and other sexual activity.
- Role orientation: Traditional vs. nontraditional orientations toward marital and parental gender roles.

That is, missionaries became more dissatisfied with the affection, understanding, sexual activity, and roles they were

expected to play during their first term of service, and that dissatisfaction remained through their second term.

A decade earlier Steve Sweatman studied first term missionaries, and he found that they also experienced sexual dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with affective communication. He did not study role orientation.

Married, with children

Children in the home resulted in two additional specific problem areas.

- Conflict over child rearing: This was the conflict between spouses about child rearing practices. Again, satisfaction declined during the first term and continued lower during the second term.
- Dissatisfaction with children: This included both the relationship between the spouses and children as well as parental concern with the emotional or behavioral well-being of at least one child. This changed little over time for those entering missions when they had been married for five or more years. However, the dissatisfaction increased during both the first and second terms for those married less than five years when they entered missionary service.

Gender differences

Wives and husbands had significantly different levels of dissatisfaction in three areas.

- Problem solving communication: general ineffectiveness in resolving differences. Wives more dissatisfied than husbands each time they took the MSI.
- Time together: the couple’s companionship during time shared in leisure activity. Dissatisfaction for both husbands and wives increased significantly, but it increased during the first term for the wives and during the second term for husbands.

- Role orientation (defined above): Wives endorsed more traditional gender and parental roles than their husbands each time they took the MSI.

In his study of first-term missionaries a decade earlier, Sweatman also found the greatest area of dissatisfaction was with time together. In addition, he found that that this dissatisfaction was significantly correlated with depression. He did not check to see if there was a difference between husbands and wives relative to the correlation with depression.

What can we do?

Serving as missionaries is often hard on marriages. After a brief honeymoon period the pressures of work and the stress of living in another culture begin to take their toll on marriage relationships. However, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Since the first term of missionary service can be so difficult, it is a crucial time to take action to protect and preserve marriage. The best general thing to do is to make your marriage a high priority in your lives. Of course, you want to serve others, but you must also care for yourself and your marriage.

Since both studies using the MSI pinpointed several specific areas where missionaries are most likely to be dissatisfied in marriage, those areas are good places to begin.

- Both studies noted that “time together” is a major problem. Begin by scheduling *at least* two hours every week for “relationship time” as described in the brochure on that topic. If you do not do so, you will probably grow further and further apart regardless of how close you believe you are.
- Both studies noted problems in affective communication, and one noted a lack in problem solving communication. Make it a priority to express your affection and really understand your spouse. Also learn how to resolve your

differences so that they do not fester under the surface. Unexpressed and unresolved conflicts tend to explode under stress.

- Both studies noted sexual dissatisfaction. Use your upgraded communication skills to discuss your sexual frustrations. Unresolved conflicts in this area may lead to illicit sexual activity, but this may be prevented by meeting each other’s needs.
- Also use your communication skills to resolve conflicts about child rearing practices. Parents who do not present a united front to their children often wind up with divided families.

Finally, if possible, find a “mentor couple” about ten years ahead of you in their marriage relationship and child rearing. Meet with them on a regular basis to ask questions and listen to their suggestions.

For more specific information please see the article by Christopher Rosik and Jelena Pandzic titled “Marital satisfaction among Christian missionaries: A longitudinal analysis from candidacy to second furlough,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 2008, Vol. 27, No. 1, 3-15.

Chapter 6

I'm Just a Trailing Spouse

The year did not turn out like Tom expected. He had thought that taking time off and living in a developing country while his wife taught in an international school would be a welcome relief from the stress of working as a senior pastor. However, he soon got bored with mowing the school lawn, sweeping floors, painting walls, doing laundry, and trying to find fresh meat at the market.

He felt little satisfaction with what he was doing after just a couple of weeks and was looking forward to getting home and back to work using his talents. However, Mary felt fulfilled and loved what she was doing, and now she wanted to stay at least another year, maybe permanently.

At first these differences led to tension in their home, and they avoided discussing them. However, as tension increased and they talked more about the differences, their discussions began to become disagreements that were never really settled.

Tom was what many people call a “trailing spouse,” a husband or wife following a marriage partner who takes a job in another place. Being a trailing spouse may mean leaving behind a deeply satisfying place of work and service to begin again, somewhere else in the world. The challenge of finding such a place in foreign locations without support networks and knowledge of the local situation may be difficult, frustrating,

and time consuming. Consider how this has happened in history, what makes it an issue, and what can be done about it.

Did this happen in Bible times?

This has happened since the Book of Genesis. God told Abram (later Abraham) to leave his country and his extended family. If he did this, Abram's descendents would be a great nation. Abram took his wife Sarai (later Sarah) and his nephew Lot and followed God's direction to Canaan, to Egypt, and back to Canaan (Genesis 12-13).

The agreement was between God and Abram, and when it was renewed, it was again between the two of them (Genesis 15). Both Abram and Sarai came up with “schemes” for the other to do, schemes indicating that they did see her as a part of the agreement.

- Abram was afraid that the Egyptians would harm him, so he asked her to tell them she was his sister rather than his wife. She did it, and Abram raised no objection even when Pharaoh took Sarai to live in his palace (Genesis 12).
- Sarai apparently saw her role as a trailing spouse whose major part in this was to bear Abraham's child. Still without children a decade later Sarai had reached the point where she did not even think she had to be the one to bear the child—She offered Abram her Egyptian maid as the one to bear the child (Genesis 16). After all, the agreement was with Abraham, not with her; perhaps her part was to be rearing the child.

Finally, more than another decade later, when He again confirmed his agreement with Abraham, God changed Sarai's name to Sarah and included her in the agreement, saying that “she will become the mother of nations; kings of people will come from her” (Genesis 17:16).

This issue affected the marriage relationship even after God said Sarah had an important role in his plan. Here is how it

unfolded chronologically after God made the agreement with Abram in Genesis 12.

- 10 years after the agreement: Sarai told Abram that it was his fault that she was suffering (Genesis 16:5).
- 25 years after the agreement: Sarah told Abraham to get rid of the maid when Ishmael teased Isaac (Genesis 21:9-10).

This issue was a quarter of a century old. Both times they tried to resolve the issue by sending the maid out into the desert.

Has this happened in modern missions?

It has been a part of modern missions from the beginning. Dorothy Carey, wife of the “father of modern missions,” was a trailing spouse. When she married William, he was a young shoemaker who inherited the business a couple years after their wedding. The two of them served Christ in their village, and William even began preaching in local churches.

However, over the next decade William became increasingly concerned about the lost in other cultures. He volunteered to go to India as a missionary, intending to take Dorothy and their children. Though Dorothy did not want to go, under great pressure she reluctantly agreed.

Dorothy never joined William in ministering to others. The first few years she cared for their children, but within a couple of years she was totally incapacitated by her mental illness and incapable of even caring for them.

In contrast, William’s second wife, Charlotte, was not a trailing spouse. She had come to India on her own, learned Bengali so she could minister to nationals, and joined William in ministry. Her particular interest was the education of Hindu girls.

Of course, most trailing spouses do not become mentally ill, but many of them are very unhappy and may become at least a contributing cause of the family leaving the field.

What is the issue?

The basic problem is that, like Tom, spouses who have been involved in fulfilling occupations of service to others suddenly find themselves doing “trivial” tasks that anyone could do. Lack of meaningful work, culture shock, and loneliness may leave the spouse miserable. Marital problems and even premature departure may finally result.

Trailing spouses experience the following:

- Frustration & resentment
- Loss of identity & self-esteem
- Loss of self-confidence
- Feeling empty & lost
- Sleep problems & unhappiness
- Anxiety & Depression
- Physical illness

The list could go on and on, but with about 80% of the spouses having a college degree and about 65% having left careers at home, it is not surprising that about 40% of overseas assignments are cut short because of failure of spousal or family adjustment. The overwhelming majority of the trailing spouses are women, but men have the same symptoms, perhaps even more pronounced since they so often find their identity in their work.

What can agencies do?

Agencies concerned about their personnel and the problem of attrition can take some steps to help:

- Involve spouses in the selection process. Remember you are moving a family, not just a person.
- Involve spouses in decisions about the move from the beginning. The more they feel a part of the move, the less they feel like they are just “trailing.”

- Continue communication about the move with spouses throughout. Remember that the spouse may be really the backbone of the moving process, and if they do not receive the messages, they may get unhappy surprises.
- Send both husband and wife on a familiarization trip so that they can make decisions together about housing, schools, and so forth.
- Allow for some flexibility in policies when something concerns the spouse. The spouse's attitude may be far more important than a policy.
- Ask spouses if there are things they would like, such as subscriptions to magazines or DSL Internet access at home, and provide reasonable ones.
- If spouses are interested in either full- or part-time employment, find a place in your agency if possible, or use resources there to help find work locally.
- Do whatever you can to encourage spouses to take "ownership" of the move too.

What can trailing spouses do?

Here are things spouses can do:

- Realize that contentment is a choice, a choice they can make. If they choose to be content, it will color their whole experience. Paul, an early missionary, said that he had learned to be content in any and every situation, whatever his circumstances (Philippians 4:11-13).
- Learn about their new home through books, the Internet, or people who have lived there. Of course, people who had a bad experience need to be taken with a grain of salt because they may view things through rust colored glasses.
- Take this experience as an opportunity to evaluate themselves and their lives. This may be the time to rethink and regroup.

- With email, skype, and the Internet they may be able to continue their work in another country—or develop a new line of work that they can do back "home" or anywhere else for that matter.
- The spouses need to talk with each other often and throughout their move and settling time realizing that being expats means repeated compromise.
- Take this as a time to develop a new "hobby" that is both enjoyable and meaningful.
- Continue their education in the context of a new culture to get a different viewpoint.
- Find a new ministry with children in the neighborhood.

Finally, rather than remaining a trailing spouse, become a prevailing spouse. Eleanor Roosevelt could have faded into the background as a trailing spouse, but she chose to make an effective and satisfying life for herself. Even after the death of her husband she continued to be an internationally prominent author, speaker, politician, and activist. She is remembered today for what she did, not just that she was a "first lady."

Taking these steps may result in a trailing spouse becoming a prevailing spouse, one that gets a whole new lease on life.

Chapter 7

Relationship Time

As we saw in the first chapter, Dorothy and William certainly did not spend time on their relationship during the final dozen years of their marriage while she was mentally ill and accusing him of adultery. It is unlikely that they did during the decade before when he was a pastor and missionary. William was so consumed with pastoral and mission work that he had little time left for anyone in his family.

Most people in missionary service today are not that blatant about ignoring their family, at least not in statements about their priorities. Most missionaries say that their relationship with God is their top priority, but their priority order after that may differ greatly, some putting their ministry second while others put family second.

However, even those who say that spouse and children are their next priorities may not “walk the talk,” may not live what they say. Let us consider the real order of a person’s priorities and relationship time. Here are the “who, what, when, where, and why” of such time.

What?

Many missionaries say that their relationship with God is their top priority but do not have time for daily devotions. Likewise they may say that their relationship with their spouse is their second priority but do not have time to spend with him

or her. Though people differ greatly in talent, intelligence, income, and so forth, everyone has the same amount of time, 24 hours in every day, 7 days in every week and 52 weeks in every year. One can see the real order of a person’s priorities by looking at how that person spends time.

Every relationship takes time to maintain. We may marvel at the wonderful relationship a person has with God and wonder how it happens. Then we find that the person daily spends much time in the Word and in prayer. Likewise, for spouses to have a wonderful relationship, they need to regularly spend time together. This is relationship time, a regularly scheduled time when they can do things that they both enjoy together. This is not a “problem-solving” time for their relationship, but a positive, stress-free time for them as a couple.

Why?

The author of Hebrews (2:1) gives the general principle that people who do not pay careful attention tend to drift away. Though that writer was talking about the truth those people had heard, it is also valid for relationships both divine and human. People who neglect their relationship with God tend to drift away from him. People who do not “pay more careful attention” to their relationships with each other tend to drift apart.

The people that author was writing to were not rejecting what they had heard, just neglecting it. Likewise, one does not have to reject God or other people to drift apart. Spouses who do not regularly maintain their marriages find themselves drifting apart. Such maintenance takes time, relationship time.

Who?

Husbands and wives of all ages must have time alone to maintain their marriages. Of course, they want to spend time

with their children, friends, colleagues, nationals, and may want to talk with a pastor or counselor. However, relationship time is a time for them to be alone together without interruption. Here are some guidelines.

- Children sleeping, gone to school, or with a baby sitter
- Cell phones and pagers turned off, not even on vibrate
- Telephone off the hook or silenced so the call can go to the answering machine (turned so low that the call cannot be heard)
- Doorbell ignored (with blinds pulled so that potential visitors cannot see you are home)
- If in “public,” a place where you can be “alone” as a couple, such as a table or booth far back in a restaurant

By definition relationship time is time to be alone without interruption or distraction.

When?

The time of day or day(s) of the week makes no difference. The important thing is that it be regular, long enough for both partners, and “carved in stone” on both schedules. That means that if a committee meeting is scheduled during your relationship time, your answer is “I have something on my schedule then. I’ll see if I can change that.” Then you change it only if your spouse is in full agreement (no pressure).

The time can be daily or weekly, and which is best often depends on the family situation and personal preferences. One spouse may not want to miss particular television programs. That spouse is saying, “My watching _____ for a couple hours each week is more important than my relationship with you.” Or, “my watching the news for half an hour every day is more important than my relationship with you.” They may not say it in those words, but as we all know “Actions speak louder than words.”

Some couples prefer to spend one larger block of time (at least two hours, preferably more) together during the week.

Others prefer spending a shorter time together each day. Here are some examples.

- Date night every Thursday evening with a sitter taking care of the children
- Tennis and lunch every Saturday
- Ample cuddling time every morning before getting out of bed
- Reading books aloud and talking together about them before falling asleep at night

The point is that it does not matter when you carve out a space for each other; all that matters is that you do it at the best time for both of you in your situation.

Where?

Where you spend the time together is irrelevant as long as you can have uninterrupted time alone. Where you meet depends on cost and what you want to do together. Some places are free, and you may want to go there most of the time and then occasionally go to places that cost something. Here are some places that people have met.

- Somewhere in your home (the most common place)
- A park
- A restaurant
- Swimming pool
- A hotel lobby
- A lake or river
- Tennis courts
- Hiking trail
- Coffee shop

Again the point is that it does not matter where you meet; all that matters is that you do so at a place that both of you enjoy.

How?

How you spend your time together is again up to you, as long as you do something that you both enjoy. Remember that this is not a problem-solving time that you come to dread each day or week. If you have problems that need to be solved, set aside a different time to work on those and ignore them during your relationship time; let them temporarily be the “elephant in the room” that no one is talking about.

Relationship time is not a time for complaining; rather it is a time for building each other up. It is all right to apologize by saying, “I’m sorry I _____” as long as there is no expectation or pressure for a similar apology from the other spouse. It is not a time for sex, unless both spouses want it (no pressure put on either).

Relationship time is a time for interacting with each other. That is why dinner together or a walk in the park is better than a movie or a concert where others in the audience discourage conversation and the focus of attention is the entertainment. Here are some activities people do.

- Read and discuss books or articles
- Play a table game together
- Climb a hill and look out over a valley
- Canoe on a river or lake
- Skate on a rink or sidewalk
- Pray together in a quiet place
- Feed the birds
- Watch an informal athletic event
- Shoot hoops
- People-watch in a park

Of course, these are all rather traditional. Many books and websites have ideas for more “creative dates.” Such times together may include such things as the following.

- Washing the car together (as long as it includes lots of throwing and spraying water on each other)

- Riding up and down every elevator in town
- Playing hide and seek together in the back yard (when one finds the other, you can hide together in the same bushes—from no one in particular)
- Taking a pile of paper to the park and seeing who can make the plane that will fly the “funniest”
- Skipping rocks on the lake to see who can get the most skips
- Flying a kite, one you have made yourselves
- Driving Go-Karts or bumper cars at a local amusement park
- Doing some karaoke singing together and laughing a lot
- Pretending it is Easter and coloring eggs together
- Picking fruit together at a local orchard
- Window-shopping together at a nice mall

Again, the possibilities are limited only to what you can imagine. What matters is that you are having fun doing something you both enjoy so that you can talk and laugh together.

I have come more and more to realize the truth in what the professor said in my first psychology class. “Couples who do not talk regularly about how they feel about their relationship drift further and further apart regardless of how close they think they are.”

Chapter 8

Ministry Separation

Whenever people in ministry are separated, disagreements are likely to occur. The most famous case is probably when Thomas refused to believe what the other disciples told him about Jesus' resurrection (John 20). Of course, the same was true of other disciples as well (Mark 16, Luke 24).

This has especially been true relative to missions. Even after Peter became convinced about the Gospel being for the Gentiles and witnessed them receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10), the other early Christians not there at the time were critical of his actions (Acts 11). A major crisis arose in the early church after Paul and Barnabas returned from their first term of missionary service and had not required the Gentile Christians to be circumcised (Acts 15).

These disagreements and misunderstandings still occur today among missionaries in general but may be especially difficult for husbands and wives experiencing separations related to their missionary ministry. We saw this in the separations that William and Dorothy Carey experienced. In these days of air travel, absences of a few days or a few weeks are very common, as are even longer absences. This is true not only on the field but perhaps even more so when on home assignment. One spouse or the other may be gone nearly every weekend or several weeks at a time raising support. Although these absences may be more frequent today, the reactions of

individuals to them have not changed. What are some of the difficulties that may occur? What can be done to minimize these difficulties?

It always happens when you are gone.

For the spouse left at home, it seems like that is the time crises are most likely to occur. A pipe breaks. The car will not start. The computer locks up and will not reboot. The kids get sick. The teacher wants to talk to a parent about a problem at school. The list goes on and on. Whether such things happen more frequently when a spouse is gone or not, they at least seem to. Here are a few steps one can take to cope with this situation.

- Develop a "practical" support group. Make a list of people you can call on to help with the car, the computer, illness, and other problems.
- Use whatever means of communication you have available to contact your spouse. E-mail can usually bring a response in a few hours. A cell phone can often get an immediate response.
- Ask older missionaries who have lived in the same area for suggestions on how they coped with such situations.
- Lower your expectations. Rather than trying to fix everything, let something go.
- See the brochure on anxiety.

I need your stability.

Marriage is about sharing life, and today that is more possible than ever before. When one spouse feels the need to discuss a situation with the other, the sooner they can do that, the better. When both spouses share in the decision, both have responsibility for the outcome. With our varied means of communication one can contact a spouse virtually anywhere within a few hours, and the traveling spouse should make that

possible. Do not hesitate to spend whatever money is necessary to communicate. Here are a few ways that can be done.

- Cell phones. Do not turn them off unless absolutely necessary for an agreed on length of time. When you do, return the call as soon as possible.
- E-mail. Check your e-mail on an agreed-on schedule and reply immediately.
- Fax. Leave word with whoever receives your fax messages to get them to you as soon as possible and reply immediately.
- Even if there is no “emergency,” communicate on an agreed schedule.

What about the children?

Children, like spouses, have various reactions to a parent being gone. They may become angry, lonely, moody, disobedient, withdrawn, and so forth. Here are some ways you can cope with these.

- Communicate I. The traveling parent can talk by phone personally, e-mail a message to each child, or add a special message to a fax.
- Communicate II. The parent at home can encourage communication with the children by asking, sharing, and being vulnerable.
- Discipline must be administered immediately, not when the absent parent returns. If possible, spouses should communicate before it is given.
- See the brochure on adolescence.

I get so angry.

The spouse left at home may become angry at the traveling spouse or angry at God. One may feel abandoned, that the absent spouse is gone because she or he really wants to be. Even if agreed to beforehand, one may feel anger at God for

calling the spouse away. Such feelings must be faced, and so must thoughts about the absent spouse. Talk with others about them, beginning with the object of your anger. If necessary, with permission, talk with selected others.

- With the spouse
- With God
- With a support group
- With a counselor
- See the brochure on anger

We seem to have less and less in common.

Of course, you do. People involved in different activities become concerned about different issues and develop different interests. A strong marriage requires common interests, and that will require intentionally maintaining these.

- Openly discuss with each other what is happening and what interests you want to nurture together.
- Choose interests that you value in your marriage.
- Choose friends that you each value, people with whom you are both comfortable and have similar interests.

I get so lonely.

Of course you do. You are alone. Both of you are alone, so both of you are likely to be lonely. To combat this, you need to intentionally plan how you will combat the loneliness.

- Tell each other about your loneliness.
- Find activities that help decrease the loneliness. For some it may be watching a video, for others having friends in, and for still others, reading a book.
- Both journal about your feelings of loneliness while apart, and then share your journals with each other when together.
- Communicate frequently via e-mail and telephone.

- See the brochure on loneliness.

I can't believe I'm attracted to ____.

Although being attracted to someone other than your spouse takes many people by surprise the first time it happens, it is very common. This attraction may be either sexual or emotional. As one song put it, "When I'm not near the girl (guy) I love, I love the girl (guy) I'm near." Typically we come to like the people we interact with most, which is usually our spouse. If you feel vulnerable in this area, you are. If you do not feel vulnerable, you may be even more vulnerable than those who do feel it. Such attraction must not be tolerated in any way.

- Be honest with yourself about it.
- Be honest with God about it.
- Find an accountability partner (or group) of the same gender to call you regularly to ask for a report.
- See the brochure on sexual stress.

It's so good to have you home, so why are we arguing now?

You have been looking forward to being together for several days or weeks, and now you find yourselves in an argument. What is the problem? Remember that both of you are probably physically and emotionally exhausted from all the things we have discussed. The spouse who stayed at home has been carrying the load usually carried by two people. The spouse who traveled is tired from work, travel, and perhaps jet lag and intestinal disturbances from getting some of the flora and/or fauna from the local water.

- Both of you need to realize what the situation is.
- Both of you need to be especially patient with each other.
- If disagreements begin, it is best to shelve discussion until you both have time to get rested, perhaps taking turns covering for each other while the other rests.

- Celebrate your reunion (when you are rested) in some special way.
- See the brochure on conflict.

We need to talk.

Missionaries, of all people, should know the importance of debriefing. You consider it routine when you reenter your passport country, and it is the same for any transition. Coming home from a few days or weeks is also a reentry, and you both need the chance to debrief this minor transition. Again, communication is of greatest importance, so debrief each other.

- Look at your journals, and tell each other everything about your separation.
- Consider how this fits in to your life story together.
- Decide what changes this may imply for your lives together in the future
- Make specific plans for how you will cope with separation next time.
- See the brochure on reentry.

(This chapter also appears in Part 4 "Family and Sexuality" of *What Missionaries Ought to Know...* also available on www.missionarycare.com.)

Chapter 9

Marriage or Ministry?

When faced with competing demands and “impossible” schedules, missionaries may feel trapped into making very difficult choices. They may feel like they have to choose one thing over another, often forced to choose one good thing over another.

Marriage or ministry?

On April 4, 1793, William Carey thought that was the choice he had to make as he took his 8-year-old son and boarded a ship to become a missionary to India. He was leaving his pregnant wife, Dorothy, and their other two sons. He did not want to leave his wife and break up his family, but he apparently believed he had to choose between marriage and ministry.

When he could not reach India at that time, he returned home and was able to convince Dorothy to come with him, but his ministry was still more important than his marriage. Things did not go well with his marriage in India.

After Dorothy’s death in 1808 William married Charlotte in 1809. By then he realized that he did not have to choose between ministry and marriage but that he had to blend ministry with marriage. William and Charlotte were able to build a loving relationship in ministry. After her death in 1821

William said that his wife’s death was the greatest loss a man could live with.

Today probably no church or agency would allow anyone to break up marriage and family to go the field. However, even today some people still believe that the choice has to be between marriage and ministry. If marriage and ministry schedules conflict, some choose ministry over marriage thinking that they must make an “either-or” decision.

What does the Bible say?

Fortunately, the Bible gives us a good example of a husband and wife in cross-cultural ministry together. Priscilla and Aquila always appear together in ministry. Sometimes they are referred to as Aquila and Priscilla, and sometimes as Priscilla and Aquila, but always together (Acts 18, Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, 2 Timothy 4).

Aquila was a Jewish TCK growing up in Pontus near the Black Sea on the north side of what is now Turkey. People from Pontus were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:9). Aquila and Priscilla became Christian missionaries to several countries.

- They served in Italy but had to leave when Jews were ordered out (Acts 18:2).
- They then became tentmakers in Corinth, giving hospitality and work to Paul (Acts 18:3) as well as hosting a house church there (1 Corinthians 16:19).
- They later served in Ephesus where they engaged in a discipleship ministry in their home (Acts 18:26).

Thus we see this married couple moving from Jewish to Roman to Greek to Asian cultures. Always serving together in a variety of ministries and viewed as a team with neither one more important than the other, they were a great example of marriage and ministry. For them it was not a question of choosing ministry or marriage, it was a matter of serving together in a “both-and” situation, both marriage and ministry.

They were in ministry together, and people viewed them as a team.

Marriage is ministry?

Many missionaries have found that their marriage is a ministry. As one lady put it, “We realized that our students at various levels of theological training were reading our lives more intently than listening to what we taught.” What you do may speak so loud that nationals cannot hear what you say.

Few people in ministry have students or parishioners come up to them years later and tell them how a particular lecture or sermon changed their lives. However, many have had people tell them how observing their actions, their lives, and their marriages had influenced them profoundly.

Missionaries, more than most people, would understand what an ambassador is. Missionaries, like other believers, are Christ’s ambassadors through whom God makes his appeal to people of other cultures (2 Corinthians 5:20). When nationals come into missionary homes, they are entering the residence of God’s ambassadors. The way husbands and wives relate to each other and to their visitors affects God’s appeal to them.

What about ministry and marriage in the early church?

The Bible does not deal specifically with husbands and wives in ministry together as missionaries. However, it does deal with husbands and wives as leaders of churches planted by missionaries.

Timothy grew up as a TCK in the town of Lystra in Lyconia. His mother was a Jewish believer and his father was a Greek (Acts 16). Timothy joined Paul during Paul’s second term of missionary service and traveled with Paul and Silas to many countries, including Greece, Macedonia, and Asia.

One time when Paul, the senior mission administrator, was leaving for Macedonia, he asked Timothy to remain on-site

in Ephesus to deal with problems in the national church there (1 Timothy 1:3). Later, probably from Rome, Paul wrote a letter to Timothy instructing him how to deal with several issues including the qualifications of church leaders (1 Timothy 3).

- Church leaders (all men in that church) were to be respectable, self-controlled, hospitable, gentle, not quarrelsome, etc. (1 Timothy 3:2-10).
- Their spouses (wives) were to be respectable, temperate, trustworthy, etc. (1 Timothy 3:11).

Leadership in the church was not only the role of the one designated as leader, but also of the spouse. Though these instructions were for nationals in church leadership rather than for the missionaries themselves, certainly the missionaries overseeing them would have at least as much expected of them, probably more.

Marriage and ministry?

Although God does not make us choose between ministry and marriage, and ideally our marriage is often our ministry, missionaries usually still have to make some difficult choices. So many demands are made on their time that they cannot do everything they want to do in both ministry and marriage. Here are several things to consider when faced with this choice:

First, everyone has 24 hours in each day. People vary greatly in how much money they have, the physical stamina they have, the intellectual prowess they have and so forth. However, everyone has exactly 24 hours each day. Each person is responsible for how they use that time. When people say that there is “no time” to do something, what they mean is that other things are more important. Everyone must be careful not to let the good crowd out the better and the better not crowd out the best.

Second, what you do is more important than what you say. Paul did not need to urge the Corinthians to imitate

him. Children imitate their fathers! Of course, before you urge people to imitate you, you must make sure that you “walk the talk.” Paul sent Timothy, the same person he had sent to the Ephesians, to remind the Corinthian church that Paul’s way of life agreed with what he taught “everywhere in every church” (I Corinthians 4: 16-17).

Third, intentionally schedule both marriage and ministry times. Missionaries may come from time-oriented cultures where their agencies and supporters are more interested in “results” than in relationships. Such missionaries are likely to become more involved in doing things that show up in reportable statistics than in maintaining relationships with spouses, children, colleagues, and nationals. Without “relationship time” marriages suffer.

Many years ago my wife and I were invited to a marriage enrichment weekend, but we found out that the leader was going through his second divorce at that time. Would you go? We know a couple who were both marriage counselors, but they had divorced and the husband married a client. Would you go to either of them for counsel about your marriage? What about nationals going to missionaries who are so busy conducting marriage retreats that they have no time for each other?

What did Paul tell an early church he had planted about husbands and wives?

Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, the same one where he had left Timothy, to teach about marriage. Rather than being seen as about the “Christ as the head,” the last part of chapter five has often been interpreted as being about the “Husband as the head” (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Missionaries serving in countries where the macho male already sees himself as vastly superior to his wife must be very careful what they say. Macho men, and even their wives, may quickly pick up the phrase, “Wives, submit to your

husbands...” and miss the previous verse which says, “Submit to one another...” (v. 21).

Note how often God is mentioned:

- (v. 22) ...as to the Lord...
- (v. 23) ...as Christ is...the Savior...
- (v. 24) ...to Christ, so...
- (v. 25) ...as Christ loved...gave himself up...
- (v. 27) ...to himself as...
- (v. 29) ...as Christ does...
- (v. 32) ...about Christ and...

Just as Jesus said that the two parts of the Great Commandment summarized the Law, the parallel commands here summarize this whole passage: “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (v. 25)” and “Each one of you must also love his wife as he loves himself (v. 33).

Relationships are often more important than “results.” Be careful to maintain your marriage as well as your ministry. When you model this in your own lives, it will not only enrich your lives but also nationals will imitate it in theirs.

Chapter 10

Sexual Stress

You and Pat have been working together for several months, but during the last three weeks both of you have been spending every available minute on the big project. You have eaten working lunches together and continued working after the others have gone home for the night. You realize that you are beginning to look forward to going to work more than you ever have before, and this morning when you saw Pat, your heart began to race. Certainly you couldn't be falling in love, could you? You are a missionary, so sexual immorality, adultery, homosexual activity, or incest are not possible, are they? Why do you feel this way? What can you do to prevent this from happening? Let's consider some of these questions.

Me?

Could it happen to you, a missionary? Of course, it could. You are human, aren't you? It is a natural human tendency to grow to like people with whom we spend time, so much so that even people taken hostage often grow to like their captors, and the captors grow to like their hostages. It is even more likely that you will like people with whom you are working, and that liking may become sexual attraction. People can gradually "slide" into sexual sin over a period of time. An example of this is found in the case of Amnon and Tamar where

Amnon became obsessed with her "in the course of time" (2 Samuel 13).

Although it is rare, it can be "love (lust) at first sight." In this case people can "fall" into sexual sin rapidly. An example of this is David and Bathsheba. Rather than being out leading his army where he should have been, David stayed in Jerusalem. Having trouble sleeping, he went for a walk on his roof and noticed a woman bathing. Rather than looking away, he sent someone to find out who she was. Rather than leaving it at knowing who she was, when he found out her husband was out fighting in the army, he had her come over. Then "he slept with her" (2 Samuel 11).

Immorality or adultery?

Could you, a missionary, get pulled into immorality or adultery? Of course you could, and the "slide" into it usually begins in harmless, innocent ways. For example, you are field director, so it is your responsibility to show the attractive new single missionary around. Or, you feel sorry for the new missionaries who have no place to stay, and you invite them to live with you temporarily. Or, while talking with a long-term missionary friend, Chris, you find out that Chris feels neglected at home, so you try to give Chris some extra attention. Before you realize it, the two of you are sharing deep things, and this intimacy leads to increasing time together, and finally adultery.

It happens not only with other missionaries, but with nationals as well. It happens to both men and women. It happens with young and old. If you think you are invulnerable to sexual sin, you are actually the most vulnerable. 1 Corinthians 10:12 describes our vulnerability, but verse 13 promises God's faithfulness in providing a way of escape. Attraction to other people is very likely to happen, and if you do not know what to do, you may well find yourself in a position like King David, trying to cover up your sexual sin and causing

serious problems for your entire family, field, and mission agency.

Homosexual activity?

Could two missionaries begin a homosexual relationship? Yes, they can, and it can happen with either men or women, married or single, young or old. As a result of isolation and loneliness, people living together with same-sex partners may form emotionally dependent relationships. These rather exclusive relationships may become possessive and lead to physical activity with sexual elements. An embrace may become more than just comforting.

This may progress into homosexual activity, so that the people involved have progressed into a sinful relationship. But even if it is stopped before reaching this level, confusion, guilt feelings, and the relationship itself need to be carefully examined.

Incest?

Certainly incest cannot occur, can it? Again, the answer is, “Yes.” Incest is still legally defined as sexual intercourse between close relatives, as described in Leviticus 18-20. Because incest is often a “family secret,” no one knows how often it occurs, but it apparently occurs most often between an adult male and a younger female relative.

The missionary community often refers to itself as a family, and socially it functions like a family. Children often have many “aunts” and “uncles” on the field to which they feel much closer than any biological relatives back “home.” Incest can also involve sexual exploitation of an intimate involving secrecy and misuse of authority—and that also happens in the “missionary family” (the field or the entire agency). Again this is most likely between an older adult male in a position of authority becoming sexually intimate with a younger female,

most often the child of a co-worker or a young single female missionary.

The underlying processes seem to be the same in both. The perpetrator is a person in a position of leadership and power in the “family.” The close family is seen as a place of safety and security in a hostile world, but the perpetrator betrays this trust. The victims often blame themselves, thinking that their spiritual leader would not have done such a thing without being provoked. Secrecy follows. The victims may keep it secret, thinking no one will believe them. When others find out, they react with disbelief, then shock, then silence—to protect the victim. They may also want to protect the perpetrator, or protect the image of the mission “family.”

Why me?

Am I, as a missionary, more susceptible to sexual sin than someone back “home?” You may be because of some of the facts of missionary life. That is why this brochure is titled “sexual stress.”

- High stress. Stress and anxiety tend to make many men want sex, but many women want cuddling and rest. When refused, either may think the other does not care. Cultural stress decreases the control of sexual urges, especially in those who had problems at “home.”
- Lack of privacy. You may live in a “goldfish bowl” where nearly everything you do is watched and talked about. There may be no locks on the door, and sound may carry far outside the bedroom, even outside the house.
- Cultural taboos. You may live in a culture where the expectations for husband-wife behavior are quite different from your home country. You may not be able to display any affection in public, even to hold hands.
- More separation. The very nature of your work may mean the spouse has to be gone several nights a week. He or she

may be tempted while away, and the partner tempted at home as well.

- Pornography available. Pornography may be more openly promoted on television, at newsstands, etc. than back home. The Internet is a mixed blessing because along with mail and information, you have access to totally uncensored pornography in your own home.
- Need for affection and touch. We all need touch, and you may be basically alone where you are with no one to just put an arm around you in difficult times. You have left your support group behind, and may not have developed a new one.

You need to remember that you are far from home, behind “enemy lines,” and the enemy will use whatever advantage he has.

How can I prevent it?

Although sexual sin occurs among missionaries, it is not unavoidable. Here are some things you can do to make it less likely.

- Acknowledge your vulnerability. Until you do this, you will not be motivated to do anything to prevent it.
- Avoid triggering situations. Know what leads you to sexual temptations. If visual stimuli do, be careful what you see on TV, the computer monitor, etc. (King David needed to stay off roofs). If it is touch, be careful about physical contact. Once you begin the sexual slide, temptation becomes stronger the further you go.
- Pray. You pray. Ask others to pray. Pray with your spouse and ask your spouse to pray for you. You have a support group back “home,” so ask them to pray.
- Communicate with your spouse and regularly fulfill each other’s sexual needs. Talk regularly and frequently about how you feel about your relationship with each other. As you talk, develop ways to create privacy, such as locking the

front door from the outside, and coming in the back door. If you can’t hold hands in public, develop other ways of saying you love each other in public, such as a wink, a raised eyebrow, etc.

- Have an accountability relationship. You also need a support group physically present who will look you in the eye and ask you regularly (weekly, if possible) about the purity of your sexual life. Remember that your capacity for self-deceit is great.
- Make a commitment to God. Read Leviticus 18-20 and 1 Corinthians 5-7. Note that they encourage you to be holy, and the way to be holy is to enjoy sex with your spouse and avoid it with anyone else. Make that commitment.
- Practice the presence of the omnipotent God. You may think that no one knows about what you are downloading from the Internet, but remember that God is there. Not only is he there, but he wants us to be holy and promises to strengthen us (Ephesians 3:16).

(This chapter also appears in Part 4 “Family and Sexuality” of *What Missionaries Ought to Know...* also available on www.missionarycare.com.)

Chapter 11

Computer Sex or Me?

Married 34 years with three adult children, Dave and Ginny sat back to back in their home office. Ginny was scanning down through the inbox of her email when her heart lurched. One message was from an old boyfriend, and she clicked on it. As she put it, “Opening that email occupied one second of my life, but that one second changed everything. I sat between the only two men I had ever loved. I was connected to one via the Internet, and the other was seated less than two feet behind me.” She began emailing Mike several times each week, rushing to the computer each morning and reluctantly leaving it in the evening. They secretly called each other. Ginny and Mike set up a time to meet....

Within months of her marriage to Dan, Ashley found evidence that her computer was used to view sexually explicit pictures of women. Dan denied it was he and that he had tried to delete parts of the history. They were expecting their first baby, but her dreams of being married “happily ever after” were shattered. He soon admitted that he had lied to her, said that this was the first time he had ever done it, and promised never to do it again. A few days later she learned that he had viewed pornography at times while they were dating as well as after they were married. Ashley was devastated. She said, “A few nights ago he lied to my face immediately after promising never to lie to me again....”

Dave, Ginny, Dan, and Ashley are real people who have written their stories. They have had the courage to be open and vulnerable because they know they are not alone in what has happened in their lives and want to give hope to others.

Is this something new?

Of course, sexual temptation and lustful thoughts have been around for thousands of years. Adam and Eve tried to cover their nakedness (Genesis 3). The Ten Commandments forbid a person from coveting a neighbor’s spouse (Exodus 20). One night King David couldn’t sleep and while walking on his roof saw a beautiful woman bathing—and sent to find out about her (2 Samuel 11). Jesus said that we must not even eagerly desire someone sexually (Matthew 5).

Graphic images and explicit writing have been around as long as artists and authors have existed. What has changed is that the computer has made these images and writings affordable and anonymously available to anyone anywhere anytime.

- Affordable. Free samples are available at many porn sites, and Internet cafes have computers available at pennies a minute.
- Anonymous. A computer in your room means no one knows (except God and those at the website you are visiting)
- Anyone. Most missionaries have computers, and most have Internet access.
- Anywhere. Internet access (often free) is available in eating places, airports, and so forth.
- Anytime. The Internet is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

How often does this happen?

Dave, Ginny, Dan, and Ashley show that it happens to young, old, male, female, married, unmarried,...to virtually anyone. At this point research has not been done to find out what percentage of missionaries are involved. *Christianity Today* surveyed pastors in the USA and found that 37% of them had a “current struggle” with cyberporn, Internet-based pornography.

People interested in computers and missions attending the annual International Conference on Computing and Mission wrestled with the dilemma of what to do when they found evidence of pornography on missionaries’ computers. They had questions about who to tell and what to do. No one knew how large the pornography problem was but based on what the techies were finding on the computers, there seemed to be one. Two of the leaders wrote an article which became the core of a whole issue of *EMQ* devoted to missions and the Internet. They hoped this would spark a discussion of the whole problem. No “letters to the editor” ever appeared, and the authors received no letters from mission administrators about it. Virtually no one is talking about it yet. It is the “elephant in the living room” that no one mentions.

Isn’t my spouse too spiritual to get involved in cyberporn?

People with higher scores on measures of spirituality are less likely to get involved in many addictive behaviors, such as gambling, smoking, alcoholism, and other types of substance abuse. Since cyberporn is relatively new, no studies on its relationship to spirituality were done before the turn of this century.

Current evidence suggests that spirituality is not a protection against involvement in cyberporn. In fact, people who seem to be more spiritual may actually be more vulnerable to it. A study conducted by psychologists at Indiana Wesleyan

University and reported in 2006 in the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* found that those with higher spirituality scores were less likely to become sexually addicted, as the authors had expected. However, the study also found that those with higher spirituality scores were MORE likely to become compulsively involved in cyberporn. The more involved people were in religious activities and the more central the role of faith was in their lives, the more likely they were to access Internet pornography. The more people felt a sense of belonging and support in the faith community, the more likely they were to view cyberporn.

Since this is such a recent finding, no one knows why this is the case, although several hypotheses have been offered, such as cyberporn may be seen as less objectionable, but more permissible, more private, and easier to rationalize than sex outside of marriage.

How can this be?

Betrayed spouses experience a wide variety of emotions. Ashley said, “I felt ugly, not good enough and stupid....” Here are other emotions people have reported.

- Disbelief, shock, astonishment
- Anger, rage, fury
- Hurt, fear, loneliness
- Heartbreak, betrayal
- Dirty, stained
- Frightened, lonely
- Resentment, bitterness
- Violated, stunned
- Tainted, defiled

The list is almost endless. Emotions are strong, changing, and may occur simultaneously. There may be a sense of unreality, like it is a bad dream or a sense that this cannot actually be happening.

What can I do if my spouse is involved?

First here are some things to stop doing (if you are doing them).

- Stop blaming yourself. Regardless of what your spouse says, you can never be attractive enough or sexy enough or anything else to keep her/him from the computer sex.
- Stop participating. Looking at the pictures, watching the videos, sending email or instant messages, or connecting with someone via skype (with or without webcams) will only make things worse.
- Stop being the Director of Spouse Security. Your spouse will find ways around anything you do to get to the computer sex.
- Stop trying to decide whether the problem is sin or sickness. It is both—and more. It has social, spiritual, physical, and psychological implications as well as others. It is a sinful obsession with neurochemical bases.

Of course, you want to meet your spouse's needs, such as emotional, social sexual, and spiritual ones among others. You can be available to encourage, support, and pray through struggles with cycles of sin, shame, and silence. You can break the silence and encourage your spouse to make the following changes.

- Accept responsibility. The problem is not with you, with parents, with society, or with anyone other than the person hooked on the computer sex—your spouse.
- Confess. Your spouse needs to confess to God, to you, and to at least one other person (several others are even better).
- Repent. Repentance means more than to feel regret or sorrow. It means to turn from what one has been doing. In this case it means that your spouse will stop the behavior, stop computer sex.
- Become accountable. Of course, one is always accountable to God, but your spouse will need at least one other person of the same sex who will hold her or him accountable. This

has to be a personal relationship, not just something like reporting to a parole officer. This person has to be someone your spouse can call at any time—and who will call your spouse as well.

- Participate in a weekly group meeting. Sharing one's struggles in a group setting and listening to others share is part of overcoming this problem.
- Be willing to seek professional mental health help if needed. Your spouse (and perhaps you) may need the help of a psychologist or counselor to supplement what is happening in the group.

Note that these changes are something you want to support, not something you can require. Although it is theoretically possible for someone to accept responsibility, confess to God, and repent—and then be over the compulsion for computer sex, it rarely (if ever) works. People are usually unable to do this on their own—or if forced by someone else.

Christian workers required to be in accountability groups are just as likely to revert or repeat as those who are not in such relationships. They just lie to their accountability partners or groups. The person has to want to change for the accountability relationships to be effective.

Chapter 12

Maintaining Sexual Purity

While watching TV, you have noticed that you pick up on something you have seen or heard, and your thoughts become more sexual. You have also noticed how attractive that other person at the office is, and you have begun imagining... You are taken by surprise because missionaries like you are so deeply committed to Christ. You are on the frontlines of spiritual battles, taking Christ to people who have never heard. Such missionaries certainly would not get into sexual sin, would they?

Of course, they would. For centuries military personnel in any conflict have been notorious for their sexual immorality. Engaged in physical/ideological battles in strange cultures far from family, friends, community, and church, they engage in sexual exploits. Why would you expect any less temptation for you, as you engage in the spiritual battles against the forces of evil? You are lonely. With social support absent, emotional needs unmet, and living in a strange culture with greater sexual freedom than at home, why would Satan not take advantage of you as well?

Most missionaries can quote 1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” “Seized” is the proper word because sexual temptation can become so strong that a

person is willing to give up everything—relationships with God, spouse, and family; reputation, ministry, everything. Before quoting the verse above and thinking you are surely safe, read the verse before it, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10: 11-12)

Same-Old. Same-Old. New-New!

The Bible specifies three intertwined sources of temptation, commonly called “the world, the flesh, and the Devil.” Two of these are relatively unchanged since Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians, but one has changed dramatically during the last century,

- The Devil, “...the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). As he has done for thousands of years, at some times the devil goes around as a roaring lion looking for someone to devour, but more often relative to sexual temptation he slips in almost unnoticed, sowing small seeds that will grow into sinful behavior.
- The Flesh, “...gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts” (Ephesians 2:3). Missionaries are tempted simply because they are human. As James puts it, “Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed” (1:14). Human nature has not changed over the years, so people today are tempted just as they were when James wrote that 200 years ago.
- The World “...when you followed the ways of this world” (Ephesians 2:2). The writer to the Romans (12: 2) warned to “not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.” The “ways of the world” and the “pattern of the world” have not changed relative to sexual temptation since Paul’s time. However these sexual temptations literally come through the

air and the walls as the “prince of the power of the air” sends them into missionaries’ homes through radios, TV satellite receivers, email, and Internet connections.

The Devil and the Flesh are relatively unchanged, but technology in our world is new. Even after the invention of printing, missionaries could be quite effective in keeping obscene, pornographic, and suggestive material out of their homes. However, most missionaries today are required to have at least email, if not Internet connections. Since about 40% of all email is spam and about 30% of all spam is pornographic, about one in every eight emails is pornographic, and some of it will get through even the best filters. Filters block many pornographic sites on the Internet, but some still gets through—and pop-ups may suddenly appear on your screen at any time.

What can missionaries do in this new world to maintain sexual purity? As is so often the case, the answer to resisting temptation is in what we call the Great Commandment, originating when the Law was given to Moses and cited by Jesus himself.

Love God

The most important thing missionaries can do to maintain sexual purity is to love God with their whole beings, their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10, Deuteronomy 6). Your relationship to God must take top priority

- Have a daily, consistent devotional time to maintain your relationship with God. Include at least reading Scripture, meditating, and praying. (Bible study for sermon preparation, writing, teaching preparation, and so forth does not count!)
- Make a specific commitment to God to live a holy life free of sexual sin. Write this commitment down and place it where you will see it daily (desk, mirror, etc.)
- Study, meditate on, memorize, and apply Scripture on this topic. Note that in the major passages where the Bible talks

about being holy it is in the context of sexual sin (Leviticus 18-20, I Corinthians 5-7). Review these periodically on a regular basis.

Love Others

The second most important thing missionaries can do to maintain sexual purity is to love others (Luke 10, Leviticus 19). Your love relationships with others must have a high priority as well. Relative to sexual purity this would include the following.

- Learn the cues in your host country that signal sexual purity and sexual availability. These include such things as dress, eye contact, posture, gestures, and so forth.
- Be aware that even within cultures people vary widely on the meaning of touch. Something you consider indicating only friendship may be interpreted as sexual by another person. Touch is not improper, but be aware that what you mean as “good touch” may be interpreted by another as “bad touch” or erotic touch.
- Be especially alert when in “high risk” situations, such as being alone with another person, spending prolonged time working with another person, and so forth.
- Meet weekly an accountability partner (or group) to answer specific questions about your sexual purity.
- If married, make your relationship with your spouse of highest priority (of all people). Set aside regular times to be together, just as you set aside time for God. Spouses who do not communicate on a regular basis about how they really feel grow further and further apart, regardless of how close they think they are.
- If married, make the same commitment to your spouse (relative to sexual purity) that you make to God.
- If married, be intentional about meeting the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of your spouse.

Love Yourself

The third most important thing that missionaries can do to maintain sexual purity is to love themselves, to care for themselves as they care for others.

- Accept your own vulnerability. 1 Corinthians 10:12 reminds us that if we think we are standing firm, we must be careful or we will fall.
- List (actually write them down) sexual things you will not do, such as those found in Leviticus 18-20.
- List sexual things that may be permissible but not beneficial, things that may master you as in 1 Corinthians 6. These are things not specifically mentioned in Scripture, such as certain movies, music, TV shows, books, Internet sites, and so forth. These are not necessarily sinful, but they may lead to sinful behavior.
- Concentrate on “renewing your mind” as described in Colossians 3 and in Ephesians 4. Take every thought captive to make it obedient to God as described in 2 Corinthians 10. Think on the kinds of things mentioned in Philippians 4.
- Avoid danger zones for you. If you know that you are tempted visually, do not watch videos or TV shows that you know will contain graphic sexual images. If you know that you are tempted verbally, do not visit Internet chat rooms or read explicit romance novels.
- Develop an early warning system to increase your awareness of problems coming. Knowing that you will be talking with an accountability partner is likely to make you more aware of danger zones. If you are married and feel the slightest attraction for someone other than your spouse, take action immediately.
- Develop a plan for combating temptations which will occur in spite of your attempts to avoid them. If your greatest temptation is visual images, train your eyes to “bounce” away from such images as soon as they appear. If your

temptation is through touch, train yourself to withdraw as soon as any touch becomes erotic.

Joseph was a handsome, single, young man with hormones raging (just past puberty) when he was taken to a different culture. When his boss’ wife asked him to have sex with her, he politely refused and gave her good reasons for his refusal. He refused her repeated requests. One time when he went to work and they were alone in the house, she grabbed his coat and asked for sex, but he left his coat and ran out of the house. You can maintain your sexual purity too, but you may have to run from a person, or your computer!

(This chapter also appears in Part 4 “Family and Sexuality” of *What Missionaries Ought to Know...*” also available on www.missionarycare.com.)

Chapter 13

Digital Distractions

During the last century changes in technology have brought about profound changes in how most people in the world live. During the last half century the digital revolution has changed how people relate, even in their marriages.

Two Millennia Ago

When Paul and Barnabas first served as cross-cultural missionaries, people had a more limited number of ways to communicate as mentioned in Acts 15.

- They could go in person and talk face to face so that both verbal and nonverbal cues were available (Acts 15: 4).
- They could tell another individual who would then go and repeat what was to be communicated (Acts 15:2). Adding that middle person could result in the message being changed.
- They could write a letter for someone to carry to the recipients (Acts 15:20). This meant that no additional clarification could help remove misunderstandings.
- They could use combinations of the above (Acts 15:22-31).

These examples are all found in communication between the first and second terms of missionary service.

Most of the New Testament epistles are letters written to relatively young national churches or missionary pastors of these churches. These letters were written by veteran

missionaries or church leaders at headquarters in Jerusalem. The letters include advice, warnings, and greetings to individuals at the church plants.

Two Centuries Ago

Little had changed when William and Dorothy Carey went to India as missionaries in the late 18th century. They still traveled on foot, on horseback, and by sailing ship. They communicated in person, by sending oral messages via a third person, and by writing letters.

However, in the 19th century changes occurred when people invented the telegraph, the telephone, and the radio.

- Letters of the alphabet could be coded into dots and dashes, sent great distances via electrical impulses over lines, and decoded at the other end with the telegraph.
- Voices could be coded into electrical impulses, transmitted over lines, and transformed back into voice-like sounds with the telephone.
- Voices could be coded into electromagnetic radiation, sent through the air, and transformed back into voice-like sounds at the other end with radio.

No longer did people have to be actually present, send an oral messenger, or write a letter to communicate.

Today

At the beginning of the 21st century with the digital revolution we have many additional ways of communicating, and these may become issues in marriages. During the last half of the 20th century with the development of the computer, information could be digitally coded so that it was readily available. This brought about huge changes in communication and entertainment readily available to missionaries all over the world. New means are continually being developed, but here are some available at the time of writing.

- Cell phones: People can converse, leave oral messages, or leave written ones.
- Email: People can send written messages for others to read at their convenience.
- Skype: people can converse orally via their computers and even see each other if they have webcams—free of charge.
- Facebook and MySpace: People have social networks around the world.
- Blogs and YouTube: People can post thoughts and videos for others to read, hear, and see.
- Internet: It has news from home as well as information from everywhere—and pornography.
- Chatrooms and instant messaging.
- Satellite TV and Radio, Podcasts—the list becomes longer every year.
- DVDs, personal viewers, and iPods allow people to carry thousands of songs and movies anywhere with them.
- Personal Digital Assistants (PDA), such as the Palm and Blackberry, allow people to carry their work and all of the above literally in their pocket.

Missionaries find the above extremely valuable. They can find needed information at the click of a mouse, reach group decisions without traveling thousands of miles, stay in touch with family and friends and so forth. No one wants to go back to more primitive methods. However, these may distract from more important things, such as your marriage.

General Issues

These inventions have raised concerns in many areas, such as transportation and business. The digital revolution has greatly improved transportation, but it has also played a part in train, plane, and automobile accidents. It has revolutionized some things in business, but it has also sometimes resulted in lower creativity and productivity.

- Multitasking. At the end of the twentieth century people said the new generation could multitask, could listen to the TV, talk on the phone, and study—all at the same time. Psychologists have long maintained that people can attend to only one thing at a time. Recent research shows that when people “multitask,” they just rapidly shift their attention from one thing to another rather doing more than one thing at a time.
- Interruptions. When people stop to answer a phone or read an email, the interruption is much more than the few seconds to listen or read. It is usually 10-15 minutes before they can refocus and proceed on their original task.
- Boundaries. Before this revolution, when one went home, other relationships and tasks were left behind. However, with a digital device in one’s pocket, that boundary is no longer in place. Anyone with your number or address can reach you at any time you have it on.
- Time. Work and entertainment can also be carried into your home in your pocket. This may mean time taken from your family or time you spend with God himself. As such, it is an issue of the stewardship of time.

When Barak Obama became President of the USA, he had to “fight” to keep his PDA. The major concern was that he might receive an email alert, instant message, or text message that would distract his attention during an important briefing.

Specific Marriage Examples

Of course, here we are not as concerned about national security as we are about marriage relationships. Here are some issues that can arise.

- Relationship with spouse. Your spouse may begin to feel like he or she is not very high on your list of priorities and come to resent your digital devices.
- Relationships with colleagues. If one partner becomes overly attached to digital activity, the couple may not

interact with other expats in their agency or in their city. Such interaction is vital to marriages, especially if the couple have children.

- Lose real contact. A person enmeshed with digital distractions may not recognize problems with family and spouse, not know that anything is wrong until too late.
- Giving impressions. Checking a cell phone to see who is calling or reading text messages may give the impression that people are not giving their full attention to their spouses, even if it is discrete glance below the table.
- Sexual fantasy. Even if one is never caught viewing pornography on the Internet, such activity still results in another fantasized person in the marital bed.
- Drain on time. When one spends hours keeping up with “friends” on Facebook, viewing DVDs, or playing electronic games, it may mean less time for the physically present spouse.

A February 2009 article in *Newsweek* is titled, “Will the Blackberry sink the Presidency?” Stopping to spend 15 minutes with your Blackberry may not sink your marriage, but it may cause your spouse to question your relationship to him or her.

What can be done?

Though problems may arise through digital distractions, here are suggestions to minimize the likelihood.

- Discuss these issues with your spouse and agree on steps you can take to prevent problems.
- Schedule daily time with your spouse.
- Turn off your cell phone or PDA before arriving at home to set a boundary and prevent interruptions.
- Check email and voice mail only at agreed on times, such as four times a day or not more than once every three hours, when with your spouse.
- Take steps to avoid pornography on the Internet, and have specific planned steps to escape it when it appears.

- Set a limit on how much time you spend each day on Facebook or other social networks.
- Limit how much time you spend watching DVDs and playing electronic games so that you have time for personal social interaction.
- Tell your colleagues the times you will be available (“on call”), and turn your digital device off at other times. Of course, during times of emergency this may not be possible.
- Take time for yourself, your spouse, and your family. Otherwise you may burn out, or your marriage may crash and burn.

All of these suggestions are specific steps people can take to set priorities in the stewardship of time. Remember that all—rich and poor, old and young—get the same 24 hours in every day. How they use that time depends on their priorities.

Chapter 14

You Spent It on WHAT?

Imagine these two plausible vignettes. Which one would occur is a matter of timing.

Vignette 1: Following a devastating flood in a nearby slum he often drove through, John went to the bank to get money from their account to provide relief for flood victims. He was shocked to find that nearly all the money had been withdrawn a few days before.

When he asked Mary what had happened to the money, she told him she had used it to buy a prom dress for their daughter Julie. He said, “You spent it on WHAT? It could have helped many flood victims. Now it will just be worn once and then packed away.”

Vignette 2: (You can see this coming.). Near the end of the school year Mary went to the bank to get money from their account to buy Julie a prom dress. She was shocked to find that nearly all of the money had been withdrawn a few days before.

When she asked John what had happened to the money, he told her he had used it to provide relief for the flood victims. She said, “You spent it on WHAT? We had been saving that for months for Julie. Now she will have nothing new to wear to her last big social event at school.”

The use of money is a major source of disagreement in many marriages. This may occur even more in missionary marriages, especially if poverty is more noticeable than in a couple’s passport culture.

What does the Bible say?

Though it is not in the context of marriage, the Bible deals specifically with the “You spent it on WHAT?” question. Look at the implications of these dramatic events in Jesus’ life as recorded in Matthew 26, Mark 14, and John 12. While eating dinner in Bethany, a woman came and poured a bottle of very expensive perfume on Jesus. Note the difference between his followers’ reactions and the reactions of Jesus himself.

First, his followers’ reactions:

- They were indignant, furious.
- They asked, “Why this waste?”
- They said, “Sell it for a year’s wages.”
- They suggested, “Give the money to the poor.”
- They generally criticized what she did.

Second, Jesus’ reactions:

- Aware of their actions, Jesus intervened.
- Jesus said, “Why are you bothering her?”
- Jesus praised her for her actions.
- He went on, “You’ll always have the poor, but not me.”
- He concluded, “What she has done will always be remembered with admiration.”

We must remember that God counts offerings very differently. The disciples saw the woman’s offering as wasted, but Jesus saw it as wonderful as indicated when he saw the poor widow put in two small coins. He noted that she had put in more than anyone else, even those who had put in large amounts of money (Mark 12, Luke 21). Now consider some things that couples can do to reduce the conflict over how money is spent.

Plan your spending.

Most people refer to this plan as a budget. Budgets for missionaries vary widely depending on where they live since

the cost of living varies from country to country. People living in a jungle village will probably have smaller amounts and different categories of expenses than those living in major metropolitan areas. Make a list of your necessities, including at least the following, plus other categories relevant to where you live.

- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Tithe and offerings
- Transportation “home”
- Other anticipated expenses and savings.

Most of these are obvious, but some need explanation. Malachi 3 cautions not to rob God. If you do not include at least your tithes in the budget, you are unlikely to have any “leftover money” for these, not to say anything about an offering. In marriage two become one financially, and your offerings are part of your stewardship together.

People remaining in their passport countries do not have to budget money to go home. However, expats often return to their passport country every year or two, and they need to plan for that large expense.

Agree on a limit.

Husband and wife should agree on a limit as to how much money each can spend without discussing it with the other. This is to prevent problems, such as, “You spent it on WHAT?” If both of them have similar views of money, setting a limit may be easy.

However if they have different views, this may require considerable negotiation. The “spender” (shop-a-holic) may want the limit set at \$200—while the “saver” (control freak) may want to set it at \$10. This couple needs to talk, listen, negotiate, and compromise to reach an amount they are comfortable with, at least one they can live with.

The budget and the limit may be revised at any time, but it should be reconsidered at least annually. Other things need to be discussed more often, perhaps monthly.

Have money meetings.

The budget is a plan, and it is rather theoretical. After the rent and utilities are paid, groceries are purchased, clothes are bought, money given at church, etc., then the couple is faced with what to do with the money left (if any). This is “where the rubber meets the road.” It is no longer theory, but reality!

What is left is your discretionary income, and you can choose how this is spent. It will be different for each couple. One person wants the latest electronic gadget while the other wants cable TV. One wants to buy books while the other wants to buy the latest DVDs. One wants a flat screen TV while the other wants to go out to more movies. One wants to go on a cruise while the other wants to hire a guide to hunt. Of course, do not forget about setting aside some savings. All of these require discussion and compromise.

One couple may want to cut back on “necessities” by moving to a smaller house, eating at restaurants less, or wearing old clothes longer. Another couple may want to increase income by taking a second job or the spouse taking a job.

Share the responsibility.

If missionaries lived in their passport countries, many could pay their utilities from the comfort of their homes by mailing a check, calling in their credit card number, via online access to their bank accounts, or even having them automatically deducted from their accounts each month. They can buy groceries for the whole week at the local supermarket in an hour.

However, in their host country, paying utility bills may take many hours spread over several days and buying food may

be a daily task of going to the market and negotiating prices with vendor after vendor. In these cases it is best for husband and wife to share these time consuming money tasks.

Avoid credit card debt.

Missionaries today face a temptation not available before 1950, credit card debt. Credit cards are very convenient and help avoid carrying much cash, but they may become a problem for some people. If you charge so much that you are unable to pay the card off in full at the end of each month, you are living beyond your means.

Credit card interest is nearly always higher than interest from a secured loan. Therefore, not being able to pay off the card is not only a first warning that you are headed for trouble but also it means that you are taking on higher interest—interest that may be raised at any time by the credit card company.

It is little wonder that Romans 13:8 cautions, “Let no debt remain outstanding.” If you cannot pay the card off a second month, you begin paying interest on the interest added at the end of the first month. That first month is the warning. If no action is taken, the compounding of interest tends to become a vicious cycle.

Find the problem.

Conflicts about money are often over other issues, and it helps to uncover these deeper issues. Here are some examples.

- “Spender vs saver:” “Let’s do... vs. No, that costs too much”
- “Now vs later” “We need a new...vs. Why, our old one is OK for a while”
- Control
- Independence
- Security

- Freedom

To each his and her own

Last, but not least—and probably MOST important. Each person needs some “No questions asked” money. This is an agreed upon amount that is literally given to each person each pay period, and neither one has to account to the other for how it is spent, or not spent. Savers can save it. Spenders can spend it. Givers can give it. Procrastinators can hide it under their mattress until they decide what they want to do with it. If they want to do random acts of kindness, they can walk along the street and give it to anyone they meet.

The amount is not nearly as important as the fact that the money is just that person’s. He or she does not have to ask for it. Neither is there need to justify it. Each is the full steward of it, responsible to no one but God as to how it is spent.

Money is a leading cause of marital conflict, but it can also be a part of marital satisfaction. Talking about money and agreeing together how to use it can improve your marriage relationship.

Chapter 15

FUNd Raising Isn't FUN

Mary dreaded opening the email when she saw who it was from and the subject line. She had been watching the family's account slowly slipping onto the red during the last few months. Her husband, John, kept saying not to worry. She had insisted that he contact their supporters, but he had not done so.

The email from their agency said the deficit had reached the point where at least one of them had to come home to shore up their support. That meant that either she would be left in their host county with their two middle school children or they would have to take the children back to their passport country. Then they would have to change schools in the middle of the year--while going through the reentry process.

Mary was angry with their agency, with their supporters, and especially angry with John. He had not tried to contact supporters, not even with an email. She hated asking for funds, begging for money, especially for money for themselves.

Finances are an issue in any marriage, but for those serving with faith-based agencies there is often even more stress. Since the 2001 terrorist attacks and with world-wide recession (depression) in 2008, raising funds has become more and more difficult.

Let us look briefly at fund raising in the Bible and in greater depth at marriage issues that may arise at different stages in the careers of cross-cultural workers.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul, an early cross-cultural worker, wrote much about this when he wrote to the Corinthian church in Greece (1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8-9). Though this brochure is about marriage issues raised by fund raising, let us also consider some of the things Paul mentioned as he raised funds.

- He specifically asked for funds and even gave suggestions about how to raise them (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 9:5).
- He encouraged people to give as much as they could (2 Corinthians 8:10-15, 9:6-7).
- He urged keeping the highest ethical standards (1 Corinthians 16:3-4, 2 Corinthians 8:20-21).
- He even compared some churches to others (2 Corinthians 8:1-8, 9:2-4).

Paul was not reticent about raising funds. Missionaries today need not hesitate about asking for money either. However, when they do, issues may arise between spouses during any stage of their missionary career.

Before They Go

The course of initial fund raising varies, but the following one is common.

- Much. At the beginning family and friends pledge support so that the beginning missionaries will not be discouraged, often responding within days of the first mailing.
- Little. After the initial "deluge," funds tend to trickle in. People are not "sure" individuals will raise enough to go, so they may wait to see if the missionary is going to make it. Missionaries take meetings wherever they can, and the balance in their account rises only slowly or even declines.
- Much. After the long drought when it becomes clear that enough funds will come in people begin to get on the "band

wagon,” perhaps wanting to be the ones who puts the missionaries over the top.

A spouse who has difficulty tolerating uncertainty may become quite anxious during that long stage when few funds are not coming in. As the fear of failure rises, he or she may say things like, “This is what I was afraid of. What do we do if we don’t get enough by the deadline?”

One spouse may begin to question whether or not God has really called them to be missionaries. This is especially likely if one has had a stronger sense of “call” than the other. As a result, tension may rise between the spouses.

While on the Field

While serving in their host country, changes beyond the missionaries’ control may result in a shortage of funds.

- Friends and family who did not want to say “No” may never give anything or just quit giving after a few months.
- People who lose their jobs or retire may be unable to keep their commitments.
- The exchange rate changes so that the support raised is no longer enough
- Supporters die.
- An agency asks missionaries to teach school to TCKs, and some supporters quit because those missionaries are no longer doing what those supporters agreed to fund.

The list can go on and on, but no matter what the reason, a couple no longer have enough support for both husband and wife to remain on the field. This results in many very difficult decisions that need to be made by the couple. Do both go home? Does one stay to continue the ministry while the other returns to raise funds? If the couple has children, how does that affect the decision? Does one parent stay with the children so that they do not have to change schools or do they all go home? Do some of the children remain with friends while others go home to be with both parents?

On Home Ministry Assignment

When missionaries return home they may find that their support base has changed along with many other things in their passport countries. Here are some things that may change.

- Pastors at supporting churches may have changed, and the new pastors have less interest in missions, supporting only denominational missionaries, only church members, or only those who are reaching unreached peoples groups.
- Friends may have grown apart from the missionaries and not renew their pledge.
- Mission committees may want to know how many converts during the last term, and the couple has very few because they teach nationals preparing for ministry.
- Some people may drop support because they not consider individuals to be “missionaries” while in their passport countries.
- Others decide to drop support because they can get more “bang for their buck” supporting nationals.

This list can also go on and on, but missionaries may find support dropping when they return. Continually having to justify their worth to supporters when doing what God has called them to do may discourage one spouse more than the other. If the passport country has a higher cost of living, loss of income during this time can become an issue between husband and wife.

Nearing and After Retirement

Approaching retirement many people are at the peak of their earnings. However, missionaries may face a decline in their support account because many of their supporters are also retiring and some are dying. Rather than having surplus money to put toward an additional retirement annuity, missionaries may have a declining income.

In addition, missionaries have a wide variety of retirement programs.

- Some have been contributing to a 401(k), 403(b), or other retirement plan which is fully vested so they can live comfortably on income from their portfolio with no need to raise funds.
- Others have been investing in property and/or savings accounts so that they can live on income from the property and the interest from their savings with no need to raise other funds.
- Still others have been promised a pension from their agency and receive it, but they still are asked to raise funds for their support account to receive this pension.
- Still others, primarily those who have gone out independently as “tentmakers” or under local churches, may have virtually nothing, perhaps not even Social Security.

Thus financial issues at this stage of life may be the same as for people who were not missionaries—or fund raising may have to continue for life. Those who need to continue to raise funds may find that people do not understand why they do. Even people who have given support for many years may discontinue so that financial pressures become an issue in marriage even in retirement.

Conclusion

Missionaries who have to raise support are under additional financial pressures on their marriage relationships. Not only are they living on a limited income and living in a culture in which the financial structure is not “natural” for them, but also they often have to raise their salary by finding people who will support them financially.

Few people would find it fun to live for long periods of time under this uncertainty. In addition, some missionaries may feel like God holds them responsible if funds do not come in.

They may feel that they have fallen short in their faith, that they have sinned. Such is not true.

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China during the last half of the 19th century, said, “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” The key concept here is “God’s supply.” Missionaries are responsible to communicate (letter, email, telephone, blog, Skype) with people who support them, but God is the one who supplies the funds.

Here are some things to consider:

- Remember that financial matters are one of the leading causes of disagreement in most marriages. Raising funds makes this even more likely to be an issue.
- Study the passages about giving to missions in the Corinthian epistles mentioned earlier.
- Talk the issue over frequently, expressing feelings to each other.
- Perhaps decide for one person to take over the responsibility for fund raising.
- Ask more experienced missionaries how they have resolved the issue.

Chapter 16

Wounds, Scabs, and Scars

For thousands of years cross-cultural workers have had to cope in their marriages with baggage from the past as well as hurts from the present, and they have had to do so in the context of an unfamiliar culture. As we saw in the introduction, William Carey lived for a dozen years with Dorothy while she was insane, a time of repeated wounds and scabs that never fully healed.

Joseph was a Third Culture Kid (TCK) who married a national and spent most of his married life in Egypt, his host country. However he had come from a family which had been dysfunctional for several generations.

- His father and his grandmother tricked his grandfather into giving his father his uncle's inheritance (Genesis 27:1-40).
- His uncle was so angry that he planned to kill his father. Therefore his grandmother sent his father to live with her own brother (Genesis 27:41-45).
- His father then deceived his mother's brother (Genesis 31:1-32).
- His own brothers hated him so much that they wouldn't even speak nicely to him (Genesis 37:3-4).
- Later, as a teenager, his brothers kidnapped him and sold him into slavery in Africa (Genesis 37:12-28).

Ruth married a TCK who was living in her country. Though we do not know about her family of origin, we do know

that she faced difficult situations and tragedy after her first marriage.

- Within a decade her husband died, as did her brother-in-law (Ruth 1:4-5).
- Ruth and her sister-in-law then lived with their widowed mother-in-law (Ruth 1:5-7).
- Against her mother-in-law's wishes, Ruth emigrated to her husband's passport country (Ruth 1:8-19).
- There in her own culture Ruth's mother-in-law became bitter (Ruth 1:20-21).
- Ruth was so poor that she had to search for food the harvesters missed (Ruth 2:2).
- When she met an eligible bachelor, Ruth did not know the culturally appropriate action to take (Ruth 2-4).

Both Joseph and Ruth had very difficult times in their lives resulting in psychological wounds, scabs, and scars. In spite of these, their marriages in their host countries flourished, and their lives were filled with success. Joseph became second in command in his host country, and in hers Ruth became great-grandmother to a king. Now let us consider wounds, scabs and scars—and how to overcome them.

Wounds

Open physical wounds are obvious because of the break in the skin and the bleeding. Likewise, some psychological wounds such as living under a death threat, being held hostage, or grieving over death of a loved one are obvious. Like people with open wounds that receive immediate attention to prevent loss of blood and infection, so do spouses with obvious psychological wounds receive comfort, reassurance, and a chance to talk.

Closed physical wounds showing only a bruise may go unnoticed and untreated. Likewise, some psychological wounds such as being betrayed, ignored, lied about, or ridiculed may not receive needed attention. Spouses who are not open with each

other about such things may not receive the comfort, reassurance, or a chance to discuss their wounds so that the underlying “damage” may turn into bitterness.

Ideally, people with wounds will be discovered in the selection process and asked to remain in their passport cultures until the wounds are healed. Of course, people may be wounded after entering their host culture and need attention too.

Scabs

Immediately after a physical injury platelets in the blood form a plug in the wound. Then coagulation factors form fibrin strands to strengthen the platelet plug. This scab needs to remain in place for days or weeks for maximum healing to take place. If the scab is dislodged by being hit or if the person picks at it repeatedly, new scabs have to be formed, delaying healing.

Likewise, individuals with psychological wounds may try to use various defenses ranging from denial to spiritualizing the event to “plug” the emotion. Spouses and colleagues need to be available to help the wounded person “process” the events to bring about healing. It takes time to drain the emotion and put the event into perspective in one’s life. During this time the “scabs” may be rather unattractive, and people may start picking at them, causing delay in healing.

Sometimes people with psychological scabs may be allowed to serve in other cultures too soon, and the scabs are disturbed. Spouses must remember that healing takes time, and attempts to remove those unattractive scabs may delay healing.

Scars

Physical scars are the areas of fibrous tissue that replace normal skin. Except for small punctures every wound leaves some scarring. This scar tissue is not identical with the skin it replaces. For example, it is less resistant to the ultraviolet rays

in sunlight, and it has no hair or sweat glands. However, it still functions quite well under normal circumstances.

Just as we all have some physical scars, so we all have some psychological scars. We have all experienced psychological wounds of some kind so we have the scars left from those. Like physical scars, these scars leave us vulnerable to further hurt. For example, people who have been ridiculed for some physical characteristic may believe they are unattractive and find it difficult to accept genuine compliments from their spouses. People who have been sexually molested as children may be unable to respond sexually to their spouses after marriage.

Scars on the skin may function well under normal circumstances indoors, but not do well in prolonged sunlight outside. Likewise, people who have emotional scars may be able to function well in their passport cultures, but not well in host cultures. Spouses need to be aware of these limitations.

Who and when?

Psychological wounds may occur during childhood and the teen years long before marriage. Joseph was there when his father deceived his grandfather and may have heard grandpa say, “Why did you run off secretly and deceive me?” (Genesis 31:27). He watched as his father bowed down seven times in fear (because of his theft) before his uncle (Genesis 33:3). He personally saw the favoritism in his family and experienced the hatred of his brothers as a teenager (Genesis 37).

These wounds may occur after marriage when relationships sour. Joseph’s Aunt Leah experienced these wounds over and over. Her husband did not love her even though she repeatedly attempted to win his love. When she had a son, in misery she said, “Surely my husband will love me now” (Genesis 29:32). After her second son, she said, “Because the Lord heard I am not loved, he gave me this one too” (Genesis 29:33). After her third son, she said, “Now at last my

husband will become attached to me” (Genesis 29:34). She even said to her sister, “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband?” (Genesis 30:15).

Wounds can come at any time in one’s life and from anyone in one’s life. Some wounds develop scabs and heal into scars. Others remain open for years or heal part way and then are opened again year after year as was the case with William Carey living with Dorothy’s mental illness..

What can be done?

Joseph and Ruth were able to live full lives even though they had major wounds, scabs, and scars. Consider these factors.

- **Forgiveness.** They forgave people who wounded them. Even though his brothers hated him, kidnapped him, considered killing him, and sold him into slavery, Joseph did not hold a grudge against them. Though they had never apologized and lied to him even after their father died, he spoke kindly, reassured them, told them not to be afraid—then he provided for them and their children (Genesis 50:15-19).
- **Time.** Physical healing takes time, often months or years, for major wounds. Psychological healing also takes time. Notice that the first time his brothers came to him in Egypt Joseph pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them (Genesis 42:7). The second time they came, he told them who he was and not to be distressed or angry with themselves (Genesis 45:5). This was 22 years after they had sold him into slavery. Healing takes time, sometimes many years.
- **Memories.** You will probably always have memories of the wound, but God can remove the negative emotions that came with the wound. He can help you place the scars in a different perspective. Joseph told his brothers, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...”

(Genesis 50:20). He clearly remembered what happened and why they did it, but he now saw it from God’s perspective.

Sometimes God helps you directly to see things differently. At other times you may need others to help you develop that perspective, possibly through healing of those memories. God may use others to accomplish what he wants in your life. For example, when Jesus came to Lazarus’ tomb, he asked the people there to remove the stone covering the door. After he brought Lazarus back to life and Lazarus came out with his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, Jesus told them to unwrap him and let him loose (John 11:38-44). Did this mean that Jesus could not have removed the stone or the linen? Of course not! He chose to have people be part of that miracle.

Even with his major wounds with Dorothy, William Carey was able to have a fulfilling second marriage with Charlotte.

Chapter 17

How Will We Discipline Them?

Remembering the pain when his father whipped him with a belt, Stan resolved never to use anything but his own hand when punishing his child. He knew that the Bible said that the man who “spares the rod” hates his son, so Stan was “careful to discipline” the son he loved (Proverbs 13:34). He spanked only with his own hand so that he could feel how much pain he was giving.

Remembering that her mother would remind her that “God is love” even when she disobeyed, Beth resolved that no one would ever hit her children. She could not imagine Jesus giving a child a spanking. Her mother had always emphasized that Jesus would forgive her if she just prayed and said she was sorry.

As husband and wife Stan and Beth now have their own small children. They have had many discussions about differences between the families they grew up in, differences in the way they looked at Scripture, as well as differences they had about disciplining their children. They had come from diverse family and church backgrounds, but after talking with their pastor they finally came to some agreement about disciplining their children. They are glad to have that behind them now that they are planning to serve overseas. Or is it behind them? Will these issues come up again?

Another Culture

In *Families on the Move*, Marion Knell tells the story of a child attending an international school. One day the boy came home from school and told his parents that a teacher had touched his private parts. The distraught parents immediately went to the school to investigate. They found out that touching a small boy’s private parts to discipline him was the cultural norm in their host culture. The teacher could not understand what the fuss was all about—she certainly had no intention of abusing the boy or of harming him in any way.

Just as families differ in their view of punishment, so do cultures. In some cultures the only ones allowed to discipline a child are the child’s own parents. In other cultures any responsible adult present is expected to discipline a misbehaving child. Some cultures use corporal punishment; others use shame or time-outs; and still others use little punishment at all. Even cultures which use physical punishment about equally may differ in the kind of such punishment.

A 2007 comparison of Japanese and USA college students found that about 90% of the students in both cultures reported experiencing physical punishment. However, students in the USA were more likely to report being hit with an object than those in Japan. In addition, USA students were most likely to be hit on the bottom and the hand, but Japanese students were most likely to be hit in the face or on the head.

Thus, as expected, people from families and cultures not using punishment may be appalled at any punishment given to their children. Even people who come from families and cultures which use punishment may be appalled at their children being slapped in the face by relative strangers or having someone touch their children’s private parts. These situations are most likely to occur in the context of household help, nearby national neighbors, or nearby expatriates.

Household Help

When wages are much lower in their host countries than in the passport countries, missionaries often hire people on a regular basis to work around their homes. Some of these people are essentially nannies, there to care for the children. Of course, people should be aware of major cultural differences and screen the nannies carefully to find out not only the cultural means of discipline they use but also their family's means of discipline.

In addition, other nationals who are there primarily to cook, clean, do household maintenance, or yard work also come into contact with children. They may also discipline your children, especially when you are not present. All of these individuals will also impart other aspects of their culture to your children, a part of making them TCKs.

As parents it is your responsibility to learn enough about the culture and your household help to assure that what your children learn from them meets with your approval. Since these people are your employees and work in or around your home, you can influence what they do with your children. Even then your spouse and you may disagree on what to do about such discipline.

National Neighbors

Assuming that you live in a "neighborhood" with nationals living all around you (rather than in a "compound" with only people from your agency), your children will probably play with national children who live nearby. While playing together your children are likely to spend time in homes of these national children where they will encounter parents and other extended family members. These adults are likely to step in and discipline your children; after all, your children are in their homes.

In this situation, you have much less leverage to question the families and much less control over what they do to

discipline your children. You can still learn about the culture, but you have to rely on general conversation and observation of everyday behavior to discover their family norms for discipline.

In this case you will need to make judgments about the relative value of your relationship with these people and the influence of their discipline on your children. This may lead to marked disagreement between husband and wife. One spouse may think of broken toys as an indication of lack of respect for another's property, and the other may see those broken toys as evidence of a lack of materialistic influence.

Nearby Expats

Unlike parents in their passport country, people living in a host country have a relatively limited number of people from their own culture to talk with. Some parents live in rather isolated (from other expats) conditions where they have few people with whom they can discuss disciplining their children. In fact, some people live in small villages far from anyone from their passport culture.

Other parents live in urban areas where they have access not only to other parents from their passport culture but also parents from other cultures who speak their language. Having others from back "home" nearby may be a real help, but asking parents from other cultures (even ones who speak the same language) may result in even more confusion since that brings in other cultural differences.

If other families live nearby, children playing together and visiting each others' homes may bring conflict not only between spouses, but with nearby expats about how children should be disciplined. Issues on the value of the relationship with these expats and the morale of the mission community need to be considered.

Other Factors

Here are several things to keep in mind as you discuss disciplining children.

- There is no one best way to discipline children. They grow up and become members of society after being disciplined in a wide variety of ways.
- Parents must present a united front. They need to have core values agreed on before marriage if possible, or with a counselor after marriage if they did not do so before marriage.
- Always intervene in cases of abuse. Do not give your silent approval if you see physical, sexual, or emotional abuse such as name-calling or other damaging activity.
- Be careful of what you do that is motivated by guilt. Some parents try to “atone” for what they have “put their children through” by taking them to live in another culture. Though you may want to be compassionate for a short period of adjustment right after arrival, do not hesitate to discipline when that time is over.
- Agree on the role of children and refine your view of their role as they mature. Are they also “missionaries” while in the host country with you? They may enjoy this role while children but come to resent it as adolescents. Likewise, they may think it is “neat” to sing in the national language to help you raise funds during childhood, but they may despise doing it as teenagers. Allow them to play these roles, but be very careful about force or shame to get them to do so.
- Remember that you are very influential in your children’s lives. In a large study of adult TCKs (specifically missionary kids) one question asked was, “Who was most important in your life as you were growing up?” Two-thirds of the respondents named their parents: 32% said father, 28% said both parents, and 6% said mother. The other one-third was distributed among houseparents, teachers, siblings, friends, and others.

What does Bible say?

As noted in the introduction, the Bible mentions a variety of means of discipline, ranging from the rod to love. No one method fits all children at all times. It is clear that even the children of spiritual leaders go bad when not disciplined.

- Sons of Eli, the priest. God told Samuel that he would judge Eli’s family because of the sin Eli knew about and “he failed to restrain them” (1 Samuel 3:13).
- Sons of Samuel, the prophet. “But his sons did not walk in his ways (1 Samuel 8:3).
- Adonijah, son of David, the king. Adonijah proclaimed himself king. The Bible says that “His father had never interfered with him by asking, ‘Why do you behave as you do?’” (1 Kings 1:6).

Chapter 18

I Wish Your Parents Would Leave Us Alone!

Pat and Chris felt called into missionary work, but they ran into difficulty when they responded to that call and were raising funds to go. Pat's father, not a believer, was quite upset with them for going. He calculated how much money he had invested in Pat's education and was very disappointed that Pat is going to "drop into oblivion" and not realize his potential. His father did not raise the issue when Pat went on a short-term trip because he thought that would "get it out of Pat's system," and then he would get on with life here at home. Pat and Chris had gone to the field anyway and his father did not say much about it anymore, but they knew he did not approve.

Now that Chris is expecting a baby, her mother is disappointed in them. Though her mother is a believer and understands why they are serving overseas, she talks constantly about the heartache she feels when she realizes that she will not be there as her only grandchild grows up. She had always thought she would be like Joseph when his grandchildren and great-grandchildren "were placed at birth on Joseph's knees" (Genesis 50:23). Instead, she will not even get to see them until long after they are born.

When parents place implied "demands" on their missionary "children," it may bring tension in a marriage relationship. With a parent pulling one way and the spouse

pulling the other, people may feel caught in the middle. These situations may arise at any time during a marriage, but let us consider some of the most common times and some solutions to the problems that may arise. The suggestions that follow are listed under particular situations, but they may be useful at any time.

Leaving

One common time for parents to be hesitant about their children being gone is as they are leaving. The parents fully realize that their expectations about family relationships after their children leave home are not going to be met. Not only are the children leaving home, or leaving town, or even leaving the state. They are leaving the country! Visiting will be much more complicated than driving to the next city or even the next state. It will mean traveling internationally involving much more time, money, visas, and so forth.

Here are some suggestions to soften the blow to your parents.

- Let your parents know what you are considering as soon as possible. No one likes surprises, and letting your parents know early gives them time to process your leaving.
- Invite your parents to give their input—then take it seriously. Remember that your parents are likely to have your best interests in mind, as well as their own wishes.
- Ask your parents to help you prepare to go. They can be a real help as you leave.
- Grieve with them. Both you and your parents are losing something—family time and the strong ties this time nurtures. Let them know that you will miss them too.
- Say goodbye well. Tell them that you will miss them too. Express your appreciation for their contributions to your life up to this time.

- Invite them to come visit you on the field soon so that they will see what you are doing and get a better understanding why you are doing it.

Grandparenting

Another common time for parents to be hesitant is when the next generation comes. Many parents look forward to playing the role of grandparents and being able to “spoil” their grandchildren. They now have more time and more money to spend with the kids. Their expectations about grandparenting are probably not going to be met if their grandchildren are going to be in a different country.

Here are some suggestions to soften the blow to the prospective grandparents.

- Let them know that you can see their point of view and are sorry that your obedience to God’s call means that their expectations will not be met.
 - Take responsibility for maintaining a close relationship, and give it a high priority.
 - Communicate! Today’s technology makes communication more personal than it has ever been, and this communication costs very little. Following are some of the ways you can communicate.
1. Telephone. If your parents do not have a computer, you can call them using VOiP services such as skype or vonage. For a dollar a day or less you can set up a virtual phone number at their exchange so they can call you at a local number with no charge to themselves.
 2. Air mail cards and pictures their grandchildren have made for them.
 3. Email them. If they have a computer, you can email them with news daily at no charge.
 4. Send digital photos. You can send pictures of the grandchildren as attachments to email, posted online so

- that the grandparents can download them, or uploaded to be developed and mailed to them via the postal service.
5. Use instant messaging. If you set up mutually acceptable times, you can “chat” with each other using widely-available instant messaging.
 6. Computer to computer to hear each others voices. VOiP providers let you talk through your computers so that you can talk with each other in real time.
 7. Purchase a webcam. For a one-time investment of a few dollars you can see each other as you talk using webcams which now often come as part of your computer.
- Encourage them to become surrogate grandparents to children near them who do not have grandparents.
 - When on home ministry assignment make it a point to spend time with them soon after you return.

Aging

A third common time for parents to be hesitant is when they begin to have difficulty in caring for themselves. Believing that there is a “contract” that each generation will care for the one before, they may feel abandoned when you are not there. Of course, you may want to follow many of the suggestions above for grandparents. In addition, you may want to consider the following.

- Make more frequent trips to see them since you can do so by air relatively easily.
- Repeatedly express appreciation and affection both orally and in writing.
- Resolve any lingering issues or conflicts you may have with them.
- Visit them in person at critical times such as when they sell their home to move into an apartment, when they move into assisted living, or when they enter a nursing home.

- Bring them to your field of service where you can hire good, low-cost help to give them adequate care near you.
- Return to your passport country for a period of time to care for them personally.

Blessing

The Biblical concept of the blessing originated in the very first book of the Old Testament. Many missionaries find it helpful to ask for and receive the blessing of their parents just as was the case with Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's children while living in their host culture. A study of Genesis 27-28 and 48-49 reveals the importance of the blessing.

- Isaac called his sons to give his blessing, Esau first (Genesis 27:1-4) and later Jacob (Genesis 28:1).
- Both Jacob and Esau asked for Isaac's blessing, Jacob first (Genesis 27:19) and then Esau (Genesis 27:34, 38).
- The blessing was so important that Jacob deceived to get it, and Esau was ready to kill his brother because he did.
- Jacob then passed the blessing on to each of his sons (Genesis 49). The author of Genesis ends by saying, "This is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him" (Genesis 49:28).
- Jacob (Israel) also asked to bless his grandchildren (Genesis 48:9).
- Jacob blessed Joseph and his two sons, Ephriam and Manasseh, giving the greater blessing to the younger grandchild.

Parents may find it easier to let their children and grandchildren go if they have given their blessing. If your parents are believers, you may want to suggest that they prepare a blessing modeled after the ones Jacob gave in Genesis 48—not necessarily using animal analogies, but "giving each the appropriate blessing."

A more general book about blessings is *The Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent. It gives more detail and additional suggestions not possible to list here. This blessing may be given in a number of settings.

- Family setting. You may want it to be a family event with only rather close family members being present.
- Church setting. You may want it to be a church family event at a special meeting in your church.
- Commissioning service. If a relatively small number of people are involved, this may even be part of your commissioning as you leave.

If your parents will grant their blessing, it will make it easier on all involved. Even unbelieving parents who do not understand the Biblical basis of it are often helped by giving their blessing and "permission" to go.

Chapter 19

What about Charlotte?

We began by asking, “What about Dorothy?” Let us end by asking, “What about Charlotte?” Dorothy was William Carey’s first wife, and Charlotte was his second. Not only were the two ladies very different but also both William and the agency which sent them had changed.

November 27, 1800, seven years before Dorothy died, William wrote to a friend, “I was last evening employed in teaching the English language to a German lady who I hope professes the grace of God. She...has been instructed in the school of affliction. Came last year into this country for her health not having been able to speak or stand for some years. Her speech is restored, and she can walk a little. Her name is Rumohr. I trust she has met with some good to her soul in this place.”

William went from being Charlotte Rumohr’s language tutor to being her pastor. Not understanding the existence of denominations within Christianity, the Governor-General in India wrote about William marrying a Danish countess “whom he had converted from a Christian to a Baptist” by “very near drowning her in the ceremony of baptism...performed by that sect.”

January 20, 1808, in a letter telling his sisters that Dorothy had died (38 days earlier), William said, “I am well

aware that there is a degree of indelicacy in mentioning so early my design to marry again after a proper time...I shall inform you that I do intend, after some months to marry Miss Rumohr. I have proposed the matter to her and she has testified her agreement thereto. She is one of the most pious and conscientious persons with whom I am acquainted...and it is in consequence of a wish she expressed, that I communicate my intention to you so early.”

William’s steps toward remarriage so soon were, at first, shocking to other missionaries there in India. However, those missionaries soon realized that William and Dorothy had little emotional attachment during the twelve years of her mental illness. Initial objections soon faded and approval took their place. William and Charlotte married May 8, 1808. This marriage was quite different from his marriage to Dorothy.

Charlotte was different.

Dorothy did not want to be a missionary, but Charlotte had come to India by choice as she looked for something that would cure her physical problems. She was well off financially and could have returned to Europe but had chosen to stay in India. In fact, immediately after their marriage she deeded her house to the mission and the rent from it was used to support national pastors.

Dorothy could not read, but Charlotte read widely, often able to read books in their original because she knew Danish, French, and Italian before coming to India. Then, as noted earlier, while in India she learned English to worship with other missionaries. Finally she learned Bengali so she could better minister to nationals.

Dorothy could not write, but Charlotte wrote courtly love letters to William.

- I thank thee most affectionately, my dearest love, for thy kind letter. Though the journey is very useful to me, I

cannot help feeling much to be so distant from you, but I am much with you in my thoughts.

- I felt very much affected in parting with thee. I see plainly I would not do to go far from you; my heart cleaves to you.
- I shall greatly rejoice, my love, in seeing thee again, but take care of your health that I may find you well. I need not say how much you are in my thoughts day and night.

In her mentally ill state Dorothy opposed William's ministry, but Charlotte joined William in ministry. She wanted to be a "mother" to the national families and the education of the Hindu girls was her particular interest. Since they had so many common interests, Charlotte and William built a loving relationship in just a few years—and William realized it.

In a letter dated March 11, 1812, less than four years after their marriage, William wrote, "I have a very affectionate and pious wife, whose mind is highly cultivated by education and extensive reading." How different Charlotte was from Dorothy in so many respects!

William had changed.

After Charlotte passed away, William wrote about their marriage saying that they had "enjoyed the most entire oneness of mind" and concealed nothing from each other. They "prayed and conversed together... without the least reserve...and enjoyed a degree of conjugal happiness while thus continued to each other."

On January 24, 1814, shortly after Jabez married, William wrote a father-son letter to him. In it he said, "You are now married. Be not content to bear yourself toward your wife with propriety, but let love be the spring of all your conduct. Esteem her highly that she may highly esteem you. The first impressions of love arising from form or beauty will soon wear off, but the trust arising from character will endure and increase."

Charlotte died on May 30, 1821. Writing to friends about her death William said it was "the greatest domestic loss that a man can sustain." Writing to his sisters months later, February 16, 1822, William said, "I am lonely and frequently very unhappy. My house becomes a wilderness and the gloom of having no one to whom I can communicate my feelings is very great." How different from the letter to his sisters after Dorothy's death—a letter in which he announced that he was going to marry Charlotte.

The agency had changed.

Andrew, the representative of the agency, who was so relieved when Dorothy finally joined William (under duress) to go to India, wrote quite a different letter several years later. After evaluating the Read family and concluding that although Mr. Read was acceptable, the family would not be allowed to serve. Writing to William September 7, 1797, Andrew said, "His wife and daughter are not willing...but the unwillingness of his wife, and the consideration that she had formerly been in a very unhappy state of mind...were at present an absolute bar." How different from his reaction to William and Dorothy's going!

May 1, 1799, in a letter to a pastor, Andrew wrote that a Mr. Brundson had married a Miss Irons "who is willing to go with him." However, he went on to say that he was not so sure about whether or not the wives of two other candidates were willing to go. The willingness of the spouse had become a pivotal point in deciding whether or not to accept a family. Apparently Dorothy's sacrifice had brought about changes that have lasted for more than two centuries, changes that have prevented others from experiencing the same distress.

What about missionary marriages today?

As in the time of the Careys, living in another culture today places much additional stress on marriage. As then, the effect of that stress on the marriage depends on the husband, the wife, and the agency.

In Andrew's remarks noted above, one can see that the Baptist Missionary Society began to screen for marriage and family issues even before Dorothy's death. About the turn of the century the Wesleyan Missionary Society began producing a policy book that shows changes over the years.

- In 1818 missionary candidates were asked nothing about their wives.
- In 1822 candidates had to answer whether they were going married or single, whether or not their wives could be recommended on several criteria, and whether or not her parents had given their consent.
- If a missionary returned to England to find a "suitable" wife, he could take up to a year before returning to the field with his bride.

Today most agencies have even more specific policies about marriage and family. Zealous candidates sometimes are just "sure" their marriages are strong and want exceptions made for them to go. However, the stresses of cross-cultural living take their toll today just as they did two hundred years ago, and it is not wise to push for exceptions to such policies.

Though everyone probably has some reservations about serving in another culture, husbands and wives must be sure that they have much in common, have open communication, and that both really want to go. If that is not the case, great difficulties still occur today.

Further reading about Dorothy and Charlotte

Few people knew much about Dorothy's life other than that she was mentally ill until James Beck published his book

about her in 1992. His subtitle in the reference below reflects that fact. His book is still the primary source of information about her life.

Beck, J. R. (1992). *Dorothy Carey: The Tragic and Untold Story of Mrs. William Carey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Although little is known about Charlotte's life, some information is contained in Beck's book above. Other details are in the biography of William Carey written by George Smith in 1909 and available several places online. The most information is in Chapter 8, "Family and Friends."

<http://www.biblebelievers.com/carey/index.html>

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/smith_geo/carey/files/carey.html

<http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/gsmith/smith.htm>

...about the Author

Ron Koteskey and his wife, Bonnie, are often asked who they are and what they do. They have prepared the following information to answer those questions.

We taught for 35 years in Christian colleges as well as in public and Christian elementary schools. Bonnie taught elementary school as well as teacher education at the college level, and Ron taught psychology at the undergraduate level in college. Our three children are all married and have families of their own. As member care consultants with GO InterNational of Wilmore, KY, we are now retired and, as volunteers, we provide member care for missionaries. We are not licensed health care professionals, but we emphasize care, encouragement, growth, and prevention of problems rather than treatment of severe problems. We provide such care to anyone, anytime, and anywhere at no charge for our time, usually providing our own transportation to the nearest airport and asking that those we are helping provide ground transportation, lodging, and food. Rather than working as professionals for pay, we provide member care as amateurs in the original sense of the word—out of love rather than for money. We have a mailing list of about 175 prayer supporters as well as about 55 financial supporters.

We do whatever we can to help missionaries. We do not belong to any sending agency but help others as someone with no official connection to their agency. Listed below are things we are currently doing, but we are always open to new ways to help. Let us begin with the most general forms of help,

continue with helping missionaries through their years of service, and end with specific ministries.

Websites. We have two websites, www.missionarycare.com and www.crossculturalworkers.com. Both websites contain brochures and books which people anywhere in the world can visit to read, download, print, copy and distribute the information free of charge to anyone who can use it. www.missionarycare.com freely uses the term “missionary” and is easily found when people search for missionary care. www.crossculturalworkers.com never uses the term “missionary” so that anyone working in a culture where accessing material on missionaries would endanger their ministry can visit freely.

Brochures. Both websites contain 62 “brochures” on topics relevant to living in other cultures and working as missionaries. These brochures may be downloaded as .pdf files and distributed to anyone as long as they given to others free of charge.

E-books. Both websites contain E-books which can be downloaded free of charge by anyone, anytime, anywhere.

- *What Missionaries Ought to Know...: A Handbook for Life and Service* is a compilation of many of the brochures about missionary life.
- *Missionary Marriage Issues* is a compilation of many of the brochures about married life for couples serving on the field.
- *Before you get “Home”:* *Preparing for Reentry* is written for use several months before returning to your passport country.
- *Coming “Home”:* *The Reentry Transition* can be used as preparation for debriefing in a group, when being debriefed by an understanding person, or to debrief yourself.

- *We're Going Home: Reentry for Elementary Children* is a story and activities for children 6-12 years of age.
- *I Don't Want to Go Home: Parent's Guide for Reentry for Elementary Children* is a companion book written specifically for parents to help them assist in their children's reentry.
- *Third Culture Kids and Adolescence: Cultural Creations* is written specifically for adolescent TCKs. Of course, the information in it is also applicable to other adolescents.
- *Understanding Adolescence* is a companion book written specifically for parents of adolescents.
- *Raising Resilient MKs: Resources for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers* was edited by Joyce Bowers and first published by ACSI in 1998.

Database. A database with more than 800 references to published material about missionary member care is on www.missionarycare.com. Those visiting this database can find reading lists or annotated bibliographies on any of more than 100 topics. They can also find lists of materials published by particular authors.

Missionary Care by Radio. Trans World Radio broadcasts in 180 languages to reach people through radio. TWR has begun a daily 15-minute program in English with broadcasts reaching from Central Asia through North Africa, and you can find out more by visiting www.membercareradio.com. TWR is adapting the brochures to a format suitable for broadcast to let Christians working in this area of the world know that they are neither alone nor forgotten.

Orientation. In an effort to decrease attrition, we participate in the training of new missionaries. We have made presentations on expectations, generational differences, moral purity, and conflict resolution. Of course, during our time at

orientation we are available to talk privately with any missionary candidates who want to see us.

Seminars. We present information on various topics to a variety of missionary groups. We have done seminars on third culture kids, leadership, generational differences, conflict, anger, adolescence, maintaining mental and physical health, maintaining sexual purity, and psychology from a Christian perspective. We have made these presentations to groups as varied as the entire missionary force of one agency, missionaries on a field, seminary students, university students, field directors, national pastors, retirees, and appointees.

Missionaries in Our Home. Missionaries have stopped by our home to discuss issues that concern them. We have talked with individuals and couples about a variety of topics ranging from grief to interpersonal relationships to debriefing when they return to the states. These are often people who have met us in larger group settings such as conferences, retreats, orientations, seminars, or perhaps discovered us on our web page.

Missionaries on the Field (from Our Home). Missionaries serving on their fields are unable to stop by our home, so we have communicated with them in a variety of ways. Of course, telephone conversations are always helpful, and long distance rates between most countries are now quite reasonable. E-mail is free, but the time between sending a message and receiving a reply may be rather long. Skype is free and instantaneous.

On-Site Visits. At the invitation of missionaries, we visit them on the field to help them cope with various issues. We do this only if everyone involved wants us to come, and we have the blessing of the mission agency. At these times we have talked with individuals, couples, and groups of

missionaries. We are not sent by the agency, but go only when invited by the missionaries themselves.

Care of Missionaries in a Geographical Area. We are seeing the realization of a dream we have had for several years, a dream of providing care for missionaries from many different agencies in a given place. We go on a regular basis to the same missionaries so that they will get to know us and feel free to talk with us, rather than just going to help in a crisis situation. We visit Bolivia on a regular basis, talking with 30-35 missionaries from five different mission agencies each time.

Reentry. We facilitate reentry retreats for missionaries in transition as they return to the USA. This includes a group debriefing as we talk for two days about where they have been, where they are now and where they are going.

Missionary Kids. Since we live near a college that has a rather large number of TCKs, we were very involved with them while we were teaching at the college. Of course, now that we are retired and travel more, we are unable to keep up the same active relationship. However, we do let them know that we are available to help them however we can, and they contact us for everything from taxes to borrowing things to personal problems.