

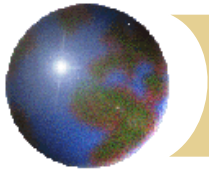
# Caring for Missionaries in Transition



How to Help in Challenging Times



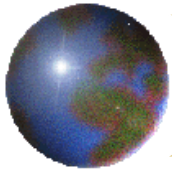
**您的光临,是我们的荣幸!**  
**WELCOME FOR COMING!**



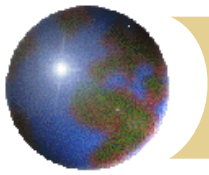
# WHAT IS TRANSITION?

✚ “Transitions in our lives are those events or non-events, that alter our roles, relationships, routines and assumptions.”

-Nancy Schlossberg, *University of Maryland College Park*



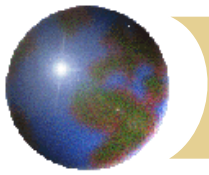
# WHO ELSE GOES THROUGH TRANSITION?



# WHO ELSE GOES THROUGH TRANSITION?

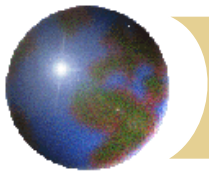
- ⊕ Military personnel
- ⊕ Immigrants & Refugees
- ⊕ People who move domestically
- ⊕ College freshmen (and seniors)
- ⊕ Anyone who:
  - ❖ Goes through adolescence
  - ❖ Gets married
  - ❖ Changes schools, jobs, churches, etc
  - ❖ Becomes a parent
  - ❖ Gets divorced
  - ❖ Retires
  - ❖ Has a serious illness or injury
  - ❖ Faces the death of a loved one

**LIFE IS FULL OF TRANSITIONS!**



# TRANSITIONS MISSIONARIES FACE

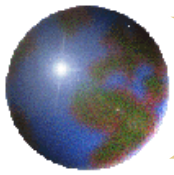
- ✚ Regular life transitions (e.g. parenthood, empty-nest, retirement)
- ✚ (Possibly) Unanticipated events (e.g. serious illness or accident, natural disasters, coups, change of Call)
- ✚ Transition to the overseas setting: leaving “home” to go to a foreign country
- ✚ Transition back to the homeland: going “home” to a changed (and sometimes foreign-feeling) country



# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

- ✚ What is Reverse Culture Shock?
- ✚ What causes Reverse Culture Shock?
  - ✚ The problem of PREPARATION  
(or the lack thereof)
  - ✚ The problem of EXPECTATIONS

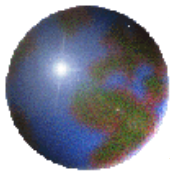




## WHAT THEY EXPECT COMING HOME TO BE LIKE

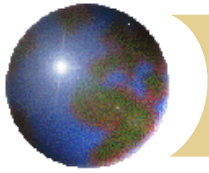






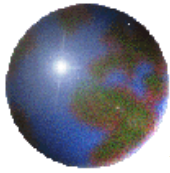
WHAT THEY FIND COMING HOME IS ACTUALLY LIKE





# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

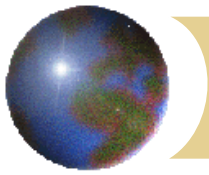
**Home:** the place where we experience security, understanding, trust, safety and belonging.



# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

**Home has three key elements:**

- ✚ Familiar places
  - ✚ vs. New places
  - ✚ vs. Changed places



# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

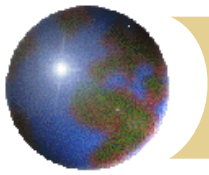
**Home has three key elements:**

- ✚ Familiar places

- ✚ Familiar people

- ✚ vs. New people at church, work, kids' schools, neighborhood, businesses, etc.

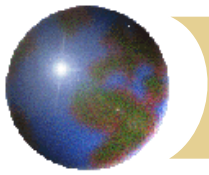
- ✚ vs. Changes (external & internal) in the missionary AND in friends & family brought about by several years of unshared experience



# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

**Home has three key elements:**

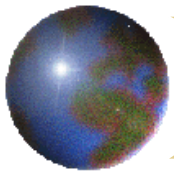
- ✚ Familiar places
- ✚ Familiar people
- ✚ Routines and predictable patterns of interaction.
  - ✚ vs. No structure or routine
  - ✚ vs. Not knowing where to find things or how to do everyday things
  - ✚ vs. Misreading social cues (verbal and non-verbal)



# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

For many missionaries and nearly all MKs, the U.S. does not feel like “home” immediately.

To feel “at home” here they must transition from familiar life overseas to a new life in the U.S.



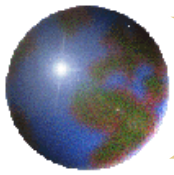
# Understanding the Process

## ✚ INVOLVEMENT

- ▣ Belonging
- ▣ Security
- ▣ Responsibility
- ▣ Commitment







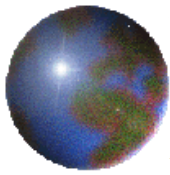
# Understanding the Process

## ✚ INVOLVEMENT

## ✚ LEAVING

- ✚ Celebration/Farewells
- ✚ Loosening Ties
- ✚ Letting Go
- ✚ Denial
  - Sadness
  - Resentment
  - Guilt
  - Expectations

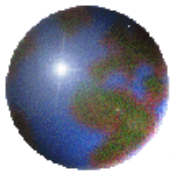




# Understanding the Process

- ⊗ INVOLVEMENT
- ⊗ LEAVING
- ⊗ TRANSITION – CHAOS
  - ⊗ Statusless
  - ⊗ Structureless
  - ⊗ Clueless
    - Exaggerated Problems
    - Exaggerated Behavior
    - Self-centeredness
    - Misunderstandings
    - Painful feelings:
      - Anxiety
      - Grief
      - Disappointment

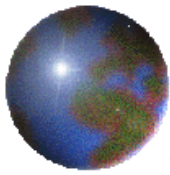




# Understanding the Process

- ✚ INVOLVEMENT
- ✚ LEAVING
- ✚ TRANSITION
- ✚ ENTERING
  - ✚ Marginality
  - ✚ Superficiality
  - ✚ Uncertainty
    - About where/how you fit in
    - About behavioral cues
    - About who to trust
  - ✚ Vulnerability
  - ✚ Ambivalence

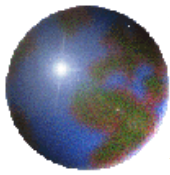




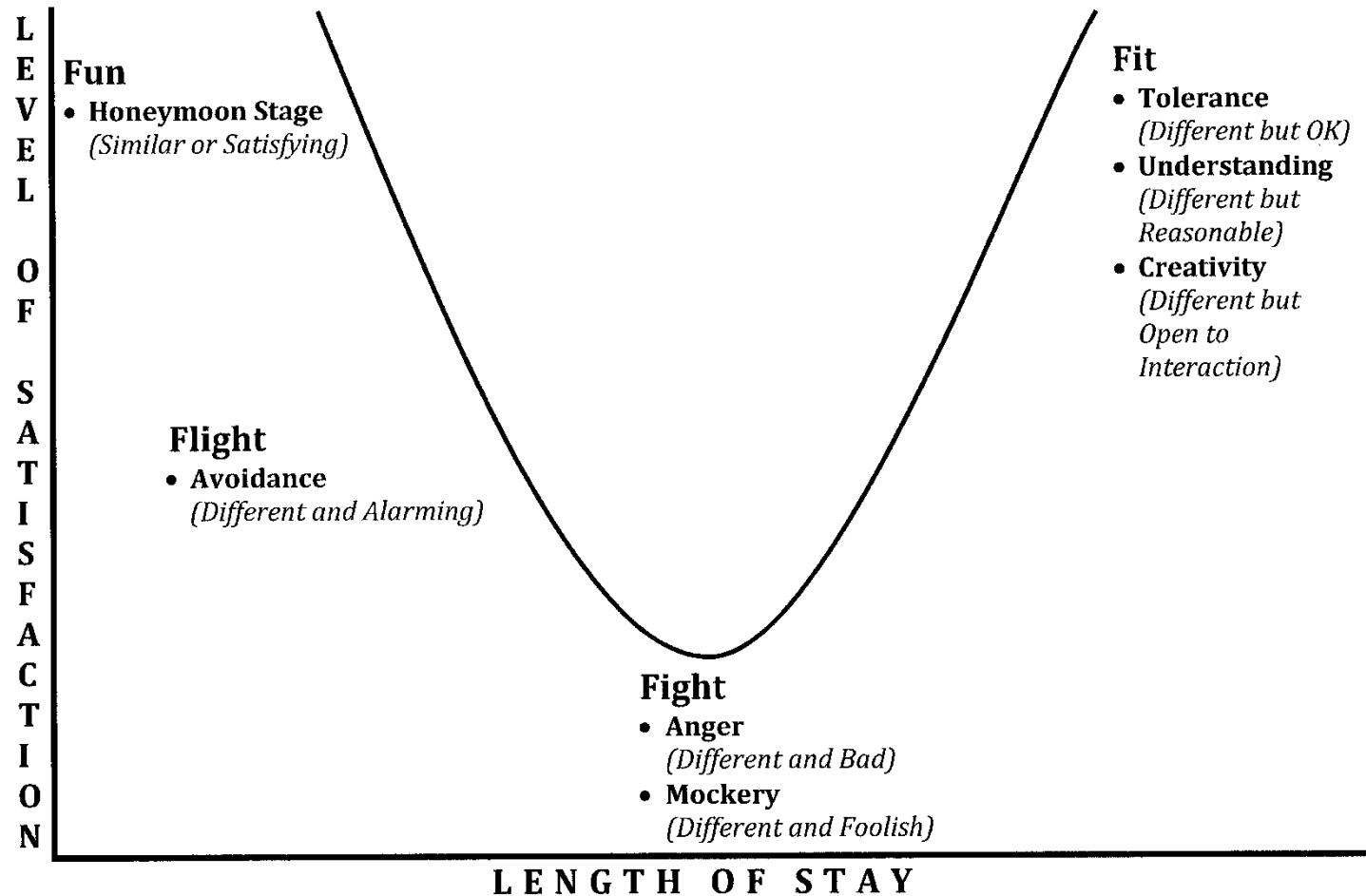
# Understanding the Process

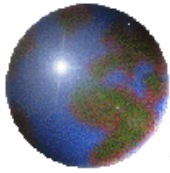
- ⊕ INVOLVEMENT
- ⊕ LEAVING
- ⊕ TRANSITION
- ⊕ ENTERING
- ⊕ RE-INVOLVEMENT
  - ⊕ Belonging
  - ⊕ Security
  - ⊕ Responsibility
  - ⊕ Commitment





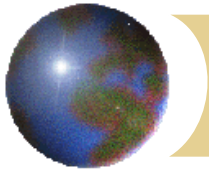
# CULTURE STRESS





# SPECIAL SITUATIONS

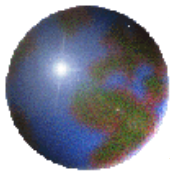
- ✚ Leaving the mission field permanently.
- ✚ Home not-by-choice.



# BONUS ISSUES FOR TCKs

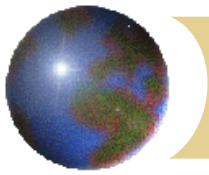
- ✚ Uneven maturity
- ✚ Extra unknowns
- ✚ Loss of home & world
- ✚ Loss of identity
- ✚ Unresolved grief





# WHAT YOU CAN DO

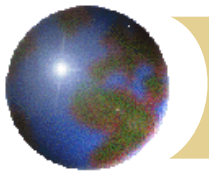




# WHAT YOU CAN DO

## DURING ANY TRANSITION

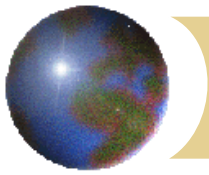
- ✚ Pray for them!
- ✚ Remind them of your love and support through letters, emails or calls.
- ✚ Advocate for them in your church - bring their needs to the attention of others who can join you in praying and supporting them.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

## DURING THE TRANSITION BACK TO THE U.S.

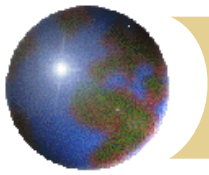
- ✚ Meet their immediate needs.
  - ✚ Welcome them at the airport.
  - ✚ Provide a place to stay - somewhere to call “home” for a while.
  - ✚ Offer meals for the first few days or stock their refrigerator and cupboards with supplies for cooking.
  - ✚ Arrange a vehicle for their use.
  - ✚ Make sure they have immediate financial needs met.
  - ✚ Arrange for medical and dental care, if needed.
  - ✚ After a week or two, hold a church gathering where they can meet people and share about their ministry.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

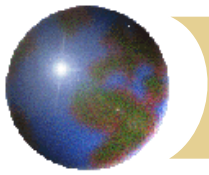
## DURING THE TRANSITION BACK TO THE U.S.

- ⊕ Meet their immediate needs.
- ⊕ Help with long-term adjustment.
- ⊞ **The Problem:** Conflicting advice / different needs.
- ⊞ **The Solution:** Listen! Ask questions. Listen some more!



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

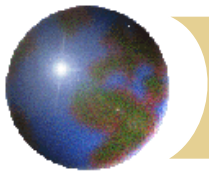
- ✚ What did you like about being overseas? What will you miss most?
- ✚ What were some of the biggest challenges you faced living overseas? How are you feeling about those things right now?
- ✚ How has living overseas changed you? How has living overseas affected your values? What new skills, knowledge, or attitudes have you gained?
- ✚ What have you learned about God through your experiences overseas? Where are you at spiritually?
- ✚ How has home changed? What differences have you noticed here so far? How do you feel about those?
- ✚ What has been the most difficult part of the transition back so far?
- ✚ What has been hardest for your spouse and children?



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✚ Show interest.
- ✚ Don't be offended when they criticize their home country and constantly compare it unfavorably with overseas.
- ✚ Don't make them feel like there's something wrong with them.
- ✚ Don't pressure them to visit all the time.
- ✚ Don't spring family/church problems and responsibilities on them too soon.
- ✚ Above all, be patient!

Adapted from The Art of Coming Home by Craig Storti



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

## Bonus suggestions:

- ⊕ Be a mentor or help them find a mentor
  - ⊞ Take them shopping
  - ⊞ Offer practical/technical support and advice
  - ⊞ Invite them to church, sit with them, and introduce them to others who share some of their interests or experiences
- ⊕ Care for their kids