

# Cross-Cultural Worker Marriage Issues

Ronald L. Koteskey

Member Care Consultant  
New Hope International Ministries

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

[ron@crossculturalworkers.com](mailto:ron@crossculturalworkers.com)

[www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com)

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## Preface

Why write a book about issues in cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural worker 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 Cross-cultural Workers 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 may have taken their spouses to other cultures as they served there. However, we do not have any actual examples in Scripture where this was done.

To find a well-documented account of a married couple serving cross-culturally, we have to move forward in time about 1700 years to the beginning of the modern cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural worker sending agency. Soon William volunteered to go to India as a cross-cultural worker, 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 cross-cultural workers.
- January 16: Knowing that Dorothy was reluctant to go as a cross-cultural worker, 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 (or even if) they would meet together again as a family.
- 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 Agency 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 Cross-cultural worker**

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 cross-cultural workers.” 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 cross-cultural workers” influence those of cross-cultural workers that followed? Did William learn anything from this sad ending? Did sending agencies learn anything from it?

We will return to this story repeatedly in future chapters as we consider cross-cultural worker marriage issues. (To find out immediately what the people involved learned, read the “What about Charlotte?”, the last chapter.)

## Chapter 2

### I Don't Want to Go!

Dorothy is a prime example of a spouse who did not want to go as a cross-cultural worker. 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 cross-cultural worker 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 overseas.

Another cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural workers during the next year, they accept people who they probably would not take under other circumstances and exert pressure on prospective cross-cultural workers to go.
- Churches. Although some mega-churches may support many cross-cultural workers and have member care for their cross-cultural workers, other smaller churches sponsor two or three couples overseas without any of the “infrastructure” needed to care for them.
- Independent cross-cultural workers. 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 cross-cultural worker, 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 cross-cultural workers 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 an agency in some capacity in their passport country, with neither of them going to serve in another culture. This enables them to be involved 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 cross-cultural 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 cross-cultural workers. 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 cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural 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 “cross-cultural 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, agency 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 1 Timothy 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 cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural work 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 cross-cultural workers, 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 cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural workers.
- Travel. People who want to see the world or have adventures may seek these through cross-cultural work.
- Going home. People who grew up overseas may be looking for a way to get "home" and find it through cross-cultural work.
- Quotas. Some churches or agencies set goals to send a certain number of cross-cultural workers 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 cross-cultural service is a good way to avoid this conflict and stress in their marriage. It may also prevent their causing problems in the cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural worker. 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 cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural workers 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 cross-cultural workers and given to such work, 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 cross-cultural worker who can help sort things out may be even more helpful. In no case should they go until both have the sane 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

# Relationship Time

As we saw in the first brochure in this series, 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 he was a pastor and cross-cultural worker. William was so consumed with pastoral and agency work that he had little time left for anyone in his family.

Most people in cross-cultural service today are not that blatant about ignoring their family, at least not in statements about their priorities. Most cross-cultural workers 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 cross-cultural workers 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 5

### 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 cross-cultural workers 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 cross-cultural workers 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 cross-cultural work attending a Conference on Computing and Cross-cultural work wrestled with the dilemma of what to do when they found evidence of pornography on cross-cultural workers’ 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 cross-cultural work 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 administrators over cross-cultural workers 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 6

# 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 7

### 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, cross-cultural workers 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 agency 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 “cross-cultural workers” 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 cross-cultural workers’ 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 8

### 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 cross-cultural workers there in India. However, those cross-cultural workers 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 cross-cultural worker, 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 agency 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 cross-cultural workers. 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 cross-cultural worker 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 Cross-cultural worker Society began to screen for marriage and family issues even before Dorothy's death. About the turn of the century the Wesleyan Cross-cultural worker Society began producing a policy book that shows changes over the years.

- In 1818 cross-cultural worker 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 cross-cultural worker 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.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 New Hope International Ministries of Wilmore, KY, we are now retired and, as volunteers, we provide member care for cross-cultural workers. 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 165 prayer supporters as well as about 55 financial supporters.

We do whatever we can to help cross-cultural workers. We do not belong to any sending organization but help others as someone with no official connection to their organization. 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 cross-cultural workers through their years of service, and end with specific ministries.

**Books.** Six E-books are available on the website and can be downloaded free of charge by anyone, anywhere, anytime.

- *What Cross-cultural Workers Ought to Know...:A Handbook for Life and Service* is a compilation of many of the brochures about cross-cultural life.
- *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.
- *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.
- *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.

Twenty-five of the brochures have been translated into German and published in a book, *Was Missionare wissen sollten...*, translated by Friedhilde Stricker and published by Verlag fur Kultur und Wissenschaft, Bonn, Germany (2003). It is available online at [www.haenssler.de](http://www.haenssler.de).

**Brochures.** The brochures on the website are also available in printed form for cross-cultural workers who do not have email or who have to pay the kilobyte for downloading their email. We mail one copy of any brochure (or all of them)

to anyone anywhere in the world who requests it. We give permission on each brochure for it to be copied and distributed as long as it is given to others free of charge.

**Cross-Cultural Worker Care by Radio.** Trans World Radio broadcasts in 180 languages to reach people through radio... TWR it has begun a daily 15-minute program in English aimed at Christians working in situations where communication through any other means may expose the workers and jeopardize their lives and ministry. The program is broadcast so that it reaches from Central Asia through North Africa, and you can find out more by visiting [www.twr.org](http://www.twr.org) and [www.memcarebyradio.com](http://www.memcarebyradio.com). TWR is adapting the brochure 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 cross-cultural workers. 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 cross-cultural worker candidates who want to see us. Currently we help in three orientations per year.

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

**Cross-Cultural Workers in Our Home.** Cross-cultural workers 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 people who have met us in larger group settings such as conferences, retreats, orientations, seminars, or even discovered us on our web page.

**Cross-Cultural Workers on the Field (from Our Home).** Cross-cultural workers 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, but may be quite expensive between some countries. E-mail is free, but the time between sending a message and receiving a reply may be rather long. Instant messaging by typing messages from computer to computer as well as via voice communication from computer to phone is free, and we do that on a regular basis.

**On-Site Visits.** At the invitation of cross-cultural workers, 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 organization. At these times we have talked with individuals, couples, and groups of cross-cultural workers. We are not sent by the organization, but go only when invited by the cross-cultural workers themselves.

**Care of Cross-Cultural Workers in a Geographical Area.** We are just beginning to see the realization of a dream we have had for several years, a dream of providing care for cross-cultural workers from many different agencies in a given place. We want to go on a regular basis to the same cross-cultural workers 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 have begun by spending a couple weeks in Bolivia talking

with about 30 cross-cultural workers from five different agencies in the spring of 2003 and again in the spring of 2004. We also presented seminars on various topics to different groups of cross-cultural workers, and we plan to return to Bolivia on a regular basis as further opportunities arise.

**Reentry.** We facilitate reentry retreats for cross-cultural workers in transition as they return to the USA. This includes a group debriefing as we talk for two or two and a half days about where they have been, where they are now and where they are going. As a part of this we have written a 50-page booklet, *Coming "Home": The Reentry Transition*, which is available on our website for anyone to download and use even if they are unable to come to a retreat. Currently we do four reentry retreats (50-60 cross-cultural workers total) each year.

**Organization Conferences.** We have participated in organization conferences when invited to give churches suggestions on how to care for the cross-cultural workers they support financially. In these seminars we give suggestions above and beyond prayer support and financial support.