

# Memories and Musings about Missionary Member Care

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## Preface

I did not sit down to write this book. It is a compilation of several short items I had written just for myself so that I would not forget what had happened. Some of the events occurred many years before I was born, and the last chapter is still incomplete. I plan to update the book (complete that chapter) in a couple years and then continue updating it every five years after that as long as I am able. I wrote this book for myself, but I believe it may be of interest to others serving in member care.

Part 1 of the book is about events that happened to me and my actions and reactions. This part of the book is based on my memories, journal entries, information from books, information from periodicals, information from the Internet, and so forth. Much of this is subjective and not well documented.

Part 2 of this book is facts about the websites [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) and [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com). It is based on statistics gathered automatically by stat packages that come with the hosting service, emails about when books or brochures were posted, when the database was updated, and so forth. These are well documented facts. I taught statistics for 35 years, often twice a year, so gathering this information was second nature for me.

As with everything I write, I owe much to the editing skills of Art Nonneman and Yvonne Moulton. They add information, correct grammar, and make my writing look better than it really is.

## Part I

### The Author's Story: Can This Be Me?

When Marjory Foyle wrote her autobiography, she noted that she and her sister had talked about people who write their autobiographies and concluded that such people must be proud and self-centered. However, other people often told her that she should write her autobiography so that people could learn how God works in human lives. I have not had people urge my autobiography, but I have had missionaries interested in becoming member care providers ask to hear my story about how I got into member care.

This is not a full autobiography, but it is the story of my becoming involved in member care. It includes information about my becoming involved in missions generally, as well as specifically how I became involved in member care. There is no mystery about my being involved in missions because I have been exposed to missions all my life and at least involved in terms of praying for missions and giving to missions. However, my personal involvement in member care, and especially in writing resources for missionaries, would not have been expected from my abilities in early life. That is the reason for the title, *Can this be me?*

## Chapter 1

### Before I was born

Even before I was born events occurred in the lives of my ancestors to produce the context in which I developed. Some of these events occurred in my family centuries ago, and some occurred during the year preceding my birth

#### In the Distant Past

While I was growing up in Michigan at the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, relatives of my grandparent's generation were very "proud" of the fact that our ancestors were followers of John Huss. As a child this meant little to me because I had no interest in something that happened 600 years ago on another continent. Even as an adolescent I had little appreciation of that fact.

#### 15<sup>th</sup> Century: John Huss

According to oral history in my family, my ancestors were from Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic) and followers of John Huss (Jan Hus or John Hus). Born in Bohemia in 1369, Huss became the preacher at Prague's Bethlehem Chapel which was the most popular church (seated 3000) in the city. His sermons were preached in Czech (not Latin), and he argued that Christ alone is head of the church,

that a pope could make mistakes, and that to rebel against an erring pope is to obey Christ. When he refused to recant his reform ideas, he was burned at the stake in 1415, just 16 years before Joan of Arc was also burned at the stake and a century before Luther posted his 95 theses. More than 500 years later people on both sides of my family were proud to say that their ancestors were followers of John Huss

Huss' teachings had a strong influence on many countries in Europe and especially on Martin Luther himself. John Huss' followers became called the Hussites, and they founded the Bohemian Brethren church in 1457. Hussites continued to be persecuted, and many moved to Moravia where their church became the foundation for the Moravian Brethren which had a strong emphasis on missions. In 2008 *Christianity Today* subtitled an article about Huss as a "Pre-Reformation Reformer" <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/131christians/martyrs/huss.html>.

### 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Moravians

Moravian missionaries played a role in the conversion of John Wesley more than three centuries after Huss was martyred. These Moravian missionaries were involved in "member care" for John Wesley as he was on his way to America in 1736 to become a missionary in the new world. While they were crossing the Atlantic a violent storm struck their ship. Wesley and other Englishmen screamed in terror, thinking they were going to die, but the Moravians sang calmly on. Wesley met with them again in America and then later after he returned to England as a missionary attrition statistic in 1738. The church my ancestors founded when they came to America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was heavily influenced by Wesley. "The Moravians and John Wesley," an article in *Christianity Today* in 1982, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/1982/issue1/128.html>,

quotes extensively from Wesley's Journal where he refers to the Moravian Brethren as Germans and describes his conversion.

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Immigrants

Continued persecution drove ancestors on both sides of my family over into Germany. On my father's side of the family, about 1880, Charles and Mary Koteskey and their son, Charlie, emigrated from Germany and homesteaded on what came to be called Bohemian Road near the village of Horton Bay on the shore of Lake Charlevoix in Michigan. My grandfather, John Koteskey, was born there in 1882.

At about the same time, on my mother's side of the family, Joseph and Charlotte Spura homesteaded on the next parcel of land up Bohemian Road. One of their daughters was Margaret (Maggie) Belknap, born there in 1893. In addition, at that same time the West family, also Bohemians from Germany, homesteaded the next parcel of land up the road.

These families spoke Bohemian, and no one in any family spoke English. However, my ancestors were devout Christians, and they began meeting in each other's homes, then in the local school. William Watson's book, *History of the Michigan Conference of the Evangelical Conference of the United Brethren Church* 1961 (p. 366) states, "The Bohemian speaking people in this area, on the north side of Lake Charlevoix had for many years been known for their piety and devotion to Christ. As a result of the fervent prayers of these people, many were converted in that year (1895), and in 1897 the first Sunday school was organized. The church was built in 1898 and the parsonage in 1899" (p. 366).

All of the children born into these immigrant families were Third Culture Kids where Bohemian was spoken in their homes, and they began public school unable to speak English. Of course, they soon learned the language in school, and they then grew up between the Bohemian and English cultures—with a bit of German culture as well. Although my

great-grandparents learned English, they still spoke Bohemian in their homes, especially when they prayed aloud. My grandparents (TCKs) were bilingual and could still converse in Bohemian in their later years, and they also spoke English as a first language.

My great grandparents, Charles and Mary Koteskey, had eight children who survived into adulthood, and half of these TCKs entered the ministry in some way. Charlie and Bill became ordained pastors, Martha became a pastor's wife, and Ed became a local pastor who filled in when needed for pastors in the area. Watson's book on the history of the church noted that the church had 48 members by 1960, and it listed eleven people who had gone into full-time Christian service—eight of them have their roots in Bohemian road.

Today the church is not much larger, but it has a plaque with the names of nineteen people who grew up there and entered Christian service. Eight of them are Koteskeys, and one is my Uncle George, son of Maggie Spura Belknap who grew up next door to the Koteskeys on Bohemian Road. Byron Belknap was pastor of the church 1911-1914, and his son, Benjamin, married one of the young ladies on Bohemian Road, so one of my great grandfathers was a pastor.

Since grandparents on both of sides of the family from Bohemian Road grew up in that same Evangelical church, it was little wonder that I also became a Christian in that church about the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that I was open to full-time Christian service.

### **The year before I was born**

That was the distant past context, but two events the year before I was born had a more personal effect on my childhood and adolescence. Close relatives on both sides of my family left for missionary service with World Gospel Mission in 1941.

### **April, 1941: Zamzam**

On the night of March 20, 1941, The Zamzam, an Egyptian passenger ship, steamed out of Hoboken, New Jersey, to return to its home port of Alexandria, Egypt. Four stops were scheduled: (1) Trinidad (island), (2) Recife, Brazil (eastern tip), (3) Cape Town, South Africa (southern tip), and (4) Mombasa, Kenya. That southern route was chosen so that the neutral ship could avoid the war taking place in Europe. The United States was not involved in the war at that time.

As the Zamzam headed toward the open sea, many of the 201 passengers aboard gathered on the deck and spontaneously began singing hymns. The passenger list included 144 missionaries serving with 20 protestant denominations as well as 17 Catholic priests. Also aboard were 33 children, some only infants and toddlers, and five of the women were pregnant. Three of those passengers were my Uncle George Belknap (Mother's brother), Aunt Peggy, and my cousin Martha.

The voyage to Trinidad and Recife went as planned, except that the captain had decided to travel in full blackout which destroyed the ship's appearance of neutrality. The Zamzam left Recife, Brazil, on April 9, 1941, and at dawn on April 17, the German raider *Atlantis* attacked the Zamzam, firing 55 shells at it near Cape Town, South Africa.

The nine shells that hit the ship sunk it. As the *Atlantis* approached the sinking ship, the German officers realized they had sunk a passenger ship, and they rescued the survivors—everyone on the ship. Although some of the passengers were injured, none were killed. The German officers warmly greeted them, apologized, and then had to decide what to do with the 142 Americans—they were not at war with America.

On April 18 the passengers were all transferred to a small German freighter, and that ship went north and east through the British blockade to German-occupied France. On

May 21 WGM received a telegram from Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, saying that the passengers were safe in France. Passports and visas were re-issued in France, and then Uncle George and Aunt Peg went through Spain to Portugal. Within a few weeks, ships brought them back to the USA.

Uncle Bill Koteskey (my grandfather's brother and also from Bohemian Road) was their district superintendent, and he offered them a church to pastor in southeast Michigan. A few months later WGM sent word that that they would like to send them to Africa going west through China and India. Unfortunately, before they could leave, something else happened to make that route impossible. Most of this information is from the *Call to Prayer*, the publication of WGM in 1941.

Many people do not know about the Zamzam. Those interested in more information can view a good video by the Lutheran Church on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHFrX3nwF0U>. Those who would rather read about it can find good information at: <http://dren.us/zamzamship/>.

### **December, 1941: Hawaii**

Later in 1941, Hollis and Ruby (Koteskey) Abbott departed from San Francisco to serve with World Gospel Mission in India. Ruby was my father's cousin, daughter of Charlie, another of my grandfather's brothers. As planned, they entered Honolulu harbor on December 7, 1941, and they heard the explosions in nearby Pearl Harbor.

Mark, their oldest son, said that Hollis and Ruby were not very frightened when they heard what was happening in Pearl Harbor because they had the outlook of many Americans at that time. Hollis told Mark, "With all this air power, the Japanese would never dare attack." The missionaries thought it was just "war games." Of course, it was much more than that as the Japanese attacked.

The Abbotts soon found a ship to take them from Hawaii to Wellington New Zealand. After five days the ship put out to sea again and went south around the south island of New Zealand, around the south and west sides and up to Tjilatjap in Java where they were told their ship was going no further. Within a week they found a ship leaving nearby Batavia (Jakarta) bound for Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) where they caught a train to the north end of the island. From there they crossed to Madras (Chennai) and caught a train to Bangalore where they arrived safely twelve weeks and two days from the time they left San Francisco. Most of this information is from the *Call to Prayer*, the publication of WGM in 1941.

Combining a heritage from the distant past and stories from the recent past from both sides of the family, it was no surprise that I became interested in missions.

## Chapter 2

### Childhood and Early Adolescence

My parents lived in Horton Bay, Michigan, about a mile from where their own parents had grown up. My grandfather, John Koteskey, owned the property behind the church, but the house and barn were at the end of a half mile long driveway; so my father grew up there on the hill. My mother's parents, Ben and Maggie (Spura) Belknap owned the General Store which was less than a quarter of a mile down the road from the church; so they knew each other from childhood.

When I was born my parents lived about half a mile from the places where they grew up. Using Google Earth, one can draw an equilateral triangle with the points at the house where Dad grew up, the store where Mom grew up, and the house where they lived, with each of the three sides about half a mile long.

#### A brand from the burning

Although I do not remember it, another event happened when I was about six months of age. My parents left me sleeping in the kitchen/dining room while they went across the road to rake leaves in my uncle's yard. While gone, they left something on the burner or in the oven to cook while they raked. When they returned and opened the door, the house was filled with smoke from whatever was on the stove. When they

carried me outside, I was foaming at the mouth. Although someone there said I didn't have a chance, I survived.

I was told this story repeatedly as a child, and I remember they often finished by saying that I was "snatched as a brand from the burning." I did not know what that meant other than thinking that God must have kept me from dying because there was something he wanted me to do. Little did I know that John Wesley had referred to himself using these terms.

In fact, in 2003 Hattersley titled Wesley's biography *The Life of John Wesley: A Brand from the Burning*. When Wesley was six years of age their house burned down, and he was plucked out of the flames. He never forgot that. The *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* defines "brand from the burning" as meaning a rescued person or a convert, and it points out that the phrase comes from Zechariah 3:2 and Amos 4:11.

#### Santa Claus

I vividly remember an event during my early childhood years. The Koteskey family often gathered for a family Christmas time during which Santa Claus came to deliver presents to everyone. One year we gathered at my Uncle Harold's cabin, and we heard a noise on the roof. Everyone was concerned that Santa would get burned if he tried to come down the chimney. I ran outside and convinced Santa to come down a ladder standing by the house. Everyone thanked me for saving Christmas for the family. I was very proud of myself!

The next Christmas we met in another family member's house across the road, and Santa arrived as usual and came in through the door. As he was handing out presents, I noticed that under his coat he wore a shirt exactly like the one my Uncle Don was wearing. I looked around to find Uncle Don, and he was not there. Then I noticed that Santa's voice was a lot like Uncle Don's, and I suddenly realized that Santa was not real. I had really believed in Santa, and my whole family had lied to

me about it. I didn't say anything at the time, but I was quite disillusioned. This event would come up years later.

### **Elementary school**

I remember beginning my education at the Horton Bay elementary school, the school where my grandparents and my parents began their education. The school was next to the church with only the playground and the half-mile driveway to Grandpa John's house on the hill between. In the short distance to the school I passed the parsonage where the pastor lived and the general store where my mother had grown up. It was a one room school with kindergarten through grade 6 and one teacher. I remember learning to read from "Dick and Jane" readers, still widely available as used books. I loved to read, and those reading grades were very good. That was not the case with any other subject with the grades in English usually the lowest with no comments.

### **Junior High School**

My junior high years were quite traumatic for me because my father was laid off at the beginning of my sixth grade. We moved south to Pontiac, Michigan, for most of the school year before moving back north. We lived in three different places in Pontiac, and I attended three different schools. In seventh grade we moved to Florida for most of the academic year, and I withdrew from many things socially. Students were required to keep track of books they read other than those assigned in classes. I read 50 such books!

I always liked to read, but I never liked to write. We had moved back to northern Michigan for my eighth grade. During that year my abilities were clear. Math was my best subject, and writing was my worst. Every grading period the "arithmetic" grades were the highest grades on the card, all A's. The lowest grades on the card were in "English," all B's.

### **Missions**

I remember very little about missions during my early years. Of course, I played with my Belknap cousins who were about my age when they came back to the USA from Burundi. They seemed very much like other playmates at home, although my cousin, Georgie, did tell us how good the ants tasted in Burundi. One time when they arrived home the whole extended family gathered at our grandparents' home for the first meal together. Grandpa Ben asked Uncle George to thank the Lord for the food. As we bowed our heads, a prolonged "Oooooooo Loooord" came from Uncle George. We all prepared for a long prayer when a rapid "Thank you for this food, Amen" came out. Peals of laughter filled the room.

Uncle George and Aunt Peggy had the first movies of missionary work I remember seeing in the 1950s. I remember seeing Georgie picking up and eating the ants. I also remember watching movies of Uncle George who had killed a lion that had been attacking nationals who lived in villages there and seeing the nationals being so grateful for his protecting them.

Finally, a red electric clock hung on my childhood home, and it was always mentioned that Uncle George and Aunt Peggy had given that to my parents before they left for Burundi in 1941.

At 13 years of age, I realized my need of a Savior. During a spring series of revival services at which a Reverend Mullet spoke. This was not the first time that I felt under conviction with my heart pounding knowing that I should respond. Many times I had gripped the seat in front of me and refused to go forward as the invitation was given while the congregation sang "Just as I Am." However, this time I responded to the invitation to come to the altar to receive Jesus as my savior. That was the beginning of my personal relationship with Christ. I remember being rather disappointed that I did not feel radically different the next morning because I

had heard others tell about how different things were after their salvation.

Something occurred the next time an invitation was given and the congregation sang “Just as I Am.” As before, my heart started pounding. How could that be? If I had been born again, why would the old response still be there? Did that mean I was not saved? That happened several more times, and finally my heart did not pound any more at those times. I did not realize until years later that the pounding heart was just a conditioned response!

## Chapter 3

### Called to Preach?

Throughout my elementary and junior high education math was my strongest (and easiest) subject, and writing was my poorest subject. This trend continued through high school.

#### High School

I took every math course taught in my high school. All grading periods and all exams in math courses had the same grade, A. However, I seldom got an A in English. During the last semester of English Composition my senior year, I decided to try my best on the term paper, a major part of the grade. I tried my hardest to see if I could make an A. I worked on it weeks in advance, finishing it far ahead of the deadline so I could go over and over it. I got a B+. Math was fun and easy because the “rules” were always the same, but English composition was filled with “exceptions” that I could seldom remember. I could spell quite well, and I could write in complete sentences, but grammar and punctuation had too many exceptions.

#### Preaching

At some time during my last couple of years of high school I attended revival meetings at the other church on our

charge. At the end of one of the meetings I responded to another invitation, and after praying at the altar, I felt God calling me to some special form of full-time Christian service. I knew of only two kinds of such service, and those were pastor or missionary. At that time I gave testimony to being called to preach, and I began moving in that direction. I chose to go to a Christian college to prepare for seminary.

At that time the church made a practice of asking people called to preach to speak in an evening service. I did this several times. Then during a time of doubt I was asked to preach and tried to develop a sermon, but my doubt about the Bible being God's word was so great that I could not bring myself to speak when the time came. From the pulpit, I told the congregation about my doubts and asked the people to come pray for me at the altar. As people gathered around me, I found I could not trust what members of my family said because they had told me that someone we could not see (Santa Claus) was real, and that was not true. Finally, a visitor that evening, Ollie McCoy, said something that made sense to me. "The Bible cannot be the words of good people because it says it is God's word. It cannot be the words of evil people because it condemns them to hell. So it must be God's word." Although I could give a more sophisticated answer now, that convinced me then, and it is still a good answer.

## Missions

Also about that time some people in our church began a WGM Prayer Band, something that would be expected with the relatives of both the Abbotts and the Belknaps attending there. I attended, not because I sensed any call to missionary service, but because Christians were supposed to pray for the lost.

In 1959 several members of my mother's family went to Detroit to greet Uncle George's family when they landed at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Before this they had traveled to and from Burundi by ship, but this time we could greet them

when they landed. As soon as my grandmother saw her son (George) get off the plane, she went running out onto the tarmac to embrace the son she had not seen during the last four years. Security then was quite different from now, and no one even tried to stop her. Then the whole family went to another aunt's house in Detroit for a wonderful reunion, and I got to see my cousins again.

## College

When I left for college later in 1959, Grandpa Ben gave me a drawing of a young man in a very small sail boat with one triangular sail on which "EDUCATION" was written. The man's hand was on the handle to the rudder. "BIBLE" was written on that rudder. The caption said, "Give her all the sail she'll take, Lad. Just keep a firm grip on the rudder." That has been a great influence for the rest of my life including everything from getting a PhD to writing material for my websites.

As a freshman I took a year of classical Greek in preparation for seminary. I was also required to take a year of Freshman Composition. By some odd twist of fate I tested into Section A (the highest one) of Composition. Since I could not write well, I decided to try a different way to get my "A." Miss Taylor, an elderly lady apparently could not see well at all. I sat in the front row every day to be sure that she could see that I was there. I made it a point to answer at least one question every day. I tried to look interested in all that was going on in the class.

Miss Taylor called roll at the beginning of each class, and each one there answered, "Present." After she finished calling roll, the guys in the back row often climbed out the window! The class was held on the ground floor of the building, and the ground was only about six inches below the window sill. I do not believe I ever missed the class—I got my A (but I still did not know how to write).

During my sophomore year I took another year of New Testament Greek in further preparation for seminary. In addition I took the second course in General Psychology and was fascinated by it. That was the beginning of my major in psychology. A major in psychology seemed to be a good choice because pastors can use it both in interacting with parishioners in general and in counseling those with problems specifically. I was pre-enrolled in seminary during this time.

One of the highlights of the psychology course was how we used it on our professor, Dr. Paul McNeely. The course was offered during winter quarter at 11:00 AM, just before lunch at noon. Many of us wanted to get out of class early so that we could beat the crowd descending on the cafeteria as soon as classes were dismissed at 11:50. We had studied about classical conditioning and soon noticed that Dr. McNeely was no longer dismissing class when the bell rang, but he did so when students began putting their coats on.

Applying our new knowledge about stimuli and responses we used the new stimulus of putting on coats. We designated a person sitting in the center of the front row to put on his coat earlier and earlier before the bell rang at 11:50, and we all followed by putting our coats on. Over time we ended class at 11:45, 11:40, and 11:35 with no problem. However, one day when he put his coat on a little before 11:30 and we followed suit, the chimes on the roof sounded as we were walking out the door—causing him to look at his watch. We never got out of class early again, learning that cognitive variables can overrule conditioned responses.

## **Bonnie**

During my freshman year I was a member of the Ministerial Association on campus, as were a number of other “preacher boys.” One of the ministries of the association was a jail ministry to men and women who were prisoners in nearby cities. Each Sunday morning those going to minister in the jails

met on campus for a time of prayer, and then divided into 8-10 groups before leaving. I became the person in charge of the ministry to the Boyle County jail in Danville, about 20 miles away.

The first Sunday of my sophomore year, as we were singing in the jail, I looked down the cell block and noticed a beautiful young lady standing on the steps singing so the women on the second floor could hear and see her. On the way back to Asbury I nudged my roommate, pointed to one of the young ladies in the back seat, and said softly, “I’m going to date that girl.” Our first date was the next Saturday night—and we married when she graduated four years later. She went to one jail service, got a husband, and never went to another jail service.

Of course, that developing relationship influenced me in several ways relative to missions. When I found out that she attended Foreign Missions Fellowship (FMF) Saturday afternoons, I also began attending as well. She also attended the WGM Student Involvement group in a home near the campus. Neither of us felt any call to missions, but supporting missionaries would become part of our lives.

## Chapter 4

### Called to Teach

Growing up in a small village for a while, then on a farm about three miles down the road, and then attending high school (graduating class of 53) in the county seat ten miles further, I had never met a psychologist or psychiatrist. I do not remember any counseling centers or counselors anywhere within 50 miles. There was a state hospital (insane asylum) about 50 miles away in Traverse City, but we seldom visited the city, so I remember driving by it only once or twice.

I had no idea at that time that there was any conflict between psychology and many Christians. I was surprised to find that there was great hostility between psychology and Christianity during the 1950s and the 1960s. Psychology was the science of behavior, but many of those involved in treating the mentally ill and counseling people with problems were influenced by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. This resulted in psychology being rejected by many Christians. Likewise, many psychologists viewed Christians as needing the "crutch" of religious beliefs or even as being mentally ill.

As a result, there were very few Christian psychologists, especially in the field of general/experimental psychology. I found psychology to be fascinating and decided to major in it. I talked about it with Lee Fisher who taught most of the psychology courses. I also talked with Dr. Charles Keys, our class sponsor, since at that time students did not have individual

advisors. I felt that God was calling me to do something that I had never considered, teach to prepare future pastors rather than becoming a pastor myself.

#### Finishing College

In addition to taking psychology courses, I realized that I would need a reading knowledge of two languages as research tools to get a PhD degree; so I took a year of German my junior year. I also took the course in statistics in the math department to prepare for graduate school—as well as three or four advanced math course just for fun.

Bonnie (my wife to be) and I discussed this change in my major, and she approved being the wife of a psychologist rather than the wife of a pastor. My parents and grandparents supported this change in direction. However, some other people thought I should not do it.

During my senior year at Asbury, Ruby Abbott, the cousin of my father, who had sailed into Honolulu Harbor on the way to India as Pearl Harbor was attacked, talked with me in the kitchen of her father's home up on Bohemian Road near Horton Bay, MI. She pled with me with tears stream down her cheeks, not to go into psychology, that I would lose my soul if I did so. She said that it was terrible, even worse than philosophy. I questioned what I was doing, because here was a missionary with more than 20 years of service questioning what I was doing.

#### Graduate School

In 1963 I began doctoral work at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, in the program General-Theoretical Psychology to get as broad a background as I could as preparation to teach in a Christian college. This was basically a program in experimental psychology, and I chose to major in Learning (Animal). That time was near the beginning of the cognitive revolution in

psychology, and Wayne State was on the cutting edge with a new Center for the Study of Cognitive Processes. Within the department I had minors in cognitive processes and statistics and outside the department I had a minor in mathematics.

I made it through graduate school on what writing skills I had. I knew the answers, and most teachers did not take off many points for the minor errors I made. When it came time to write my doctoral dissertation, I chose to develop a mathematical model to explain the partial reinforcement effect in learning and then to test some of the predictions it made. Rats given food each time they ran down an alley to the goal box quit running sooner when the food is discontinued than do rats given food only part of the time. The body of this dissertation was only 79 pages long, and it contained many mathematical equations. The appendix contained the derivations of many of those difference equations. So I had the fun of using some of my math knowledge and had many fewer words than most dissertations.

During the fall of 1966, while running my dissertation study, I met a faculty member in the hall. He was not on my committee, and I had never had him for a class, but he knew I was conducting my dissertation research. He said that I needed to begin planning for where I would work after graduating. I said I was going to teach at Greenville College, a Free Methodist college in southern IL. He was aghast that I was going there.

Once a week for six consecutive weeks other faculty members or students met me somewhere to tell me why I should not go to Greenville. My advisor, a graduate of Stanford University, arranged for me to have a post-doc for a year at Stanford saying, "A year in San Francisco can't hurt anyone." Another told me how much money the state of Michigan had wasted on me; another told me how the faculty had wasted four years each on me; and another said I would drop into oblivion and they would never hear from me again. The sixth week my advisor called me aside and told me that he wanted to make sure

I understood that he did not approve of what I was doing; he had just given up on me.

I was terrified about what they might do to me during the final defense of my dissertation! I knew that they could refuse to sign my dissertation meaning that I would not get the PhD. However, none of them really understood my mathematical dissertation, because they did not know difference equations. They asked only trivial questions, and they did not make me make any changes in the dissertation. Apparently they had all given up on me and just wanted to send me on my way.

### **Greenville College**

I taught at Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois, for three years in the late 1960s. My training was in experimental psychology, so I taught courses in that area during that time, courses such as statistics, experimental psychology, and physiological psychology. I did get a grant from the national institute of mental health, but it was for an experiment with rats! I never taught courses in counseling or clinical psychology. However, learning theories and the animal experiments forming the foundation of those theories were the basis for many of the clinical techniques that helped suffering people to change maladaptive behaviors.

### **Asbury College**

I taught at Asbury College for 32 years beginning in 1970. During the first 20 years the subjects I taught were similar to those at Greenville. In addition, I taught history and systems of psychology and developmental psychology as well as some other subjects. Although I never taught courses in counseling or clinical psychology, many of my students became counselors, pastors, or missionaries. About five years after I completed my PhD, I really wanted to write about the integration of psychology and Christianity. I asked several of

the English professors to critique what I wrote. Instead of correcting me they tried to be encouraging with comments like, “Keep trying, you really have something to say.” I didn’t need encouragement to write, but I did need to be told what I was doing wrong, why it was wrong, and how to do it right. I finally had Dr. Richard Sherry critique something I had written, and the paper came back so red that it looked like he had bled all over it.

That was just what I needed! I said, “Rich, if I pay you by the page, will you edit everything I write?” He agreed, so for a whole year he read everything I wrote. The red marks grew fewer, the clarity got better, and I learned how to at least get the mechanics of writing correct. I was not then, and still am not now, a really good writer; but I am able to say things well enough in writing to get the ideas across.

### Scholarship

After I learned to write, I wrote dozens of journal articles and half a dozen books, mostly related to the integration of psychology and Christianity. The first two books were self-instructional volumes about General Psychology published by Christian Academic publications in the late 1970s. The second two books were written for scholars and professionals. *Psychology from a Christian Perspective* and *General Psychology for Christian Counselors* were published by Abingdon Press in the early 1980s. I soon realized that my writing had less influence on either students or professionals than I had hoped. Therefore, I wrote *Understanding Adolescence* for parents and *The Love Triangle: Sex, Love, and Dating* for adolescents, published in the late 1980s by Victor Books. These books also went out of print after the initial printing.

Although I had learned to write, I seemed to have little impact on anyone. I had no idea that material in all of these books would impact thousands of missionaries in the future. At

that time I had no idea how life would change relative to what Bonnie and I were doing.

### Changes

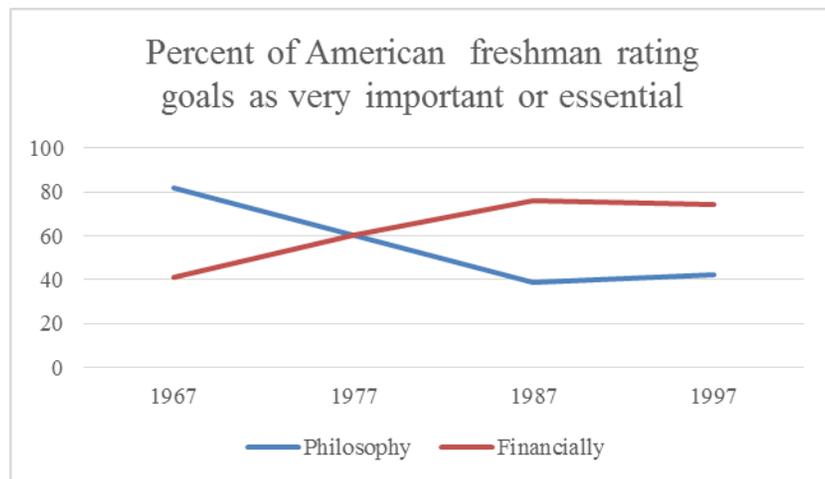
I had gone into teaching seeing my role in the Great Commission as one of preparing people to be pastors and missionaries. When I began teaching at Asbury College in 1970, psychology was one of the largest majors on the campus, and about half of the graduating psychology majors went on to seminary for further preparation. Others went on to graduate school, into youth ministry, and into a variety of other lines of work.

With my background in statistics and love of math, I was the one in the department usually preparing data for reports and various kinds of assessment. I watched the percentage of psychology majors going into “full-time Christian service” gradually drop from about 50% to about 10%. This was not working out as I had thought it would.

At about the same time the psychology department changed the general psychology textbook used to *Psychology* by David Myers, a gifted writer and Christian professor of psychology at Hope College. Several editions of his text included a graph of the results of the UCLA Education Research Institute annual survey that they have conducted each year for half a century. The American Freshman survey asks about 200,000 freshmen at all types of colleges and universities many questions, and one set of questions asks them about their goals and values. One of those questions asks them to rate “Being very well-off financially” and another asks them to rate “Developing a meaningful life philosophy.” The figure below shows how the answers have changed over the years, actually beginning the year I began teaching.

In 1967, my first year of teaching, about 80% of freshman thought that developing a meaningful philosophy of life was important, and 40% thought that being very well off

financially was. A decade later, in 1977, the freshman thought both goals were equally important. Still another decade later by 1987, they had completely reversed so that only 40% thought that developing a meaningful philosophy of life was important, but 80% thought that being very well off financially was. Those percentages have continued at that level for the next quarter of a century.



When I began teaching, very few students took short-term missionary trips or served overseas for a summer. The longer I taught the more short-term mission trips they seemed to make, but the number of long-term missionaries seemed to be declining. Also, by the end of the 1980s I had more and more children of “helicopter parents”, and more and more students were postmodern in their thinking (although I did not know the term at the time, I could see it frequently). All of these, as well as other factors, led to my becoming more and more disillusioned with teaching.

## Chapter 5

### Called to Care

Bonnie and I had always supported missionaries, and by the late 1980s had shares in a dozen, one for each month of the year. We attended missionary conferences at Asbury, invited missionary speakers to stay with us when at conferences in Wilmore, and prayed for missionaries. Then an event occurred which we did not expect to really change our involvement in missions.

At that time we had been teaching upper elementary children’s Sunday school classes for several years. Another teacher, Jenny Cochran, told us several times that we needed to take a short-term mission trip sometime. Her husband served with Missionary World Service and Evangelism, an agency which took many such trips each year. We always told her that we were not interested.

Our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary occurred during the summer of 1989, and we were trying to decide what to do to celebrate that event. Our children were all in college or had already graduated, so we were free to travel. We had considered taking a cruise but thought that did not sound like something we would enjoy. Of course, Jenny again told us that we ought to take a short-term mission trip. We looked at the list of teams available, and the trip to Brazil fit our schedule for the summer, and we could afford the price.

### The Call

We took the trip to celebrate our first 25 years of marriage, and it radically changed the next 25 years of our marriage. We had traveled with our children to all of the 48 contiguous states in the USA as well as to southern Ontario in Canada. However, we had never visited a culture outside of North America. We didn't even know enough to buy a travel guide.

#### Brazil

The stated purpose of the trip was to help with the construction of a church in the city of Iguassu Falls in southern Brazil across the river from Paraguay and Argentina. Of course, we were amazed at the beautiful falls and the immense Itaipu dam. But the thing that impressed us the most was the people. The congregation of 75 people was building a church that seated 500 even in the presence of open demonic forces. Passers-by would stop and work with us just to get to speak English, and the poverty in some parts of the city was obvious.

During the daily devotional times, C. V Elliott made clear to me the importance of the "clans, and languages in their territories and nations" in Genesis 10 to the "every nation, tribe, people, and language" in Revelation 7. I had not even realized that the Greek word often translated "nation" was "ethne," literally ethnic groups, not the political nations of the world.

#### Call

As Bonnie and I talked together in our room there in Brazil, we realized that we were both sensing that we had to do something more in missions than we had been doing. It was not a specific call to Brazil or any other country. Nor was it a call to do any particular thing. It was just a call to become involved personally in missions rather than just donating to the

missionary cause and praying for missionaries and the nationals they were reaching.

#### Effects

After we returned from our trip it was obvious to friends and colleagues that the mission trip had profoundly changed us. We told different groups what we had experienced and what we were thinking of doing. One colleague told me that I was just going through a mid-life crisis and I would be OK in a few years. A lady in our Bible study group said, "Don't worry, it will wear off. Mine did." I replied that I did not want it to wear off. Of course, we prayed that God would lead us into what we should do and where we should go.

#### Searching (Exploring)

Not having a specific call, Bonnie and I wanted to be open to whatever God wanted us to do and wherever he wanted us to go. We attended conferences, talked to people from different agencies, tried doing different tasks and so forth. We continued to pray each time for his guidance.

#### Conferences

Of course, we continued going to the annual mission conferences at Asbury College and talking with representatives from many different agencies as we had done previously, except that now we were interested in what we might do. Agencies at that time held annual conferences in different parts of the country. Missionaries on home ministry assignment were present, so we went to at least one every summer.

## Countries

We went to Spain with OMS International in 1990 to give presentations to Spanish nationals about the “invention” of adolescence and its implications for Christians. This was a topic on which I had written a couple books and spoken about to many groups here in the USA. The presentations went well, and people seemed interested, but making presentations while visiting a field did not seem to be where God was leading.

We went to Bolivia with World Gospel Mission in 1991 to help write a proposal for a USAID (American Schools and Hospitals Abroad) grant to build an Evangelical University in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. I had never raised funds before, but I wrote the first draft of the proposal, and Bob Swan at WGM completed the proposal and submitted it to USAID. We were granted \$650,000 to build the university, but I felt no real sense of satisfaction in doing this. It did not seem like a personal involvement.

We went to Jamaica with Christian Service International during the summers of 1992 and 1993 to hold a daily VBS for the children with renewal services for adults in the evening. The first year we went as a part of the team, and the second year we recruited and led a team. Again this did not seem to be where God was leading.

## Agencies and Tasks

When we approached agencies about serving with them, the conversation often went something like this.

Agency representative: “What do you do?”

Bonnie: I am an elementary teacher.”

Agency representative: “Wonderful, we can use you on many fields. Ron, what do you do?”

Ron: “I teach psychology in college.”

Agency representative: “Wonderful, we need counselors.”

Ron: “I’m not a counselor. I am an experimental psychologist and teach subjects such as statistics, experimental psychology, and physiological psychology. I am an expert in rat learning.”

Agency representative: “Perhaps you could be a church planter.”

Many agencies had rats on several fields, but none of them wanted those rats taught anything. However, nearly every agency could use counselors.

## Commitment

During October 1991 Bonnie and I went to a conference on the Teaching of Psychology at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. The conference ended on a beautiful fall day, so we decided to stay there another day. We noticed that Natural Chimneys Park was nearby, so we decided to spend the afternoon there. We found that the national jousting tournament has been held there every year since 1821. We didn’t even know that there was such a sporting event.

We climbed more than 100 feet to the top of one of the chimneys and sat there looking out over the beautiful Shenandoah Valley watching an Amish family come up in their buggy and people on horses there to practice their jousting. As we sat there we decided to commit our future completely to God by giving him everything about our future. For several hours we went over things one by one. Most things were relatively easy because we had already committed them to the Lord. However, some major things were harder. Giving up tenure was the most difficult thing for me nearing 50 years of age, and giving up our house filled with so many memories was the most difficult thing for Bonnie.

After that we returned to our motel and rested well for our trip home to Wilmore to finish fall semester. We still did not know what we should do. I realized that counselors were needed, but I was not one. I also realized that by the time I

became one, I would be nearing 60 years of age, and told God that. Of course, another related similar question is how old would I be then if I did not become a counsellor?

### **Respecialization**

During spring semester of 1992 I looked into what was available at the University of Kentucky in Lexington a half hour's drive from Wilmore. I finally decided to return to school and get a master's degree in counseling psychology. When I talked with people there at UK I discovered that they had a respecialization program in which people like me could become licensed in psychology in about the length of time it would take to get a master's degree.

### **Return to graduate school**

In 1992 I began that respecialization program in counseling psychology at the University of Kentucky. During the next four years I took graduate courses at the University of Kentucky half time while continuing to teach undergraduate psychology courses at Asbury College full time. At the same time I also took courses for a minor in Marriage and Family studies at Asbury Theological Seminary.

I also took counseling psychology practicums at the University of Kentucky, at Asbury College, at Asbury Theological Seminary, and at Ridge Behavioral Health in Lexington Kentucky. These gave me experience in counseling in a variety of situations and with various clients.

### **EPPP**

With the course and practicums behind me, the next step to becoming a licensed psychologist was to pass the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology. This test assesses a person's knowledge of psychology to make sure he

or she knows all that is needed to practice psychology. It is required by all state boards for licensure. When I passed that I could serve an internship and be licensed, and I had an internship all lined up in a neighboring city.

I had studied all areas of psychology to make sure I would pass the test, and I passed the test with a good score. However, as I studied for that licensing exam, I ran across two things that changed what I was planning to do. First, much research had shown that counseling by para-professionals was as effective as that by licensed psychologists or counselors. I saw no reason to spend two years in a supervised internship if it would not make me more effective. As a result, I cancelled my internship and prepared to enter member care as a trained layman who loved and cared for missionaries rather than as a psychologist.

The second thing I ran across was a 1993 article in the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* by Christopher Rosik in which he studied who missionaries would like to see for counseling. He asked 114 missionaries if they would prefer to see a counselor affiliated with their own agency or one not with their agency. Among missionary candidates less than 1/3 preferred seeing a counsellor outside their agency, but among missionaries who has served on the field and needed restoration 88% preferred a non-agency counselor. So I chose to be a lay counselor available to anyone who wanted to talk with me rather than joining a sending agency.

### **Database**

Now that I basically had the "counselor questions" resolved, I needed to learn about missionary member care. At that time there were no degrees or even courses in member care. Very little was written about member care before 1990, but I wanted to read everything I could find about it. I knew that my fifty-year-old brain could not remember facts like it did when I was in my 20s. In my PhD program in the 60s I had learned a

method of using card files to store information I had read, and card files have long memories. .

Thirty years later computer databases could do the same thing, so I learned enough about Access to store the data and retrieve what I wanted instantly. As I read any article, book, or chapter in edited books, I entered that data in the database. Now that database has more than 900 entries, and I can get a bibliography on any of more than 100 topics about missionary member care. I can also get an annotated biography that includes a summary, outline, and a quote from each item.

This database which began as a memory aid for me is now on missionarycare.com so that other people can use it. To date others have viewed nearly a million full citations of articles.

### **Models and Mentors**

In the spring of 1995, Steve Stratton, director of the Asbury College Counseling Center, returned from a conference of directors of counseling centers at Cristian colleges. He told me that he had just met someone who was actually doing what I had been talking about doing. He gave me the phone number of Chuck Lewis, director of the counseling center at Wheaton College.

That evening Bonnie and I were talking with Chuck and Sue Lewis who told us about missionary member care and about the annual Conference on Mental Health and Missions in northern Indiana. I went alone to that conference in November to see what it was like. I called Bonnie at the end of the first session and said, “You’re coming with me next year. These are our kind of people.” We have never missed that conference since then.

Chuck and Sue were our models of what we wanted to be. We asked them to be our mentors and help us get from where we were on the staff of a Christian college to being involved in missionary member care. We met with them every

year they were at that conference, corresponded with them by email, and talked with them by phone during the year. Each year we asked, “What should we do next?” Finally one year Chuck said, “Go for it!”

### **Bloom where you are planted**

Chuck and Sue encouraged us to begin our member care ministry while still on the Asbury College campus and in response to other opportunities that presented themselves. We did so.

### **Help Third Culture Kids (TCKs)**

One obvious ministry we had on campus was to the TCKs on campus. We did the following:

- We began corresponding via email as soon as they applied.
- We met them at the airport.
- We were part of their TCK orientation on campus.
- We attended most Mu Kappa functions, such as movies, camping, and parties.
- We helped them with their income taxes and other cultural things.
- We took them shopping and helped them get needed legal items.
- We invited them to our home for dinner every other Sunday.

This ministry was helpful not only to them but also to us as well. We had hundreds of TCKs in our home over the years, and many times we just sat and listened to them talk, learning about them. For example, near the end of her first semester one young lady said, “I am SO homesick!” I mentioned that her family was less than three hours away. She said, “I don’t miss my family. I miss my country!”

Another time three TCKs were talking about another one on campus, and one said, “She may have lived overseas for two years, but she’s not a TCK. She doesn’t think like one.”

### **Assist Agencies**

Chuck and Sue also urged us to help however we could when mission agencies asked us to do something. While attending the 1998 OMS conference held here on the Asbury College campus we met Jim and Lois Ogan in the cafeteria line. We told them about our call and our ministry. They had just had someone cancel for part of cross-training, their orientation, which was to begin in two weeks. They asked us to help. We did a presentation on missionary conflict, and that was the first of many times of being part of the OMS orientation.

In 1999 John Muehleisen at WGM asked us to be part of their Forum, a meeting of all missionaries on deputation as well as retired missionaries. We did sessions on conflict management, adolescence, and generational differences. That led to our facilitating many reentry retreats for WGM missionaries.

### **Respond to needs if possible**

In 1997, a TCK we met when she was a student at Asbury College and had gone to the University of Kentucky when I was respecializing there telephoned from Bolivia. She was on the faculty teaching psychology at Bolivian Evangelical University in Santa Cruz, and a problem had arisen there. We discussed the issues involved, and I advised her as well as I could, and then we hung up. Right after we hung up, it occurred to me that I had been preparing for the previous five years for such a time as this. I immediately called her back and offered to come down to Santa Cruz if she thought that would help. She thought that having someone from outside the institution would be helpful.

Bonnie and I had been discussing what we would do when it came time for us to begin traveling to visit missionaries. We had been talking about it with New Hope International Ministries, a group of volunteers who served to help people in other agencies. This seemed to be the time for us to formally join NHIM as member care consultants, and we did so. We went down to help at the university in Bolivia, and we even had the privilege of staying in a house on the campus of the university we had helped to build by writing the first draft of aUSAID grant request.

### **Brochures**

I was corresponding frequently with TCK prospective students from all over the world by the mid-1990s. About the same time Asbury College posted its website on the internet. It occurred to me that missionaries might be able to download member care information relevant to them from the internet if I could have it posted on the Psychology department pages of the College website. I checked with the department, and all members thought it was a great idea. Then I checked with Information Services, and they said they would be willing to have that material there. I submitted a proposal to New Hope International Ministries, and it was approved.

In 1998 I wrote a sample brochure, “What Missionaries ought to Know about Depression,” and asked six missionary couples on home ministry assignment here in Wilmore to read it and tell me if it was something that missionaries would read. I also asked them to suggest other topics for future brochures. All six couples said missionaries would read it, and all six couples suggested other topics. The only topic suggested by all six couples was one about conflict between missionaries, so that was the second brochure I wrote.

By fall I had written ten brochures, and they were posted on the Asbury College website. The webmaster also posted the database I had written for my own use in remembering what I

had read. He made it possible to search the database online or to download the whole database for people who were familiar with Access. In November I presented a paper at the annual conference on Mental Health and Missions about the resources available online, and I also gave everyone attending a floppy disk (3.5 inch) containing all of the information on the website. I thought that if I just gave the URL for the website, most of them would not visit it, but if I sent a copy home with them, probably more would look at it there.

These were the first things I had written for “publication” since 1991 (except for one article with a student doing most of it). Seven years with nothing published!!

## Chapter 6

### Caring for Missionaries

There are many ways to care for missionaries. Bonnie I have been involved in many of them during the last quarter of a century; however, more than half a dozen of these ministries have become major ways we have cared for missionaries and for their children. Four of those ministries lasted for several years, but for various reasons, they came to an end. Three of the ministries are still major ways we serve missionaries. Some of these are mentioned elsewhere in the book. Here is a summary of our major ministries during the last two decades.

#### Third Culture Kids

First, our ministry to TCKs at Asbury College began in 1996. We were both still working full time, but we had 50+ TCKs attending Asbury College. As soon as TCKs applied to Asbury, the admissions office would send me their email address, and we began corresponding with them as one of their prospective teachers who was interested in them.

When they arrived in Kentucky to begin their studies, Bonnie and I were available to help them. We picked them up at the airport, let them stay at our home until their dorm opened, were part of their orientation to the USA and Asbury, took them

to visit Wal-Mart (not to buy anything, just to look around), and anything else that would help during the three-day orientation.

During the semester we attended their activities, such as movie night at which *The Gods Must Be Crazy* was a favorite. We went camping with them in state parks in Kentucky. We made our basement available for them to use for parties or other gatherings. We were available to take them to get identification cards at the county court house, helped them with income tax, taught some to drive, and just helped in any way we could.

Probably most important was that we invited them up to Sunday dinner every other week. We invited about 35 each time, and 10-12 usually came. Freshmen were most likely to come, and seniors the least likely, which would be expected. We mostly let them talk with each other while we listened and learned much about them.

When I quit teaching in 2002, we intended to continue the ministry, but with me not on campus to interact with the TCKs and our travel increasing, we found that attendance at Sunday dinner decreased. The last time we had them up to dinner in the spring of 2004, only three attended. Two of them were sophomores, and one a senior! Not one new TCK in the two years was there. This ministry lasted 8 years.

### Personal Visits

Second, our first trip for member care was to Bolivia in 1997. One of my former students who was teaching at Bolivian Evangelical University called to ask us about a situation in the psychology department there. After talking about it, we offered to come down to help if she would like us to do so. She wanted us to come, our first time to visit missionaries in other countries. We made many other trips to Bolivia staying at guest houses with World Gospel Mission, South America Mission, and Evangelical Church mission when invited. We had a list of 50 missionary units and a mailing list of more than 100 to

whom we sent birthday and anniversary cards each year. These trips to Bolivia continued until 2009.

In the following years we visited missionaries on five continents (not Australia). We wanted to make repeat visits so that we could develop continuing relationships, and the longest lasting time for that was to visit teachers at a conference in Thailand. We were there to be counselors (along with others) to a group of 450-600 teachers in countries in Asia. Of course, while there we visited missionaries in Chiang Mai as well as those at the conference. Our first visit to Thailand 2005 and our last was in 2012. This ministry of personal visits lasted 15 years.

### Orientation

Third, in 1998 OMS International asked us to participate in their cross-training, a part of their orientation for missionary candidates. The person who was to do the sessions on conflict resolution cancelled, and they needed someone to do it. They also asked for a session on relationships. We became a regular part of cross-training for years, including sessions on expectations, generational differences, and so forth. We participated in these sessions two or three times each year and influenced well over 100 missionary candidates. At times we were also part of orientation with World Gospel Mission, and this continued until 2005. This ministry of orientation lasted 8 years.

### Reentry Retreats

Fourth, in 2001 we facilitated our first reentry retreat with World Gospel Mission. After that we did an average of about four reentry retreats each year for three agencies, including OMS International and The Mission Society for United Methodists. Most of the retreats were 2 to 2.5 days long and included about 8-10 sessions. We were available to talk

with individuals or couples during free times. We did 35 such retreats which included more than 350 missionaries. The last reentry retreat was in 2008, so that reentry retreat ministry also lasted 8 years. Since then individuals and couples come to us in Wilmore for a one or two day reentry debriefing.

### Brochures

Fifth, in 1998 I wrote the first brochure in the “What missionaries Ought to Know...” series. I had six missionary couples read the brochure and tell me whether or not missionaries would read them. I also asked them to suggest other topics that needed to be written—if the brochures were good. All six couples assured me that the brochures would be helpful for missionaries, and all suggested a variety of other topics. One topic was suggested by all 12 readers, and that was a brochure about conflict between missionaries. The second brochure I wrote was “What Missionaries Ought to Know about Conflict. These brochures were posted under the psychology department of the Asbury college website, and I added new ones until I retired.

These brochures were later posted on our two websites, [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) and [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com) when we moved them from the Asbury website. Now both websites have 106 brochures available to anyone, anywhere, anytime. As I am writing, people are downloading them at the rate of more than 600/day, about 18,000 each month.

### Websites

Sixth, in 2003 a former student finally convinced me that we needed our own website, and he became our webmaster. In addition to the material on the Asbury website, he suggested putting the “Ought to Know...” brochures into a book format so that people could get them all together. So we posted that book

and a book about reentry on [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com). Then we added more books.

When we were providing member care to people working in Southeast Asia, the people serving there told us that they were not able to visit a website that had the word “missionary” in its URL as well as references to anything about missions. So, in 2005 I went through all of the brochures and all of the books removing such words and rewording them so that they could be posted on [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com).

Now there are 17 books available on [missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) and 10 books available on [crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com). Some of the books simply did not make sense if I tried to remove missionary words. During the last six years people have downloaded an average of 50,000 books each year. That is an average of more than 100 books each day.

### Korean Member Care

Eighth, in 2011 several Koreans contacted us about translating the brochures into Korean and making them available online. The first brochures were posted on their website in 2012. Now they have 79 brochures available on their website, <http://www.anmcusa.org/>. People have downloaded more than 480,000 copies of the brochures. The All Nations Mission Center also has a three-week retreat to refresh and revitalize missionaries, and we are part of that. They are also in the process of translating five other member care books on [mssionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com).

### Specific Memories and Musings

Below, in alphabetical order, are titles of brief descriptions of memories I have about a wide variety of member care situations. These provide examples of situations, experiences or issues that persons newly entering the field of

member care may encounter. These are not intended to be read in any particular order, all are self-contained.

[Answers, not Paraphrases](#)

[Arsenic and Curry?](#)

[Breakfast in the Hotel](#)

[Cats](#)

[Changes in Students](#)

[Counseling at the Zoo](#)

[Counseling in the Sausage House](#)

[Cross-Cultural Marriages are Very Difficult](#)

[Devastated](#)

[Disconcerting Moments](#)

[Dogs](#)

[Donation Surprise](#)

[Earthquake](#)

["Early" Flights](#)

[Finding the Real Problem](#)

[First Reentry Retreat](#)

[Food and Water](#)

[Gaining Someone's Confidence](#)

[Goodwill Tour](#)

[Get to the Airport Early](#)

[Illness Everywhere](#)

[Informed Consent](#)

[Inoculations](#)

[Interesting Trivia](#)

[Jesus is a Wiener Mon](#)

[Kicking under the Table](#)

[Long Counseling Sessions](#)

[Look Poor, and Pack Smart](#)

[Lost Nail](#)

[Malaria](#)

[Many Independent Agencies, but no Denominations](#)

[Meet me at...](#)

[Member Care under Jet-Lag](#)

[Missionaries from Many Agencies](#)

[Mosquitos in the Night](#)

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### Answers, not Paraphrases

Most missionaries on the field want member care workers to give answers or suggestions, not to paraphrase what they just said. Unless they are dealing with deep personal problems, these missionaries are facing current problems they want to solve, and the member care person saying; “What I hear you saying is...” is of little help. Even empathy, saying something like, “I feel your pain...” is of little help.

Member care workers from a counseling or psychological background may find it difficult to step out of their therapeutic roles and into helper roles where they give possible solutions to the stated problems. We have found that even when we saw general personal problems that we could help solve, we found it best to begin by giving practical suggestions that might help solve the specific issue that was troubling the missionaries. Sometimes this meant waiting until a later visit to the field months or years later.

### Arsenic and curry?

We often enjoyed trying new foods when we were visiting missionaries in other countries. When they suggested that we try something, we nearly always did, and we usually liked it. When we were eating in small restaurants near hotels

where we were staying and there were no English translations, we asked the missionaries to write down the names of meals we would like.

Of course, some restaurants had English translations, and we could look at those and at pictures of the food. One time in China the menu picture looked good, and it was reasonably priced. However, we were not even tempted to try it when we noticed that the English translation said, “MIX ARSENIC INTO A POT OF CURRY...”

Although we like curry, we wanted to make sure some over-zealous cook did not get measurements mixed up. It was probably a poor translation, but we wanted to make sure!

### Breakfast in the Hotel

A complimentary breakfast came with the hotel room, so we found our way to the room where it was served. Nearly every eye in the room followed us as we found our way to a table and walked over to where the food was available. We were the only Americans there. Everyone looked Chinese. As we walked by the counter where the food was, we did not recognize anything, and the Chinese characters there had no meaning for us.

We each took a variety of foods and headed back to our table. We tried a bite of this and a bite of that, and found nothing that we cared for. I finally remembered that there was a McDonalds just down the street and asked Bonnie if she would like to go there for breakfast. Without hesitation she said she would. We continued to kind of push the food around on our plates and finally got up and left. At McDonalds, there were some English words on the menu as well as pictures of the food. We had a good breakfast of more familiar food.

## Cats

We stayed in the home of a missionary on our very first member care visit overseas. We were the only ones living in the house, but various nationals who worked for her came and went at different times during the day. At first, we did not even realize that a cat was living there with us.

When we began eating our first meal, a cat suddenly appeared and jumped up onto the table! We had both grown up on farms where we had cats and dogs, but we had never had one on the table. We chased the cat off and returned to our meal, but the cat came right back up. No matter what we did while eating the cat was there. We finally realized that the cat had the run of the house, even the top of the table during meals. The only way for us to have a meal without the cat on the table was to close the cat in another room.

The next time we visited that field we were in a different city and staying with another family. When we went into our bedroom and began getting ready for bed, we realized that the cats in that house lived under our bed. We found cats on the bed, throughout the house, but most often under our bed.

## Changes in Students

As the statistician in the psychology department at Asbury, I was the one who gathered data on students in the department for 30 years. To show that our students were learning psychology, I was the one to get their test scores at the beginning of their first general psychology course, at the end of that course, and during the required senior seminar at the end of their major.

Along with those scores, I kept records for a number of other things, including what the seniors did after they graduated. When I began teaching at Asbury in 1970 about half of the graduating seniors went to seminary to continue their preparation for “full-time” Christian service as ministers and

missionaries. This was just what I had felt called to do, prepare people for such a task. Less than a quarter went on to graduate school, and the rest did a variety of things.

Over the years, I saw the percentage of those going on to seminary declined. In 20 years the numbers going to seminary dropped to less than half of what it was, and the number going on to graduate school increased some. This was rather disconcerting to me.

As we moved into the 1990s, I found that I was having trouble thinking like the students did. One spring I told Bonnie that I must be really “out of it.” However, as the faculty lined up for commencement in order of rank and years of service, several of the people around me in the line were talking about the same thing. I went home and told Bonnie that I was not out of it, I was just getting old. That fall, in a committee meeting with faculty of all ages, I heard even the younger faculty in their 30s and 40s saying the same thing. I went home and told Bonnie it was not my being out of it or being old, everyone was saying the same thing. At that time I had not even heard of “postmodernism,” but when I did, I recognized it immediately.

I also noted a difference in student thinking about missions. Rather than saying it myself, here is a direct quote from the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Asbury, page 163. “The college commitment to world evangelism remained strong, but students themselves recognized the traditional role of the lifetime overseas missionary was in permanent decline. Now there were short-term missions trips and the ‘foreign immersion experience.’” Rather than preparing students, I determined to serve by attempting to keep missionaries already serving on the field.

## Counseling at the Zoo

While we were visiting in their host country, a missionary couple called and asked if they could take us to the zoo for half a day. Of course, we agreed to go. Then they

called back and asked if we could spend the whole day with them, and we agreed.

As we began looking at the animals, they began to talk about issues they were facing, issues on which they wanted our input. It was a fascinating day of stopping near a cage so that they could tell about the animal we saw. The animals in the zoo were different than the usual tigers, lions, elephants, and so forth from around the world; they were nearly all animals that were native to the country itself. The conversation would soon turn to an issue. Then we would move on to sit on a bench near some beautiful flowers that they told us about, and another issue came up.

This was repeated throughout the morning, at lunch, and through midafternoon. It was a fascinating day of getting well-acquainted with the couple, helping them, and learning about the flora and fauna in the county.

### **Counseling in the Sausage House**

We were at a small staff retreat meeting at the field director's home. One of the missionaries wanted to meet with us and had asked where we could meet alone for a couple hours. Although it was one of the larger homes on the field, there was no good place to meet in the house where we would not be disturbed.

After some thought, the field director and his wife suggested that we meet in the sausage house. Seeing our puzzled looks, they explained what they meant. They brought spices from the United States. Then they would buy a pig, slaughter it, grind it up, and make sausage like they could get at grocery stores in the USA. Other missionaries, both from their agency and other agencies, ordered sausage and they sold it to Americans all over the city. Sometimes the sausage house had a pig hanging in it, and sometimes the sausage was stored there. However, at that particular time, nothing was in it, and it was improbable that anyone would find us in the sausage house.

The three of us met in the small brick building, looking much like a large outhouse. It was clean and smelled a bit like the meat department of a grocery store, but it was cool, offered privacy, and no one disturbed us in the couple of hours we were there. That was probably the most unusual place where we had a counseling session.

### **Cross-Cultural Marriages are very difficult**

I knew that cross-cultural marriages were difficult, but I learned the hard way when we began visiting missionaries on the field. A young woman missionary had met a national about her age while in language school in the host country, but several hours drive from where most of the agency missionaries were assigned. We were there at a conference to which all agency missionaries in the country had come.

She asked to talk with us about marrying a national. He was not at the conference, so we did not meet him. Their fathers were both pastors of churches of the same denomination. Both of them had university educations and were working as professionals. They had met at his father's church where they were both on the worship team. Both his denomination and her agency had the same theological statement. If/when they married, he was going to join her agency, and they were planning to serve as missionaries in his country. With all of those similarities and the assurance from other missionaries in her agency that he was a good person, we told her that we could see no reason she should not marry him.

Unfortunately, we had underestimated the full result of being from different cultures. When we returned a year later, they were married. However, he soon found that he did not like her agency. The next time we visited the country, he was back up in the city where his father's church was, and she was serving where most of the rest of her agency was. By the next time we visited, they were divorced.

Knowing what we know now, after seeing many cross-cultural marriages in which a woman who has grown up in the USA marries a man from another culture, we would have recommended much more caution. We would have recommended that together they study *In Love but Worlds Apart: Insights, Questions and Tips for the Intercultural Couple* by G. Shelling and J. Fraser-Smith and/or *Intercultural Marriage: Promise & Pitfalls (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)* by Dugan Romano. Both were published in 2008. Intercultural marriages are not impossible, but they are very difficult.

### Devastated

After respecializing in counseling psychology and beginning to post brochures on the Asbury website something happened that devastated me. A class of six students rated my performance in a class. Five of those six students gave me the lowest possible rating on all the items, and they had all said that I was a very bad teacher, and many of the things they said were just not true. I was shocked and numb when I got the results.

I never fully recovered from that incident, the joy of teaching was gone. I had completed my preparation for member care and had already told the provost when I was leaving so that he and the department could begin to make plans to replace me. I taught those few years, and realized anew that God uses such things for our good. One good thing about it was that I was more ready to leave teaching and go on to what God had for me in member care.

Another good thing from having this experience is that it is common for missionaries to be rejected and betrayed by the people they have come to serve as well. When they tell me, “I do not understand,” I can describe what happened to me and assure them that the experience is common among missionaries and pastors. I must emphasize that this was not general behavior of our students, but it taught me that “anything” can happen even with good people.

### Disconcerting moments

While staying at the guesthouse of one agency we were meeting with people serving with various agencies. We met in the library to talk privately with them. To enter the compound, visitors had to come through the front door of the building containing offices and security. A couple from another agency in the city had scheduled an appointment with us, and we waited in the hall near the offices.

When we saw the couple nearing the entrance, we went out and met them on the sidewalk. As the four of us came into the building and started down the hall, one of the missionaries of the agency where we were staying met us and said to the entering couple, “Oh, so you are the ones. They said they had a really tough case this afternoon!”

I was shocked! I quickly turned to the couple that had just arrived and said something like, “I don’t know what he is talking about. I never said anything like that to anyone!”

Suddenly everyone was laughing! It turned out that the man who said it and the couple who had just arrived had gone to language school together and were good friends.

### Dogs

Many missionaries have dogs, especially those who live in houses that have enclosed yards. These dogs often look mean, growl a lot, and bark along the fence or at the gate. They are there to frighten nationals who may be looking for access to a place where they are not supposed to be.

Although these dogs appear mean and may jump up on strangers, we have never been bitten by one. We have received a few scratches on our hands or arms or some dirt or mud on our clothing, but the dogs are not usually dangerous. If one just stands still and lets the dog sniff all over, the dogs generally lose interest.

However, they may actually hurt someone occasionally. One Easter we were eating dinner with two missionary families. We adults were in the dining room, and the elementary age children were eating out on the porch. Suddenly we heard the dog growling and barking, along with fearful cries from the children. The parents ran out onto the porch and brought back a boy bleeding from bites in several places. The host's dog had for some reason turned on the guest's child. That was the end of our dinner together.

We had been trained to do a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, so we made arrangements to have a CISD the next day. Fortunately, both families were still friends, forgiving, and willing to talk. The one family had a frightened child, and the other family would lose its dog. It was a sad day for both.

### **Donation Surprise**

Looking over a statement of our account I noticed a donation of \$1000 from a Presbyterian church. Knowing that we seldom received donations that large and not recognizing the church, I immediately sent an email to GO International suggesting that they check to see if that donation was really for us, and if it was, to give me more information about the donor.

I immediately received an email saying that the donation was for us, there were no limitations on its use, and the church address was included. Bonnie and I had not been in the city where the church is, and we could not even think of anyone we knew who lived in that city. We visited the church's website. Nothing on the home page or history of the church would explain the donation, but we did find that the church had a real emphasis on missions. When we clicked on "Staff," we found the answer to our questions. The senior pastor of the church was a former student of mine. He was a psychology major graduating 44 years before that! What a delightful, unexpected surprise that was, and it enabled us to connect again.

### **Earthquake**

Mid-afternoon on May 12, 2008, Bonnie and I were seated near the transfer desk in the Xi'an airport waiting for confirmation that our bags were being sent on our next flight to Xining. We noticed a rumbling noise coming from below and speculated that the noise was coming from several trucks with large diesel engines below us in the terminal. Then we noticed that everything was shaking and people were running across the terminal. As we stood there in confusion a young Chinese man said, "Earthquake! Out quickly!"

Even though we were more than 300 miles from the epicenter, the floor of the terminal was moving enough to make walking difficult. We picked up our carryon luggage and headed toward the nearest exit. It does not take long to evacuate a terminal because every jet-way has steps to the ground, and as we were going down the steps, we noticed that tall light posts were waving very noticeably at the top. The earthquake went on for a full three minutes, so we could feel it even after we reached the tarmac.

When the shaking stopped, we took out our cellphone and called our contact in Xining, and he did not realize there had been an earthquake. They had not felt it there, and he was not watching the news. He encouraged us, and we made arrangements to call him whenever we knew more about when we might arrive. After the airport personnel was convinced that the terminal had no structural damage, we all went back in and attempted to find out when we might continue traveling.

The airport personnel seemed to know two words in English, and those were "delayed" and "cancelled" which seemed to be synonyms. It soon became clear that the earthquake had disrupted air travel all over China. A lady came up to us asking if we spoke English. She was so glad to find someone who could help her—the problem was that we were as helpless as she was. Fortunately, a young Chinese gentleman overheard us talking and offered to go with us to talk to the

Chinese at the desk. He found that our flight was scheduled to leave from a different gate. When we arrived there, the plane was with a different airline!

Much more happened, but we finally realized that airlines were swapping their planes so that the name of the airline on our tickets would not match the name on the plane. We finally arrived in Xining about 10:00 PM, 19 long hours after the first mosquito in our hotel room woke us up.

### **“Early” Flights!**

We had never had the problem of an early flight when traveling internationally, but we learned that sometimes domestic flights in some countries may actually leave earlier than the scheduled time. Fortunately, we did not have to learn that the hard way.

We visited a missionary family that lived in a town large enough to have an airport, but a relatively small one. We were scheduled to fly to a hub near the center of the country to catch a flight to the large city where we were located during our time in the country. We were familiar with having to call the airline the day before to confirm that we were still planning to fly at that time, and we had already done that.

Our flight was scheduled to leave in the early afternoon; however, we noticed that the family we were staying with called the airline several times during the morning. We were puzzled and asked why the repeated calls were made. Although we had a scheduled time to fly, the airline was known for departing from the airport whenever the scheduled plane had arrived and its passengers had left the plane. They would simply tidy up the plane, take whatever passengers were there, and leave for the next city on its schedule regardless of the time. If we had missed that flight, we would have had to wait until the next day.

### **Finding the Real Problem**

Before visiting missionaries on the field we always talked with them about the issues with which we were willing and able to help them. We did not want to get into long term situations that could not be handled in a week or so of intense counseling.

One couple asked us to come visit them. We had agreed on the issue, and we had spent many hours in the air to reach them. We were in our second session with them when we realized that the real problem was not what we had come to deal with, but a much more basic relationship problem. We asked the couple if they had had any counseling about this issue, and we found out that they had met with counselors about the issue during three different home ministry assignments! Our hearts sank because we knew that we had little chance of making any progress in a week on an issue that they had spent many hours talking about over more than a decade of their lives.

We still tried and spent more than twenty hours with them, but we also made ourselves available to other missionaries on the field as well.

### **First Reentry Retreat**

One afternoon, in April 2001, John Muehleisen unexpectedly came into my office on the corner of the second floor of Reasoner Hall in the Asbury College campus. After greetings and some small talk, he said that he would like Bonnie and me to do something. The people who had done their reentry retreats at WGM would no longer be doing them, and he wanted us to facilitate their reentry retreat in early July.

I immediately told John that I had never led a reentry retreat. In fact, I had never even attended a reentry retreat to see how it should be done. He still wanted us to do it, so I called Bonnie at home and asked her to come up to my office to talk with John. When she arrived, I summarized our previous

conversation for her. Then we asked if we could come to the one in July to learn from observing what the previous people had done. He said that was not possible.

After further discussion with John, we finally said we would do it, but we were “scared to death.” He said that was good. That July we met with 11 returning missionaries at WGM headquarters in Marion, IN. Although we felt unprepared, the reentry retreat went well, and the missionaries were great. After 35 years of teaching, it was our habit to assess how we did. So we had the missionaries fill out an evaluation form which included their rating us from 1 – 9 on a dozen or so items related to the reentry. We received an average of 6.30 on the items. In addition, we asked for other comments and suggestions.

We did a second reentry retreat in September with 18 returning missionaries, and we made several modifications suggested on the evaluation forms. We received an average of 7.93 of a possible 9.00. Not only that, but facilitating reentry retreats became our favorite activity for many years. We did more than 30 reentry retreats with three different agencies including more than 350 missionaries. Even after these agencies decided not to continue the retreats or do them in-house, we continued to offer reentry retreats or individual/couple debriefings here in Wilmore,

### **Food and Water**

We closely followed the recommendations given for eating and drinking when we could without offending anyone. We avoided food that had not been cooked except for fruit and vegetables we had peeled ourselves or that someone we knew and had confidence in had peeled. The grapes or tomatoes may have looked delicious, but we avoided them. We drank only bottled water that we had opened ourselves or what had been boiled in someone’s home. We were careful about swallowing water in the shower or when brushing our teeth.

We did not think something in the food or water might kill us, but we were there for only a week or ten days, and missionaries had appointments with us. We did not want to have sickness keep us from seeing them all. Of course, we still did not avoid all illness, but we were not ill much of the time. Our worst experience was when the resort at which the conference was held had not changed its filters, so the shower water was not free of organisms. About 400 of the 600 people at the conference became very sick, and some passed out.

A physician recommended our taking one Pepto-Bismol tablet each day we were there just to calm our digestive system, and that seemed to help prevent the routine kinds of illness. At least we did what we could to avoid illness.

### **Gaining Someone’s Confidence**

We prefer to visit the same group of missionaries repeatedly so that we can develop relationships. That way we know them well and can pick up from where we left off the last time. One field with about 40 adults asked us to come once or twice a year, usually when they had meetings at which those serving in outlying areas came into the city for several days, and they could schedule meetings with us if they wanted to talk privately.

By the end of our second time there nearly everyone had scheduled time with us, had eaten a meal with us, or had invited us into their own homes. However, one couple was obviously avoiding us. They did not look up if we walked by them or sit near us in meetings. They were not required to talk with us, but we could not just ignore them. So we made it a point to eat a meal with them once each trip or sit by them in meetings that included discussion. We just made small talk with them so that we could get acquainted a bit.

During the first five times we went we never had a deep conversation with either of them. However, as soon as we arrived the sixth time they came to us and made an appointment

to talk with us about important topics. It took five years to gain their confidence.

### **Get to the airport early**

We arrived at the airport to begin our flight overseas. When we reached the desk to check in, the agent at the desk took our itineraries and passports. This was before the days of checking yourself in, and e-tickets were just beginning to be used. After looking our papers over and checking things on his computer, the agent looked at us and said to Ron, “You can go, but she needs a paper ticket.”

We asked him to print a ticket for her, at least boarding passes, but he said the way the reservation was made, he could not access it on-line. The agent who had made the reservation needed to make some change in her reservation to allow the desk agent to get the reservation. Since our plane was scheduled to take off rather soon, Bonnie said, “Ron, you go ahead, and I will come as soon as we get this straightened out.”

The agent tried to call the lady who had issued the ticket in Mobile, Alabama, where she worked, but she was not at her phone. He finally reached her, and she made the needed changes so the he could issue Bonnie’s boarding pass; but for some reason no claim check was issued for her baggage. After more than 20 minutes at the counter, we hurried to the gate and arrived to find that, due to bad weather in Atlanta, the plane would take off late.

After a 20-minute delay, we took off for Atlanta, where we sat on the tarmac waiting for a gate. We finally got off the plane only 15 minutes before our next plane was scheduled to take off. We hurried through the airport to our gate where they were holding the plane for us—and several others from our previous flight. The rest of the flight was rather routine except when we arrived at our final destination. Bonnie’s bag did not arrive. So we had to file a claim for the bag with no claim check.

### **Goodwill Tour**

We had spent about three hours talking with a missionary who had returned to the USA about two months before meeting with us. She had been in an Asian country a long time and briefly in an African one. She felt responsible for providing for two young women who lived with her. She was on a limited income and wanted to know a good place to buy clothing and other items for them. When we suggested Goodwill stores, she immediately replied that, although she knew how to shop at places like Kohls and Walmart, she could not figure out how to shop at Goodwill. She had gone in, and just walked out—something not uncommon for returning missionaries.

We told her we would take her to the nearest Goodwill store before we parted. Then we explained that people donated useful items to Goodwill, the store sold them for very low prices, and that she would probably be able to buy articles of clothing for a few dollars. We also noted that Goodwill also frequently hired handicapped individuals to work in their stores. In fact, the store we would go to hired Bill, the microcephalic son of good friends of ours, and Bill often greeted us when we donated things.

When we entered the store, we pointed out fitting rooms as we walked through the store looking at everything from clothing, to books, to furniture. We pointed out that individual items had no prices attached, but that all items on a rack sold for the price attached to the rack. For example, a rack of women’s skirts would all sell for \$3.00 if that is the price on the rack. Just about at that time Bill saw us and rushed over to us saying, “RON!! HOW ARE YOU DOING? IT SURE IS GOOD TO SEE YOU!” as he literally threw his arms around me. The missionary just stood there with a big smile on her face.

## Illness Everywhere

Even with the precautions we took, we still occasionally got sick, as happens to anyone in a different country. However, we also experienced a time when hundreds of people became ill. We were at a very nice resort in the mountains near Chiang Mai, Thailand, with a group of about 650 English teachers serving in several Asian countries. We had been there with the group several times before and all had gone well. However, people began to get sick this time.

We were at the evening service on our second day at the resort. We left during the service because Bonnie did not feel well. Like the others, she could not hold anything down for about 24 hours. Whatever it was struck quickly and without warning. Another counselor who left the service shortly after we did passed out on the way back to her room, and others found her lying on the path. The illness spread rapidly through the group until about 400 people had it. We did have a physician with our group, but in those few days he could not figure what had happened.

The group to follow us that year was a group of Christian physicians. From what the leaders of our group told them and what they saw happening in their group, they decoded that it had to be in the water supply. Sure enough, they discovered that the water filters had not been changed recently, and new filters in that system resulted in a healthy meeting for the doctors.

## How Long?

When we began visiting missionaries on the field, usually overseas, we knew that we had to set a limit on how long we would stay away from home and how much time we would need at home between trips. We received a variety of answers, so we knew that the limits varied between individuals. We decided to test our limits.

We had made trips of ten days or two weeks and knew that was no problem for us. When we were asked by an agency to spend three weeks on a field of about 40 missionaries living in several parts of the country, we agreed to go for three weeks. The majority of the missionaries lived in one of the large cities, but several couples or small groups of missionaries lived in outlying areas. We were based in the guesthouse in the large city, but when we visited those in the outlying areas, we stayed in missionary homes.

Before the three weeks were up, we realized that staying that long was more than we wanted to do. We decided that two weeks should be our limit, and we also insisted for a Sabbath at the end of each week—a day of rest.

## Informed Consent

To make sure that people who came to us for help understood who we were and what we do, we gave a copy of the following statement to everyone and verbally noted the information about our qualifications and the conditions under which we would break confidence. Then we asked if they had any questions:

We provide member care for missionaries emphasizing personal growth, development, and prevention of problems, rather than attempting solutions to serious difficulties. We do not work with missionaries who have such serious difficulties that they should be seeing a licensed mental health professional, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist. Since we deal with prevention rather than long term cure, we do not talk with people for extended periods of time. Problems faced when they begin are much easier to solve than those allowed to develop over a long time.

We view ourselves as being in the “Order of Stephanus” as described in 1 Corinthians 16. Paul wrote that the household of Stephanus had “devoted themselves to the service of the saints....supplied what was lacking....refreshed my spirit” when

they came to visit him. We see ourselves as people who understand to some extent the special needs of missionaries and come along side them to help, comfort, and affirm. There is never any charge for what we do; missionaries are guests in our home.

Ordinarily anything shared with us is held in confidence with the exception of the following. (1) Intention to harm yourself or others. (2) Reports of abuse. (3) Court order to reveal something. (4) Intention to sabotage the mission agency. We are not licensed as psychologists or counselors, and we are not ordained ministers. We are knowledgeable friends of missionaries who would like to offer a sympathetic ear and whatever help we can as amateurs in its original sense, those who do something out of love.

### **Inoculations**

When we began visiting people overseas, we were careful to get inoculated for diseases found in the country we were visiting. Of course, we soon realized that in member care we were visiting many different countries and flying over many others so that we needed to be inoculated for “everything.” For example, the country we were visiting did not have yellow fever, but we were flying over countries that did—and we may have to land in those countries because of mechanical failures or bad weather.

We were then very careful to keep our inoculations up-to-date. That can be difficult because some of them are one time only, others last ten years, and others only a very short time.

### **Interesting Trivia**

Traveling doing member care results in some rather unusual things. For example, even though we are not sports fans, we have watched parts of the Super Bowl in four

countries. In addition to seeing it here in the USA, we have watched parts of it in Mozambique, Thailand, and Korea.

One year we were traveling on Bonnie’s birthday, and Ron takes credit for making her birthday last for 36 hours! Another time we ate our daily usual three meals in three different countries on two continents: breakfast in Thailand, lunch in Korea, and dinner in the USA.

### **Jesus is a “wiener mon”**

We were with a group conducting a VBS in a small church in the mountains of eastern Jamaica. We had driven to the end of the road, crossed the Rio Grande on a bamboo raft, and walked about a quarter of a mile down the river to the church on the bank. It was the summer of 1993, and we knew that we were called to serve in missions some way, but we were trying to figure out how.

We had gone to Spain in 1990 to do some teaching about adolescence and to Bolivia in 1991 to do some fund raising to build a university, but neither of these things seemed to be what God had for us. To keep our interest in missions alive, we took a short term trip to Jamaica to help with a VBS. During that week our primary ministry was to children, and services for adults were held in the evenings.

The Jamaicans loved singing, and one of their favorite songs repeated “Jesus is a wiener mon.” We had talked with the Jamaicans enough to know that they pronounced “man” as “mon,” but we could not figure out why they were calling him a wiener man. We finally realized that they were pronouncing “winner” as “wiener.” Of course, Jesus is a winner.

### **Just like Mom’s**

When we invited TCKs at the college to our home for Sunday dinners on alternate Sundays, we fed them a variety of

foods. One week we served sloppy joes. When one student bit into the bun, he was very excited and said “Wow, just like Mom used to make!”

We didn’t have the heart to tell him they were Manwich, which comes from a can available at any grocery store here in the USA.”

### **Kicking under the table**

I had taught psychology for many years, and Bonnie had been an elementary teacher. During the early years of our ministry, Bonnie was learning some basic things to do and not to do during counseling sessions.

A couple had invited us to visit them on their field, and we had agreed on what issues we were going to deal with while we were there. We had been there a day or two and were still adjusting to jet lag, but we were in one of the early sessions with the four of us sitting on the four sides of a small square table as we talked.

Although the issue we were discussing was somewhat related to the purpose of our trip there, it became apparent that the husband was not treating his wife with respect. Bonnie’s anger became more and more apparent. She was lecturing him like she would have done to a cocky fifth grader in the classroom.

Ron did not know quite what to do, but finally he started literally kicking Bonnie under the table as one might see in a TV show. She got the message and backed off. That evening we talked about things that would be best left unsaid even though the husband certainly deserved the lecture.

### **Long Counseling Sessions**

While attending a conference at a mountain resort, two men on the same team made an appointment with us to help them settle a disagreement. As was our custom, Bonnie and I

both met with them for that hour, our next to last appointment of the day. Near the end of the hour we still had not fully settled the disagreement, and a woman was scheduled for the next hour. We were making progress and did not want to interrupt the session, so Bonnie excused herself and waited outside the door for the woman to come. The three of us left in the room continued the session.

Bonnie and the woman found a place to sit outside and talk. Their session went well, and when Bonnie returned to our room she realized that our session was still going. As I looked out the window of our room, I saw people making preparations for the picnic dinner that evening. The session continued, and I did not want to risk even leaving the pair and going to the bathroom. Finally, after a full four hours, I excused myself saying that I had to use the restroom. When I returned, they were still talking.

The session lasted four and a half hours! I had to find some food because dinner was over and everything was picked up. However, I felt good about the result. We saw both men back at the conference the next year or two.

### **Look poor, and pack smart**

When flying into a country, and even within a country, be very careful what you wear. A member care person we know flew into a country in a suit, tie, and shiny leather shoes, and he carried much American currency. After the missionaries had picked him and his wife up at the airport, someone followed their vehicle and forced them off the road several miles from the airport. They were robbed, and one of them was shot in the hand, but no one was killed.

We realized that when we enter most foreign countries many nationals will immediately recognize us as Americans and think of us as rich. I typically traveled in cargo pants, an old sweater or jacket (if needed), and worn athletic shoes. I carried my computer in my backpack rather than carrying in a computer

case. Both of us tried to avoid wearing anything that would imply that we were wealthy.

Since checked baggage is sometimes lost, and frequently delayed, we divided our clothing in equal parts among all the suitcases we took. In the “good old days” when we could each take two 70-pound suitcases, we each packed a quarter of our clothes in each suitcase. If only one of the four suitcases arrived, we still had clothing for a few days.

### Lost Nail

We were staying with a missionary family in a relatively small town far from any large city. The sewer system carried only what was flushed down toilets, and the greywater flowed through the open gutters along the streets. The town was surrounded by dikes that had pumps to move the water outside the dikes when it rained. However, when it rained hard, the pumps could not keep up. When this happened the rainwater and greywater flooded the streets and the walled yard around the house.

We all just stayed in the house during those flood times and the small children played with the toys, put together puzzles, and read the books they had. We noticed that when they put a puzzle together they could pick up any piece, and they knew exactly where it went so that they could place it where it would fit in the finished puzzle—they had memorized the puzzle. They also had memorized nearly all the books and could “read” them without looking at the page. The oldest boy occasionally built things by nailing pieces of wood together.

One day he was in tears because he had lost a nail. We wondered why that was such a problem, until we found out that he had just six nails and could find only five! He routinely built things with pieces of wood and those six nails. Then when he wanted to build something else, he pulled out the nails and straightened them out by pounding them on a brick to build the new thing.

### Malaria

We learned that missionaries often do not take an antimalarial drug to prevent malaria. They probably do not do so because of potential side effects of those drugs. They usually take the chance of getting malaria and then seek a treatment. That may be wise for someone living for several years where malaria is found. However, such missionaries often tell visitors that there is no need to take anything to prevent malaria. Of course, everyone should take other steps to avoid mosquito bites, such as mosquito netting, insect repellent, avoiding wet places, staying inside at night if possible, etc.

Our most vivid example of this was when we went to Africa to help some missionaries. The family we went to help told us that the wife was a nurse, and none of them took any drug to prevent malaria. Knowing that this was common, and wanting to avoid malaria, we checked the CDC website, <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>, found out that malaria was common there, and asked for the most effective drug available. We began taking that drug well before we flew to Africa, and we were glad we had done so.

As we drove into their driveway, they mentioned that their night guard had come down with malaria a couple days earlier. Their day guard was not sick (mosquitos that transmit malaria fly at night), but a couple days later the night guard next door also came down with malaria. We slept under netting, avoided outdoor activity at night, etc. during our time there.

After we arrived home in the states their youngest child had malaria and was undergoing treatment. Shortly after that we heard from them that there were no drugs that would cure his malaria in the country where they were serving, and they had to take the child to a nearby country where the child could be treated intravenously.

### **Many Independent agencies, but no denominations**

Although many independent agencies have asked us to be available to their missionaries, no denominational mission agency ever did. We were careful to approach denominations whose theology was the same as ours. We told denominational missions about ourselves in a variety of ways. We met with denominational member care people at conferences and told them that we were available free of charge. We sent emails to people in charge of member care at headquarters. We even had the president of one denomination in our home for a meal. None ever asked us to do anything.

In one case we did spend a week on the field with the missionaries of a denomination; however, it was not because anyone from headquarters asked us. The invitation came from the field director who had met us while we were visiting that country, and he had become acquainted with us. We assume that he had received permission from headquarters to have us there, but the invitation did not come from headquarters, and we were never invited to any other field.

### **Meet me at...**

Occasionally missionaries preferred not to meet with us in our room, at the place provided for us to meet with people, or in their home. They would rather that others not know that they were seeing a counselor. In cases like that we had them suggest where they would feel the most at ease. The two most common places they wanted us to meet them were at parks or at restaurants.

Usually they had a favorite place in the park, and we walked to the park by ourselves and met them at the entrance if the park had one, or at an intersection at one corner of the park. Then we could sit and talk about whatever issues were of concern to them. If the weather was not good for meeting outside, too hot, too cold, or raining, missionaries would

suggest a restaurant, and they would take us to their favorite booth or corner, and we could talk there.

### **Member Care under Jet-Lag**

We have made more than a dozen member care trips to Latin America as well as other trips to Europe, Africa, and Asia. Jet-lag to Latin America was minimal, but we were aware of its effects when traveling east and west. We had agreed to visit several missionaries in China. We assumed we would have time to adjust to the jet-lag. We asked for our itinerary several times but did not receive it (we found that the later a reservation is made the less it costs).

We arrived at our lodging in Beijing at 5:00 PM local time, just in time for a dinner. We left the next afternoon for Xining in northwest China, and during the following nine days we visited leaders in six cities from northeast to southwest China, over 7000 miles of travel in the country. Then we spent one day in Beijing and returned to the States where we again went through the jet-lag that comes from a 12-hour time change. We were certainly not at our best on that trip and may have hurt more than helped. From that time on we insisted on seeing our itinerary and making sure that it allowed adequate time for jet-lag.

### **Missionaries from many agencies**

We met with missionaries from many agencies in various parts of the world. For example, we went to Bolivia once or twice a year for about a decade. During that time we met with a total of about 165 missionaries from many different agencies. We had an email distribution list of those missionaries and prayed each day for several of them so that we prayed at least once a month for each of them and their children.

We also sent birthday cards by snail mail to each missionary and each dependent child as well as cards to each

married couple on their wedding anniversary. We also sent an email with “Praying for you...” on the subject line once a month to tell them that we had prayed for them.

During that time we went to Santa Cruz for ten days to two weeks and stayed in the guesthouse at the invitation of three different agencies to be available to their missionaries. At their request we made presentations to their missionaries as a group and met with couples, individuals, or families when they scheduled a time with us.

Whenever we went, we would email all 165 missionaries telling them that we were coming to Bolivia and they could make appointments with us personally. They could either come to meet with us at the agency where we were staying, or we could meet them somewhere nearby. We usually met with 30-35 missionaries serving with about five agencies on each trip, and most of them were from the agency where we were staying. They ranged from Swedish Pentecostals to Mennonites to Baptists to independent agencies of all types.

### **Mosquitos in the night**

About 3:00 AM we awoke to the sound of a mosquito buzzing around our heads. When we turned a light on, we could see the mosquito on the wall of our hotel room. We swatted it with a folded newspaper, leaving a bloody spot on the wall, and we dozed off. A few minutes later this was repeated with another mosquito, then another. We realized then that they were getting into the room some way. We checked all the windows, and all were closed. But they kept coming into the room, buzzing around us, and landing on the wall. We could find no openings to the outside anywhere.

After the first three, they did not leave any bloody spots when we swatted them with the paper because we heard them, saw them, and killed them before they had a chance to bite us. We were traveling all over China, and we had not checked all areas of the country about malaria. However, we had just been

in South America where malaria was prevalent, and we were still taking our final tablets of Lariam and were pretty sure that we did not have anything to worry about.

By 4:04 AM we had killed nine mosquitos and realized that trying to find and kill them all was hopeless. We always take our pillows with us when we travel, so we took the hotel pillow cases off of the pillows and put them over our heads and piled the pillows on us as much as possible. When daylight came, we looked again for the way mosquitos were getting in. We realized that all around the windows there was an opening of an inch or so because the climate was such that heat was not needed at any time. Mosquitos just came with the room.

### **Mystery Gift**

We received an envelope with a return address to a small Illinois town we had never heard of and names we had never seen before. Inside was a generous check and nothing else. We thought it might be from former students or missionaries we had helped sometime in the past, but no one by those names was listed in the Asbury Alumni Directory nor was anyone in our list of people we had helped.

We wrote a thank you note to the couple who sent the check and apologized for not recognizing them if they were former students or missionaries we had helped. We also asked them if it was meant for us or if it was a donation for expenses of our ministry, and we included our phone number and email address.

A few days later we received the following answer:

“Just a note of explanation--we sent you a check recently. I apologize that in my rush out the door that day, I didn't enclose anything besides the check. I should have included a long overdue thank you note! You met with our daughter and son-in-law, xxxxx and xxxxx when they returned from a four year mission in xxxxx. You were without a doubt an answer to this

mother's prayers. Re-entry was difficult and then multiple health issues and also fertility issues have made their return home a very difficult time. It has been heart breaking to watch all of the trials they have faced in their young lives. And yet they have given so much of themselves in His service. We are grateful that you were there for them, offering your most important ministry when they needed it so much. So it is with deep gratitude that we sent the small gift to you. Please use it wherever it is needed most for your ministry or it would certainly please us if you were able to use it to treat yourselves.

Those of you in ministry should be able to follow Jesus' example of pulling away to rest and refuel occasionally!"

### **Never a "thank you" for alerting an agency**

It is amazing what people write in an email to me as a result of visiting our websites. They may write thinking I will not know who sent the email, and they may disclose very personal information, especially about sexual matters. I always answer their emails and try to find out more about them, including what agency they are with. Several times I have alerted their agencies to sexual predators.

One email had "Horrible decision" on the subject line. It was from a married missionary with three children who wrote to say that he had committed adultery with the teenage daughter of a leader in the area where they were going to start a new work. As we corresponded, I encouraged him to confess to his wife and to his agency, which he did, and he went through a restoration program with his agency.

Another email had "Suicide" on the subject line. This was from a missionary who had an affair with the wife of another missionary. He was in the USA trying to break off the affair, and the woman was still on the field threatening suicide if he did not continue it. She already had a plan and the time set when she would do it. He also confessed to his agency, and the

agency was able to get to the field before she did so. This missionary was dropped by the agency.

I always asked them to confess to their agencies and copy the email to me. Then I also sent copies of earlier emails to administrators of their agency myself to make sure they were aware of the situations. I have never received anything from an agency thanking me for telling them. Most of these were to well-known agencies or denominations.

### **New Believers as Missionaries**

A member care person in an agency asked us to meet as objective "outsiders" with a team working together in the same city. One of the young men on the team had recently become a believer, and he was very zealous about being a missionary.

The problem was that he had not studied the Bible enough to know what it said overall, and he tended to overgeneralize some things found in it. He had discovered Paul's writing about women and men in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. He was insisting that women should be in submission to all men and that they should never teach or have authority if a man was present.

For example, even if his team was meeting in the apartment of a single woman, she should not pray if any man was present. If the team was walking down a sidewalk, no woman could be at the head of the group. Only a man could be the one leading the group.

Of course, this was a problem that occurred because of inadequate screening of candidates. The women (mostly single) in the group were offended by what he was doing. We wanted to help the group function in some way, so as a group we looked at some of the scriptures, and we said that they did not apply to a single woman submitting to a single man. That at least got the group functioning, and later the overzealous man was disciplined enough to still be on the team when we met it again the next year.

## Nine Eleven

I had told the provost at Asbury that I was going to quit teaching at the end of the academic year in 2002 so that the College could know how to plan for the future. At the end of the academic year in May of 2001, I sent my letter resignation to him so that he and the department could begin searching for my replacement. Since they knew I was planning on quitting, they began the search during that summer break by contacting some people they had in mind that would make a good replacement.

The morning of September 11, 2001, I was teaching psychology in a basement classroom under the chapel when a student came in and said, “An airplane just crashed into the World Trade Center.” Bonnie was at home painting the posts holding up the roof over the front porch when our telephone rang. Our daughter was calling from northern New Jersey, and she said, “Mom, turn your TV on and tell me what is happening, I can’t get any stations.” We watched over and over that day the replays when two airliners crashed into the Trade Center, one into the Pentagon, and one into that field in Pennsylvania.

That was one of the times when we say, “What have we done?” I had turned in my resignation, and the college was in the process of looking for a replacement. I had given up tenure, and next summer I would be an unemployed 60-year old man. Although I continued to pay into our retirement program during the following year, at the end of 2002 the value of our retirement dropped. (That was 15 years ago, and our “portfolio” now is far larger than it was at the end of 2002. God is good and cares for his people)

## No jet-lag “miracle”

When we began traveling across many time zones, we experienced jet-lag like most people do. On our trips to Asia we often completely switched day and night by the 12-hour time changes. We realized that we were not being fair to the missionaries we tried to help. We found many remedies available, and each remedy had its believers. We tried many of them, such as jet-lag diets, jet-lag chemicals like melatonin, jet-lag preventers such as doing much of the time change gradually before traveling, and a host of others.

We found that none of them worked reliably for us. From time to time one seemed to work, but on the next trip, it made no difference. We finally concluded that the best thing for us to do was to get to our destination and switch to the local time there, spending as much time as possible out in the sun. For example, if we arrived at 1:00 AM local time, we went to bed and set our alarm for 7:00 AM that time. We got up, showered, had breakfast, and spent the day outside at the zoo, walking around parks, etc. That did not reset our body clocks in one day, but it was probably better than anything else we tried.

## Only Nine Minutes

We have often found it helpful to actually stay overnight in the homes of missionary families. When we do that, we can not only tell them what to do to solve problems but also be there when they try to do it. Here is an example.

We were staying in the home of a new mother who had no other expats from the USA to help her with parenting situations she faced with her infant. The husband was gone when she laid the baby in its bed and came back downstairs to talk with us. The baby began to cry, and she made repeated trips up to its room, but it always began crying when she came back down.

She told us that she did not know what to do because the nationals said babies should never cry. We explained to her that she was rewarding the baby's crying each time she went back into its room. She said that she had tried just leaving the baby there, but it continued to cry, and she should not let it cry.

We said that we would be glad to be there with her while the crying extinguished, and she said she would like that. So we made sure the baby was fed, had a clean diaper on, no pins (before pampers), and so forth. Then we talked in the living room. Of course, the baby began to cry, and we urged the mother to stay with us (and I glanced at my watch). A time or two she mentioned that she should check on the baby, but we urged her not to. Finally, the baby stopped crying—and we stopped talking so we could listen. After a minute or so, I said, “That wasn’t bad. It was only nine minutes.”

The mother said, “Only nine minutes! I thought it was about two hours.” After a little more talking the mother said she should probably check on the baby, and we again discouraged her from doing so. If we had not been there to help her, she may have never extinguished the crying. Every time she saw us during the next few years, she thanked us over and over for helping her do that.

### “Perfect” Timing

Sometimes we know of a solution and are able to respond immediately. Probably the most rapid solution occurred in June 2015. We were on the road returning to our home and arrived at our motel about 6:30 PM after 11 hours on the road (including visiting friends for lunch). We immediately left for something to eat. After we returned to our room, we checked our email. We found an email from a couple who had served as missionaries for 25 years and now had a very difficult situation with an adolescent. Here is the sequence of events.

6/15/15, 7:01 PM: Missionary: “We at this time feel we need some counseling about how to proceed to see our daughter

restored.... Is it possible that you might find some time to give us some guidance in this crisis?”

6/15/15, 8:13 PM: Our reply: We are on the road and just received your email. Your situation is so complicated and has been so long in developing that it is something we cannot help you with from a distance. We suggest that you contact xxxxx in xxxxx...

6/15/15, 8:39 PM: “Thank you! I just sent the request to them on the website you recommended. My wife actually has attended some ladies Bible studies with some that are associated with this group...” The whole process took less than two hours!

At other times we did not know of a solution, and the solution came after we were contacted. Exactly one week after the above we were the afternoon presenters on a retreat for Korean missionaries. When we returned home at about 5:00 PM we received an email from a 22 year veteran missionary under an agency which had more than 400 families serving in other cultures but had no member care program. During the last eight years he had been a pastor in the USA. Here is the sequence of events.,

6/22/15 1:46 PM: Missionary: “I've approached my previous Missions Agency... and they have agreed to begin a much needed missionary care program. My wife and I are that beginning....I was wondering if you might be willing to open a dialogue on this subject?”

6/22/15 7:42 PM: My reply: “Sure, I would be willing to dialogue with you. I write and serve missionaries on the field and do not claim to be an expert on the structure of a member care program, but I will be glad to tell you what I know....”

The next morning we gave two presentations at the retreat. Just as we were finishing the second one, Laura Mae Gardener and her husband arrived to continue the retreat. We had lunch together, and she gave us a copy of her new book, *Healthy, Resilient, & Effective in Cross-Cultural Ministry: A Comprehensive Member Care Plan*.

6/23/15 2:33 PM: My email to the Missionary: I described what had happened and sent a link to get the book and said, “Of course, I would still be glad to dialog with you, but this is the finest thing (the only thing) available.”

6/23/15 3:40 PM: Missionary: “Thanks so much for getting back with me, and sharing the great information!”

In just a little over 24 hours later he could order the book which I did not even know existed!

### **Premarital Counseling**

A couple who both served with the same agency was planning to marry. They served in different countries in Asia hundreds of miles apart. Each year their agency had a conference that involved everyone in the agency, hundreds of teachers. We had attended that conference several times, and when they became engaged, they asked for premarital counseling.

We used the Prepare/Enrich materials when counseling couples planning to marry. The questionnaire can be taken online, so the bride-to-be too took it in northern Asia, and the husband-to-be took it in southern Asia. The results were sent to us in the USA. Then we all met at another country in Asia to discuss the results.

They married, and we continued seeing them at that conference through the years as their family grew. We live in a day in which we can use technology to do things never imagined by missionaries a century ago.

### **Publish as a book?**

Shortly after the turn of the century, I began considering publishing the brochures as a book. While reading everything I could find on member care as recorded in the database, I had decided that the best style was that found in EMQ, so I had written the brochures that way. Also, EMQ had published more

member care articles than any other publication I had found. Therefore, the logical place to start was with Kenneth Gill, Director of EMIS (Evangelical Missions Information Service) which published EMQ. In 2001 I wrote a brief email to ask if he would be interested in seeing a proposal. He replied that he would, but that EMIS was not in a position to “take on another project for some time.” I was disappointed, but hopeful.

In 2003, I wrote to him again, and he asked to see a proposal. I sent a proposal, and he replied listing five reasons why it would not sell well. He said that he was not able to refer the proposal to another publisher because he did not know any who would be likely to accept it. He said that I already had it in the best place to reach missionaries on the field, on the web. Of course, I was disappointed at the time, but I am so grateful that he rejected the idea of publishing it as a printed book. That fall we posted it on missionarycare.com, and since that time, people have downloaded more than 40,000 copies of that book free of charge!

An interesting event occurred six years later. In 2009 I wrote to Dr. Gill to thank him for rejecting my proposal and for encouraging me to keep posting brochures and books on the Internet. To my surprise, he replied very angry with me for posting all those EMQ articles on the internet without permission which was breaking copyright law! I knew that I had written every article myself and had broken no law, that even the editor of EMQ had said that my member care resources were some of the best available. Dr. Gill immediately replied with an apology saying that he had read them only quickly and thought they were from EMQ. I was elated that even the director of the organization publishing EMQ thought they were from it. I had succeeded in imitating the EMQ style beyond my wildest dreams.

## Reentry Confidentiality

At the beginning of every reentry retreat for an agency, or at the beginning of debriefing missionaries in our home or at the GO InterNational office, we gave them information about ourselves including this statement: “Ordinarily anything shared with us is held in confidence with the exception of the following. (1) Intention to harm yourself or others. (2) Reports of abuse. (3) Court order to reveal something. (4) Intention to sabotage the mission agency.” The first three are usual in many situations, but the fourth one was to let them know that we would not tolerate things that would harm the missionary enterprise generally. We usually elaborated by saying that if they were having an affair or embezzling funds and intended to continue, we would report that to the agency. If they had an affair or embezzled years ago but had stopped it, made restitution, and asked God’s forgiveness, we would not report it.

A director of member care asked us to do a reentry retreat with the agency’s missionaries. As we talked he/she mentioned attending the retreat as we facilitated it. We objected to that and discussed it at length. We finally pointed out that the only thing we had that he/she did not was that we were from outside the agency. However, she/he finally said that if we would not agree to him/her being present we would not do the retreat. We reluctantly agreed, and facilitated the retreat.

During the first session, everyone around the table gave a very short introduction limited to name, where they serve, and their type of service. All seemed normal during that session, and one man said, “My name is John Doe, and I am Field Director in England” (name and country changed here). However, he never said another word in the following seven sessions during those two days. When he did not participate during the second session, I approached him during lunch time, and he said everything was OK, but he just did not have anything to say. At the end of the day it was apparent to everyone that John was not participating.

The director of member care approached me saying that there must be something wrong with John and asking what we should do. I told the director that I had talked with John and did not find anything wrong. The director said that she/he thought that something needed to be told to personnel and wondered if she/he should do something. I reminded him/her that I had said I would not report anything other than the four items. I did not know what she had told them.

Other than that, the retreat went very well. The next year we were asked to do the reentry retreat again. The director of member care did not even ask to come!

## Reentry: little talk

We were expecting a very good reentry retreat because the participants were eleven people from five countries on four continents with most between 40 and 65 years of age. A diverse group of this size usually resulted in good sharing. However, during the first session someone nearing retirement said something like, “I believe that people who have problems reentering have spiritual problems, not psychological problems.” Although Bonnie and I tried to overcome the results of this statement, very few missionaries shared in the group the rest of that day. If they talked about their problems, they would have been viewed as “unspiritual.”

At the beginning of the second day, during the fifth session, another missionary close to retirement asked, “During most of your retreats do people share more than we do?” When I replied that people usually shared more about issues, he asked if they were younger than this group. When I replied that they were, he said that people their age did not need to share because they were more mature and took care of issues before they left the field. Now anyone who shared would be seen as being both “immature” and “unspiritual.”

After that fifth session a missionary in her 40s called us aside and asked if we knew what was going on. I replied, “I

don't have a clue!" She told us that, although they were now from several countries, most of the missionaries there had served in the country where she was now, and many of them had unresolved issues with others present!

### **Reentry: much talk**

We were rather apprehensive about a reentry retreat because it included only six participants, three couples, and two of the couples were from the same country. This small a group with two thirds of the participants from the same country usually resulted in little sharing. However, this group began sharing very early in the retreat and was one of the best retreats we ever had.

After the worship session, the eighth session, we closed with prayer. Bonnie and I began gathering our things and packing them to take to the car. The six missionaries continued talking with each other. After a while the people fixing the final meal together came over to the building where we held the retreat and said that the pizza was ready.

The six missionaries continued to talk together as we put things in our car. After a few more minutes, the people fixing the meal came and said that if we all did not come over right away everyone else was going to start eating without us. The missionaries still did not want to stop talking and eat. As one put it, "Where can we find people with such great missionary stories to tell, and who will listen to our stories like these people here?"

### **Refusing to go**

We were willing to go nearly anywhere to meet with missionaries, and we have traveled many thousands of miles to help individuals, couples, and families. When we did so, we insisted that their agency and their field director knew that we were coming and why we were coming.

One time a couple we knew quite well contacted us to see if we would come to their host country to meet with them about a family issue. We had stayed in their home overnight on previous visits to their host country, so we knew that they needed help in that area. We also knew that they had read several books and attended several conferences on that issue, and that had not helped.

We replied that we would be glad to come if we could stay in their home while we worked on the issue with them. They replied that they had in mind that they would come to a large city that we could fly into from the USA, and we could all meet at a five star hotel and talk around the pool.

We told them that we believed that they needed something more than could be done sitting around the pool, and we would not come at that time. It all turned out well because the field finally required that the whole family go to Link Care for help. They found so much help there that they convinced one of their parents to go to Link Care as well. We remain good friends to this day.

### **Scheduling Time for Us**

If the agency had a set schedule, we cooperated with that. The most frequent schedule we found was based on one hour time slots. That meant that for people we did not know, we would have about 50 minutes to meet them, hear about the issue bothering them and give suggestions to solve it. This was seldom adequate, and we suggested to people who wanted to return that they schedule two hours. These agencies nearly always had adequate time set aside for us to rest.

If we were with an agency who told us to schedule people who wanted to see us, we usually divided the day into four slots available to meet people.

- Morning: 9:00AM-Noon
- Lunch: Noon-3:00PM
- Afternoon: 3:00PM-6:00 PM

- Dinner: 6:00PM –9:00 PM

Of course, we did not meet for three hours, but we had that time available if we needed it. People who wanted to take us out or have us in their home could do so. Those who would rather not feed us could meet at different times. We always reserved one of those four slots for us to rest. As soon as three of them were filled, we literally wrote our own names in the fourth slot and told people that we could not meet during that time because we had something on our schedule.

### Serving Two Masters

Jesus said we could not serve two masters or we would get into love-hate relationships. I thought of it as being a choice between God and something else, such as money. I had missed the phrase between these things.

The same year I quit working at Asbury College our church needed a missions pastor, a part-time position. I thought that I would have lots of “free” time because I was not yet really into member care; so I agreed to take the position for a year. Both missionary member care and missions pastor seemed to be about similar things. However, in just a few months, I realized my mistake. The missions pastor position seemed to take time away from what God had called me to do in member care (my fault). Before the year was half gone, I had told the church I would not do it another year. The phrase I missed in Matthew 6:24 was, “He will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” “Despise” seemed too strong a word, but I did not like it.

For about five years, I devoted all my time to member care, and then the missions committee asked Bonnie and me to join it, and we agreed to try it for a year. It seemed like such a small thing, and it did not take a lot of time, but I again knew that it was not the thing for me to do. It interfered with my time to think and took some emotional energy that I needed for member care. At the end of that year, I notified the committee

that I would be glad to help the committee on any given issue, but I did not want to be on the committee again.

Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, said something that was a great help in making such decisions. It went something like, “Never do anything that someone else can and will do, when there is so much of importance to be done which others cannot or will not do.” God had called me to care for missionaries when very few others were doing that, and I did not want even good things to interfere.

### Side Trips

When we visited missionaries in their host countries, we often arrived early to see some of the local sights. When traveling to Latin America, we usually allowed only a day or two. However, when traveling east or west, we often allowed a week or so to begin to get over jet lag. Thailand was exactly half way around the world, so we usually arrived about a week early. The first couple times we spent that week in Bangkok seeing the sights there in the capital before flying on to Chiang Mai.

After that we asked our travel agent to get us to the island of Phuket further south on the Andaman Sea. She did so and found lodging for us in Patong, the most popular destination on Phuket. Our *Lonely Planet* guidebook described it as “a seething concentration of souvenir shops, sleazy girlie bars,...and plenty of bare skin to go along with the exciting day and nightlife ....You might want to think twice about bringing your young kids into this town.”

We contacted our travel agent and told her that we would rather not stay in a town where we would not want to bring children. She soon found us reservations in a hotel in Karon which advertised itself as family friendly and “only six kilometers from the sizzling night life of Patong.” We had a delightful time there on the beautiful beach.

## Small World

We had many “small world” experiences, but the one spread over several years and several continents is a favorite. Someone we had met in Bolivia at least a decade previously wrote to ask for a copy of a book I had written. I noticed that he lived in Elkhart, (very close to South Bend) IN. So I wrote, “Our oldest son just joined the Bethel College faculty, after 21 years in pastoral ministry. He is now Assistant Professor of Christian Ministry, and our granddaughter is a freshman there! Keith and LeAnne (his wife) bought a home on the south side of South Bend, close to Bethel.”

The man wrote back, “Both of our sons graduated from Bethel (2012 and 2013). One of them still lives less than ½ mile from campus. We have a daughter who graduated from IPFW in Ft Wayne. I believe Keith was the pastor for some close family friends in Ft Wayne and conducted the funeral for our friend (xxxxx) when he passed away.

Keith remembered the funeral well and said, “I was, indeed, the pastor who did xxxxx xxxxx’s funeral a number of years ago. I visited xxxxx prior to his death many times in the hospital and nursing home as he suffered through dementia or Alzheimers during those last couple of years. Small world!

## Story of the Singles book

I usually wrote brochures or books in response to suggestions missionaries made or problems we dealt with in our counseling. As we came up with a number of issues married couples faced, I finally wrote a set of brochures which became the chapters of the *Missionary Marriage Issues* book.

After those brochures and the book were posted, I started getting suggestions to write something for single missionaries as well. I replied to each of these suggestions noting the following things. First, Bonnie and I were not

singles. Second, we were married at 22 years of age right after college, so we had not lived as singles. Third, we had done little counseling with singles, so we were not really aware of what needed to be written.

That seemed to satisfy most people; however, a few years later an older single lady just would not take “No” for an answer. She pointed out that I was ignoring a quarter of the missionary force, and that should not be. She wrote back several times bringing up other reasons why I should write it. I finally agreed to do so under one condition, and that was that she would continue to make suggestions and critique everything I wrote about singles.

She commented on the first few brochures, and then did not reply when I sent more. By then I was into the book and found another single who would critique what I wrote. Months later, when I finished the book, I sent her a copy and asked for her input.

She wrote back something like, “Well, I met this man...” She had gone to the funeral of a friend of hers who had passed away, and there she began to get reacquainted with the lady’s husband..... You know the rest of the story.

## The Joke’s on me

One of the things I have enjoyed during member care service is when the people we were serving felt they knew us well enough to play jokes on me. Here are a couple of my favorites.

While I was still teaching psychology, a TCK was in my general psychology course in which I had used the example of something that happened when I was taking the same course the students were in. The course was taught just before lunch, and we were eager to get out before the 11:50 AM bell that ended the class time. That would get us to the cafeteria ahead of the long lines.

It was during the winter, and we noticed that the professor was dismissing the class when we began putting our coats on rather than when the bell rang. So we appointed a student sitting in the first row to put his coat on whenever he thought we should get out of class to go to lunch. We did that day after day, earlier and earlier. We knew the stimulus that elicited his response of dismissing class. Unfortunately, one day we were leaving class at 11:30 AM just as the half-hour chimes rang, and the professor looked at his watch. Cognitive factors took over, and that was the last time we got out early.

Students in my class said they could do the same thing to me. I quickly said that would not work because I did not dismiss class when the bell rang but when my digital watch was approaching the time to end the class. I always kept the watch on the edge of the overhead projector so that I would know exactly how much time was left in the class. A few days later, during the class, I noticed that time was nearly gone and mentioned how fast time had gone that day. I hurried through the remaining minutes and dismissed the class. As the last students were leaving, they mentioned how they had fooled me. I picked up the watch and told them that they had not and that the bell would ring any second.

However, they were right. Without my noticing it, a TCK sitting in the front row right in front of the projector had removed my watch, set the time ten minutes faster, and I had dismissed the class when I thought it was near the time to do so. Of course, the next day I complimented him on learning and applying the principles talked about a few days earlier.

### **Theological differences: Denominations**

A leader of the member care area for a denomination talked with us at a member care conference about helping them with a series of three member care retreats for workers in North Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia. We discussed dates, what we would be expected to do, and how expenses

would be shared. As member care providers, we agreed on everything we talked about.

I had not met him before. I noticed that he served with a denomination that had theological differences with ours, and I asked if that would make any difference. He replied that it would not. He said, “We don’t know whether we have it or not, but we know that if we have it we will never lose it. You are sure you have it, but you are afraid you might lose it.” That was one of the best short summaries of our differences, and I told him so. As we parted he said he would check with his boss and contact me soon.

However, knowing what I did, I told Bonnie that we would never hear from him again, and we did not.

### **Theological differences: Independent Agencies**

Independent agencies also had their preferred theological positions, but we found them open to differences. In one case, a field director of an agency got acquainted with us when we were in the country with another agency. He and his executive team had met with us over dinner, and they decided that they would like to have us come and spend a week at their guest house in a few months. The field director wanted us to talk with the agency president based here in the USA.

We discussed primarily our approach to counseling and psychology, and theological differences with the president. After about an hour of answering many questions, I asked the president if he could approve us to talk with his missionaries. I could tell that we were not in complete agreement, but I felt comfortable planning to meet with their missionaries. The president replied, ‘We are on opposite sides of the line that goes down the middle of the road, but we seem close enough to the line to work together.’ We met with them and had a good week of ministry.

### **They've Never Met**

When we first began facilitating reentry retreats, we did not realize that many missionaries had never met some of the people in their own agency. At that time the usual five-year cycle of service was four years on the field and one year at "home," so they got to meet about 20% of the other missionaries. Of course, today there is no "usual" cycle, so they do have opportunities to meet a larger percentage of other missionaries; however, they still seldom meet all the others.

This was brought home to us when two missionary families were spending their home ministry assignment here in Wilmore where we live. The two husbands were watching a parade in town when they began talking with each other. In the conversation one mentioned that he was a missionary.

The other said, "I'm a missionary too."

The first replied, "That's great, where are you a missionary to?"

The other said, "I'm a missionary to XXXX."

The first replied, "I'm a missionary to YYYYYY."

The other missionary asked, "What agency are you with?"

The first replied, "I serve with ZZZZZZ."

They both served with the same agency, and they found out that they lived only four houses apart on the same street. When they gave their names, they knew a lot about each other from the agency's publication, from memos received, etc. Both had served several terms, but they had never met.

### **Too many counselors**

Most of our work has been done with a relatively small number of missionaries present, so we were the only counselors there. However, several times we have been asked to be at conferences where there were several hundred missionaries. At times, the conference directors have had too many counselors so

that the counselors have much free time. The most common cause of this is that the spouse of one of the conference speakers is also a counselor and wants to be "useful" while there.

In one case, we had been with a group that held their conference at a conference center in the mountains, far from anything to do outside the center. After serving several years there, the venue was changed to a large hotel downtown in a large city, and fewer missionaries attended. That time we had much free time, as did the other counselors. The next year we did not attend that conference and told the group they had too many counselors.

Then the group seemed to make the adjustment, and we went several more years with good schedules. However, the group then had more counselors, and our load was very small again. We calculated that we spent about \$400 for airfare, and we were in the air four hours for every hour we spent counseling. When they asked us to return another year, we said we would be glad to do so if they agreed to limit the number of counselors. They said they could not do that, so we stopped going to that conference.

### **Travel Warnings**

We learned that missionaries often become accustomed to life in conditions of unrest, and it becomes so routine that they do not realize that it is dangerous. We became most aware of this when we offered our house for a couple weeks to a missionary who had just returned to the states while we were out of the country on a member care trip. We had told her how to get into our house because we were not here when she came, and she was gone when we returned. Soon after we came into the house, we noticed the low battery sound from the smoke detector just outside our bedroom door. We called her to apologize for disturbing her sleep while she was here. She said that it did not bother her at all because it was so much better than the gunshots around her home overseas.

Missionaries may become so accustomed to danger that they do not think to tell member care people about it. We have found it very helpful to get more objective information from the state department at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>. This website gives travel alerts which are short-term events which the traveler needs to know, such as political or health issues that go away in a few weeks or months. It also provides travel warnings about countries with long-term issues which have lasted for months or years. As you might expect, travel warnings have been in place for Afghanistan and Iraq for many years. Warnings such as these are to be taken seriously and heeded in many situations.

However, some travel warnings are for specific long-term events that occur for long times in only specific parts of a country. Rather than just not going to countries with travel warnings, we learned to contact the missionaries and ask what it is like where we are going. We question them about particular things that are happening right there at that time and in the immediate past.

### **Turbulence**

Anyone flying about 50,000 miles a year will encounter turbulence in the air at times. Our worst turbulence was not in some other country, but right here in Kentucky. We had just returned from South America and were in Dayton, Ohio, ready for the last hour-long flight to Lexington. The flight was over-booked, and we volunteered to be bumped so that we could get a free trip anywhere in the States. It was early evening, and there were seats available on the next flight, so we would be home by bedtime.

It was a stormy night, and we were on a small plane with only about a dozen passengers. Most of the other passengers looked like businessmen heading home. It was very windy, but nothing we hadn't experienced before. However, as we crossed

the Kentucky River, the storm hit with a vengeance. The plane was thrown about more than we had ever experienced. People on the plane were either silent or talking quietly. One of the businessmen suddenly lost it and started shouting things like, "O! God, we're all going to die. I knew I should have rented a car and driven." He buried his face in his hands and wept. We were praying we would make it home safely—and we did.

Even though it was a stressful trip, we thoroughly enjoyed our free trip to Seattle and week camping there in the northwest.

### **Two Useful Tests**

Although I was qualified to use many psychological tests, the two most useful ones for me are the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS). I kept copies of both of these instruments in an envelope ready to put in my backpack whenever I went to visit a field. Depression is so common among the general population that I knew that I was very likely to meet someone who was depressed. I wanted something that took only a few minutes to take and score that I could do that during a session. Both of these instruments consist of about 20 items and take only 5-10 minutes to complete and score.

The BDI is widely available on the Internet and gave me a quick indication of how depressed the person was. Three versions of it have been developed over the years, and anyone can score it and see from the score how serious the depression is, and whether or not the person could handle the situation and whether or not the person needed a referral. Also very useful were two questions on the inventory which gave indications of whether or not the person might be suicidal and may need immediate supervision and a quick referral.

If the suicide indicators were checked, then I asked the person to complete the BHS. This instrument is not available on-line, but it was very useful to better ascertain whether or not

the person needed immediate supervision and help. If that was the case, I would alert the person's supervisor there on the field to the danger.

### **Unwanted "Suggestions"**

Member care workers may misinterpret what missionaries say and give unwanted answers or suggestions. I did this when visiting a missionary family on the field. We were eating in a restaurant and during our conversation one of the parents said something like, "I wish I knew what to do when my children..." I interpreted that to mean that she wanted us to give them some suggestions about what they could do.

I proceeded to make several suggestions based on what I had observed in the day or two we had spent with them. The couple did not say anything about what I had said and conversation went on. I thought I had said some things that would help them. However, I was wrong. When we went to their home the next morning, the mother was in tears at breakfast. I did not know that I was the one who had caused the tears.

I learned that day that missionaries really want suggestions only when they have asked for them specifically. From that time on, I asked some questions of my own before offering advice. Fortunately, the couple accepted my apology, and we were able to visit them again the next year, and I was more careful what I said.

### **Waste of Time?**

Because we did not get involved in long-term therapy we asked that agencies not require their missionaries to come to us and insisted that the missionaries contact us themselves. We wanted to make sure that time spent with them would help, so we asked them if they wanted to talk with us or if they were just coming because of pressure from their agency. We usually

asked to talk personally with both husband and wife, but occasionally one of those was not available to talk.

A husband called to ask if we would meet with him and his wife sometime. We said we would be glad to do so, but we wanted to be sure that they really wanted to come. He assured us that both of them did, so we agreed to meet with them. As they came through our door, the wife remarked that she was glad we could meet with them so that they could get this marked off their list of things to do! Of course, that session went nowhere and seemed like it was a waste of time. We decided that we would insist always on talking with both before agreeing to meet.

To our surprise, about a decade later we got an email from the husband, and he wanted to meet with me. We met several times, and those times were very fruitful. If we had not had that "waste of time" with the couple, we may not have ever been of help to him.

### **Weapons of Mass Destruction (war)**

We were scheduled to begin our time as International Pastors to WGM Bolivia in March of 2003. We had our tickets to depart the morning of March 23 and were scheduled to be there three and a half weeks to give us time to visit most of the WGM missionaries living in various parts of Bolivia. When the USA began its preemptive strike on Iraq, we were uncertain about what to do. We did not know what would happen on the world scene.

We wondered how wide the conflict might become. What would Saddam Hussein do if he really had weapons of mass destruction? How would the rest of the world react to our country invading a much smaller one when there had been no attack of us? Even more, how would the government in Bolivia react? What about the people in Bolivia, since we would obviously stand out? What if the conflict spread so that we would not be able to return to the USA?

With many misgivings we flew to Santa Cruz with nothing unusual occurring. The field director and his wife met us. There were no obvious problems, and the most difficult question for us from the national Christians who were asking, “If George Bush is a Christian, how can he attack a country who has done nothing to the USA?”

### **What if nobody ever asks us to do anything?**

As the time approached when I planned to quit teaching, Bonnie began to occasionally ask, “What if nobody ever asks us to do anything?” Of course, we both knew that we would be asked to do a few things because that was already the case. The real question was, what if very few agencies asked us to do very few things? We were quitting right at the peak of our earnings, and we did have some concern about only a few opportunities developing to be worth it.

My reply to Bonnie was always, “We can go down and volunteer at Red Bird Mission and Henderson Settlement.” These were two missions in the mountains of southeastern Kentucky where we had volunteered several times to help the people of Appalachia. They were both good ministries, and we had made acquaintances at both.

### **What Works? What doesn't?**

When we had resources (brochures and database) posted on our website, we wanted to know how to increase activity to reach more missionaries. We were in uncharted waters, so we tried a variety of things that we thought would help.

- I made presentations at CAPS (Christian Association for Psychological Studies) and the MHM (Mental Health and Missions) conference. The presentations had virtually no effect.
- We copied some of the brochures and the database onto floppy disks (3.5”) and handed 100 of them out to

people attending the MHM Conference. The disks had virtually no effect.

- I wrote individual emails addressed to “Director of Member Care” at all EFMA (Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies) and all IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association) members. This was before they joined to form Missio Nexus. The emails had virtually no effect.
- I placed a quarter page ad in EMQ (Evangelical Missions Quarterly). The ad had virtually no effect.

By then I knew what would not work. All of these attempts took time and/or money. Then in fall of 2010 Brigada Today contained an item about one of the free books on [missionarycare.com](http://missionarycare.com), and the number of books downloaded that month. I thought that it was a rather poorly worded item, but the results were incredible. This led to the following which are all free and rather easy.

- An item in the weekly Brigada Today (<http://www.brigada.org>) email leads to great increases in the number of books downloaded.
- An item in the GMCN (Global Member Care Network <http://www.globalmembercare.com>) newsletter also leads to great increases in the number of books downloaded.
- An item posted on the GMCN Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/globalmembercare>) also leads to great increases in the number of books downloaded.

Brigada Today is received weekly by thousands of people interested in missions. The GMCN Newsletter is received monthly by over a thousand people interested in missionary member care. The GMCN Facebook group is a closed group of more than 1700 people interested in missionary member care.

### **Will we have enough money for international travel and other ministry expenses?**

As we approached going into missionary member care full-time as volunteers, we pondered what we would do about finances for expenses, especially for airfares to people overseas. We decided that we would again trust God for those. As we wrote letters to hundreds of people to raise prayer support, we promised that we would never ask them for money—all we wanted were their prayers. We did say that if they wanted to make a contribution to our work, they could ask us how to do so. We wrote letters to everyone on such things as our Christmas card list, people we worked with at the college, people who attended our church, and the hundreds of psychology majors I had taught over the years.

About 150 people offered to pray for us, and about 50 of those asked how they could donate funds for expenses. We told those who asked about donating where to send the funds for a tax deductible receipt, and we also told them that we would never ask for money. However, we also told them that with every prayer letter, we would tell them exactly how much was in our expense account, and they could decide whether or not they wanted to add to that.

One of the things that we noticed was that many of those were retired missionaries who said something like, “Where were you when we needed you?” We went to the funeral of one of our retired missionary supporters. When we greeted one of her grandchildren there and told her that her grandmother was one of our faithful supporters, she said, “I know. I wrote the checks.”

We were amazed at how the money came in for our expenses. During the years that we were traveling overseas several times a year, our account usually had a balance of \$20,000 or more. Sometimes we would say, “I don’t know if I would give to people who had that much.” However, we never

did need to pay airfare to get anywhere. One evening we were attending a program at Asbury when we met a family who had two children who had been in Bonnie’s elementary class at school. Those boys wanted to support us. So we put them on our list and were so humbled to receive an envelope every now and then over several years with a few one dollar bills. We always thought about the poor widow that Jesus had said gave more than all the others because they gave out of their wealth, but she put in all she had.

### **Will we have enough money to live on?**

When we were 50 and decided that we were to quit working and go into member care full-time, we faced the decision about when we would do. I began my respecialization program at the University of Kentucky that year so that I would have training in counseling psychology, and Bonnie began working on her credentials in education. We noticed that Psalm 90:10 said, “The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty if we have the strength.” We also noticed that people past the age of 70 began to have serious, chronic illnesses; so we decided tentatively to quit working for a salary when we turned 60. That would give us a decade to prepare, and perhaps God would give us a decade of fruitful ministry to missionaries.

That meant that we had ten more years of our regular income, and then we would have to live on what God provided. Bonnie had not worked full time since I started teaching full-time, and I would not be paying into my Social Security and retirement program at Asbury during the years of my highest salary. Plus we would have to have funds to live on before we could begin drawing Social Security two years after we quit working. We did begin a supplemental annuity into which we could put aside some funds for those two years.

Seven or eight years later I had completed the respecialization program at UK, and Bonnie had a lifetime Kentucky teaching certificate as well as an ACSI teaching

certificate. However, we found that we didn't even use up all of the money we had in our supplemental annuity when we began getting Social Security at 62, and after more than a dozen years we still have a net worth which is far greater than we had when we quit at age 60. God is a faithful provider.

### **You never know...**

One day we were crossing a busy street inside the first ring in the center of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, when we barely made it across. From behind we heard someone behind us say something like, "That was close, wasn't it?" in English. We turned to see who it was, and it was an American we had never met before. After brief introductions, we told him that we were there to provide member care for missionaries and gave him our card. We were both staying at the same guesthouse, and when he read our card he asked if he could talk with us that evening because he had an appointment in just a few minutes.

When we met that evening, he said that he had noticed that I was professor emeritus at Asbury College, and he wondered if we knew Dick Reznick who taught there. Of course, we knew Dick well, and we asked about his connection with Dick. When he was an undergraduate at a university in Ohio, Dick was teaching there and was with Intervarsity. It was under Dick's ministry there that he was saved, and he had been a missionary to Ethiopia for 20 years before coming to serve in Bolivia. His ministry was primarily in providing water for people.

We asked if he would like to have his name and those of his family on the list of missionaries we prayed for each morning after breakfast and sent birthday and anniversary cards each year. He did, and he gave us names, birthdays, and an address. We prayed for them and sent cards for the next decade, continuing even after they returned to the USA about the time their "children" entered college. They put us on their mailing list so that we knew about their family and their

ministry, including his teaching in the engineering department at Cedarville College and taking students on mission trips to Bolivia to provide water.

When one of our grandsons in high school expressed an interest in engineering, we sent him a book about a missionary engineer and included one of those prayer letters. Just last week as our grandson packed to go to Cedarville in engineering, he packed the book and letter saying, "It just seemed right that I should take this book with me since that's how I first learned about Cedarville." You never know how God might work over three decades in events in both hemispheres.

## Chapter 7

### In Their Own Words: Email to [missionarycare.com](http://missionarycare.com)

In early drafts of this book, this chapter consisted of a selection of parts of 3000 emails sent to Ron or Bonnie at [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com). However, that chapter grew to more than 100 pages in length, and I decided it would be best to make it a book for only people involved in missionary member care. That book now has the following 18 chapters, each with five to ten emails or parts of emails. After consulting several people about ethical issues, I compiled some of these into a 100-page book available from me at [ron@missionarycare.com](mailto:ron@missionarycare.com). This book is for those serving in member care, so I am sending it to member care workers who request a copy rather than posting it on-line for the general public. Please tell me if you would like it as a .pdf or .doc file for your computer or as a .mobi or .epub file for your e-reader. Rather than reading what mental health professionals write about missionaries seeking help, read what missionaries say “in their own words.” That book now has the following 18 chapters, each with five to ten emails or parts of emails.

1. Constructive Criticism
2. Cries for Help
3. Critical Comments
4. Database Issues
5. Everyday Problems

6. Financial Issues
7. From Non-Missionaries
8. General Requests
9. Leadership Issues
10. Marriage Issues
11. National’s Requests
12. Potential Member Care Providers
13. Psychological Disorders
14. Reentry Issues
15. Singleness Issues
16. Student Issues
17. TCK Issues
18. Thanks

Remember, to get this book you must request a copy from [ron@missionarycare.com](mailto:ron@missionarycare.com). Please specify which format you prefer, pdf, doc, zip, mobi, or epub file.

## Part II

### The Story of the Websites

This is the story of [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) and its companion website, [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com). This part is factual. The statements here tell what happened and are based on what I did and statistics of what other people did in terms of helping me and visiting the websites.

I first became aware of the possibilities of the “Internet” in 1973 at a National Science Foundation summer program at the University of Colorado in Boulder. During that program, “Computer science in Social and Behavioral Science Education,” several of us played chess with a computer at Harvard University in Massachusetts. Although I had heard of one computer “communicating” with another far away, this was my first actual experience of doing it.

This was also my first idea of having books in electronic format and being able to revise them frequently. I was author of a chapter in a book that resulted from that program. D. E. Bailey was editor of *Computer Science in Social and Behavioral Science Education* published in 1978 by Educational Technology Publications in Englewood Cliffs, NJ. The title of my chapter was, “Write your own book and revise it every

semester--or instruction personalized by and for the teacher as well as for the student.”

I had written a set of subroutines that enabled instructors to use the computer to generate individualized workbooks for students and make changes as often as they wanted—and the workbooks all had different numbers randomly generated so that everyone’s answers were different! Little did I realize that, 25 years later, I would begin writing books that could be revised whenever I wanted to do so.

While respecializing in counseling psychology (20 years later) at the University of Kentucky during the mid 1990s, I realized that most missionaries had email, and many of them had Internet access. Asbury University had a website, the Psychology Department had a space on the site, and I could post things there for missionaries. With these facts in mind, I began to take steps in the direction of making a series of brochures available on the Internet to missionaries in the late 1990s.

My most important and longest lasting contribution to missionary member care is what I have written. Part II of the book is the detailed and documented story about the last two decades of this ministry. Some of the following contributions have previously been mentioned in Part I.

## Chapter 8

### The Beginning: Before November 1, 1998 Brochures and Database

Bonnie and I joined New Hope International Ministries as Mental Health Consultants in 1997. Later that year we submitted a “Proposal for a series of pamphlets pertaining to mental health and missions.” After our rationale, Ron proposed the following format:

Write them in the style found in *Evangelical Missions quarterly* so that they would fit on the 8 “pages” of an 8.5X14 piece of paper folded twice. These could be distributed free of charge to mission societies who requested them. Give permission to duplicate, if done in entirety, such as Dobson does on his monthly letter. Also make available on a web page along side of our “missionary care” database. That way, missionaries around the world who really do not want to be identified can download them anonymously. At the end of the article give our address, our e-mail address, and request feedback and other topics they would like to find out about.

In a report to New Hope International Ministries dated August 1998, four of the items were about what became missionarycare.com five years later.

We have more than 400 articles and books about missionary care in the database from which queries can be made on more than 100 topics. We continue to add to the database as we read new articles and books relevant to missionary care. This database can be shared with anyone who has Microsoft Access.

We have the brochures in final form, meaning that they have been written, commented on by members of the psychology department who will give comments, and edited by someone from the English department.

The “Mental Health and Missionary Care” web page is nearly operational. Although it does not have all the “bugs” out of it, you can see it at (URL). At this point, you can download the database, but not use it on-line to do searches, and only the “conflict” brochure is fully correct, but the time should soon come when it is all working.

I told the organizers of the Mental Health and Missions Conference about what I was doing, and offered to share it with people who attended the 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference this fall—thinking I would give them computer disks. They asked me to make a complete presentation of what is available as well as giving the attendees the material.

#### Brochures

In March 1998 I gave a copy of the proposed brochure titled “What Missionaries Ought to know about Depression” to six missionary couples on furlough or living “permanently” in

Wilmore. I did not really know what issues I should write about, but I knew I could not miss with depression. With that first brochure I included a self-addressed stamped envelope and the following paragraph on a slip of paper.

“This is just a first draft of a series of brochures we are considering producing for distribution to interested missionaries. Please give me any feedback you can. I am particularly interested in your reaction to the style of writing, the reading level, and the relevance to missionaries you have known in your experiences overseas. I am also very interested in what other topics you would suggest—what other mental health issues do you know of that it would be good for missionaries to know about, but they are not likely to ask their agency about. I appreciate your comments. After you have read it, please send it back to me. Thanks. Ron Koteskey”

All six couples replied saying that missionaries would read them, suggested changes in format, and suggested other topics. Their lists of other topics varied with some repetition, but the only topic on all six lists was “conflict between missionaries.” By April 22, 1998, I had a list of publications about conflict and had written a first draft of “What Missionaries Ought to Know about Conflict,” so I sent copies of the conflict brochure to all members of the psychology department. During the months that followed, I continued that process until by the end of October, I had ten brochures completed.

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Adolescence
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Anxiety
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Books for Missionary Care
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Burnout

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Conflict
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Counseling
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Depression
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Guilt
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Relationships
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Sexual Stress

All of these brochures, and all written since, have had the following two statements at the end of the brochure.

This brochure is one of a series, and you are invited to suggest other topics you would like to know about to the following: (my name and contact information including USPS address, telephone number, and email address)

This brochure may be reproduced without change and in its entirety for non-commercial purposes without permission.

Brady Nasfell was webmaster of the Asbury College website, and he was interested in missions as well. By the end of October he had posted these ten brochures on a page in the Psychology Department section of the college website. We posted them in both .html and .pdf formats, the pdf formats so that people could print them as the four-fold brochures to be printed and distributed. Counseling centers printed them as brochures and made them available to clients. Agencies printed them as books and gave them to their missionaries. Agencies burned them onto CDs and gave them to their member care workers.

### **Database**

While talking with Brady about the brochures I mentioned that I had an Access database of information about published (printed) resources about missionary member care. These resources were very valuable to me in writing the

brochures. He encouraged me to post the database as well. I did not even know that the database could be posted and that he could post it so that people could search it online or download the database into their own computers.

I was changing from teaching experimental psychology to providing missionary member care, so I needed to read a whole new body of literature. As I prepared to read the literature related to Mental Health and Missions, I pondered what to do to remember what I was reading and being able to find information I wanted. I was now in my 50s, and I knew I could not remember things like I did when I was in my 20s.

Annotated bibliographies are helpful to those who want an introduction to the literature in a given area, but they soon become outdated, and they are unwieldy if they contain too many references. I remembered the boxes of cards that I used in graduate school with each card giving several (at least 6) cross-references to other topics. I finally settled on creating a database of material related to missionary care. Rather than creating an elegant database, I decided to create a simple one, so all the data is in one large table rather than in several linked tables.

The evolving product became a large matrix with over 400 references, each making up one horizontal record in the database. Each record (reference) consisted of authors, editors, date of publication, titles, publication data, type of publication, number of pages, an outline of the article, a brief summary of the article, and “gems” (particular parts of the article I found intriguing and wanted to remember). Then each article had “yes” or a “no” as to whether or not the reference was relevant to one or more of more than 100 topics ranging from accountability to women’s roles. Thus, it became a large annotated bibliography in an electronic format.

However, it was not just a general annotated bibliography about mental health and missions. It could also be used to create over 100 annotated bibliographies on specific topics. These topics range from accountability to women’s

roles, and include all of the topics in the titles of the brochures above as well as 90 others. Thus, the database had a great deal of flexibility. Furthermore, each time I read a new book or article and entered it into the database, any new annotated bibliography generated on any topic contained the new publication, so it was continually updated, rather than becoming out of date. Finally, since it was in electronic format, it could be made available to anyone, anywhere, anytime to either search on his or her own—or to download and take personal charge of the content of the database.

As Brady talked with me about the database, I realized that I could share the notes I took about these resources, and they could be shared with any others that might be interested. They did not even have to learn Access, but could search the database on-line to create annotated bibliographies on more than 100 topics in member care. The only thing I had to delete were the columns I had used to give verbal evaluations and ratings of 1-10 of each article, chapter, or book. I did not want to share my opinion of each publication!

### **Website summary at the end of October, 1998**

No Websites

10 Brochures

No Books

Database with 400 records

No statistics available describing activity on these pages of the Asbury College website.

## Chapter 9

### The First Five Years: November 1998—October 2003 Website and Books

I presented a paper, “Available Anytime, Anywhere: Information for Missionary Personnel and Mental Health Professionals,” at the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference on Mental Health and Missions in Angola, Indiana, in November 1998. The paper included much of the information at the end of Chapter 1 as well as more specific information about the website. One section of the paper was titled “Principles of Production:”

Wanting to “scratch where missionaries itched,” rather than producing something irrelevant to needs, I wrote one brochure (on depression) and gave copies to half a dozen missionaries from several agencies. Asked whether or not a series on various topics related to mental health and missions would be useful, everyone a resounding “Yes.” Asked for additional topics, missionaries responded with several (on everyone’s list was something about “conflict”). That original brochure was modeled after typical *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* articles and the missionaries responded very positively to that. We then adopted the KISS

principle—Keep It Short & Simple. Although there is always the temptation to “tell all you know,” we agreed that no brochure could be longer than what could fit on an 8.5 X 14 sheet of paper in a four-fold format. If the content became longer than that, something had to go, or the information had to become two brochures.

Furthermore, missionaries wanted something practical, something they could use, and they liked a question-answer, bulleted format which allowed them to scan the content to see if it was relevant as well as quickly pick out needed information.

In addition to making the presentation, I handed out, free of charge, 100 floppy disks containing the ten brochures available on the website as well as the database as it was at that time. I had enough disks to give every couple and every single attending the conference one.

I also presented “WWW.hope.God/on/the/web: Information Available: Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime,” at the annual conference of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in March 2000.

I was teaching full time for the first four years, and we were getting personally involved in doing 3-4 reentry retreats and about as many orientations per year as well as visiting missionaries overseas occasionally. However, I did continue writing brochures and reading published material on a regular basis—each brochure or database entry was a small enough task to be done in “spare time” while still working full-time.

#### Brochures

Additional brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to Know... series.1998-2003:

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Anger
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Culture Stress

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Debriefing
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Each Other: From Builders to Busters
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Expectations
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Forgiveness
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Grief
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Leadership
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Maintaining Mental (and Physical) Health
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Member Care
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Ministry Separation
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Psychological Testing
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Reconciliation
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Reentry
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Saying Goodbye
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Sexual Abuse
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Trauma, PTSD, and CISD

I also co-authored a new series of brochures, “Stewardship Of Self,” with Marty Seitz.

- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Anxiety
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Biblical Basis
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Depression
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: General Principles
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Time Management in an Event-Oriented Culture
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Time Management in a Time-Oriented Culture

- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Internet Immorality
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Sleep
- Stewardship of Self for Christian Workers: Stress

In summary, the total number of brochures available by October 2003 included 36 brochures including 27 in the “Ought to Know” series and 9 in the “Stewardship of Self” series.

### Database

As I continued reading everything I could find, I added another 337 references to the database. By this time I had most of the material available in the database consisting of a total of 737 records.

In the January 2001 issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Scott Moreau and Mike O’Rear had an article titled “Virtual missionary care?” In it they said:

The Psychology Department of Asbury College has developed perhaps the best site on missionary member care: “Mental Health and Missionary Care...The site includes three primary features. *A collection of brochures written for missionaries.* These deal with practical mental health topics (stress, culture stress, anxiety, expectations, grief, leadership, etc.) and can be printed from the site, copied, and distributed. In a day when copyright issues are sensitive and intellectual property rights are closely guarded, it is refreshing to find an institution committed to providing practical advice without charge to the missions public.

## MissionaryCare.com

I retired from Asbury College in June 2002. The college said I could keep the brochures and database posted there; however, because I no longer worked at the college and Brady Nasfell was working elsewhere, the member care material was given a much lower priority, sometimes taking months to post new material.

For several years, a former student of mine, John Muehleisen, had told me repeatedly that my brochures were really good, but they were just too deeply buried in the Asbury College website. He continued to tell me that and encouraged me to get my own website. About that time he said that he was willing to build the website for me and got missionarycare.com (.org was not available). He was interested in Member Care, and he offered to do the website free of charge. So in 2003 [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) came into being.

Having our own website gave us more flexibility and control of when things were posted. It also gave us something very important, feedback in the form of statistics. We now knew what was being downloaded, how many of each item were viewed or downloaded, where in the world things were being downloaded, etc. This gave us not only information, but motivation.

I had always known that things were being downloaded from email, phone calls, and snail-mail. However, now I could follow daily what was happening relative to the resources, and I did follow it daily as I continued to write.

## Books

Member care workers in several countries requested permission to translate the brochures into other languages, and they did so, distributing them to missionaries individually or publishing them in periodicals. Friedhilde Stricker translated 25 of them (all that were available) into German, and Verlan für

Kultur and Wissenschaft published *Was Missionare wissen sollten... Ein Handbuch für Leben und Dienst* in 2003.

Bonnie and I began doing reentry retreats for several different agencies. We had used several different reentry books as part of those retreats, but most of them gave primarily facts about reentry. We wanted something that would help the participants process their own experiences during the time they had served in their passport countries. We wrote a brief (50-page) book, *Coming "Home": The Reentry Transition*, which could be used in a group, as a guide when being debriefed by someone else, or for a person to just process their own experiences.

As John Muehleisen was building missionarycare.com in 2003, he suggested gathering many of the brochures together as chapters in a book. I did so, and titled the book *What Missionaries Ought to Know...: A handbook for Life and Service*, the English translation of the German book published that year. This first edition of the book contained 32 chapters from both series of brochures, "What Missionaries ought to know" and "Stewardship of Self."

Each book contained the following on the copyright page:

"Permission is granted to copy and distribute  
this book without charge and in its entirety.  
Send it to anyone you believe may benefit  
from reading it.

Please do NOT post this book anywhere else on the Internet."

We wanted the member care resources to reach as many people as possible, so we encouraged those who downloaded books to print them and distribute them to anyone or to forward it in digital format to others who needed it.

We posted them in several formats so people could download them in whatever one they preferred. The compressed .zip files were especially for missionaries who lived

in areas where they did not have good Internet connections and paid by the minute or by the kb for downloads (Here is a note from a decade later: Only 2% of the books downloaded during the next 10 years were compressed .zip files, so that does not seem like very much. However, that was 5275 books, and that sounds quite important, especially when the missionaries downloading them were probably the ones most in need.)

The total number of books available was 2.

## People

One other thing I came to fully realize during this first five years was that I could do very little without the help of many other people. I have mentioned some of them earlier as groups of people. Faculty members in three departments at Asbury University were very helpful to me. Of course, members of the psychology department were of great help in making suggestions about rough drafts of the brochures. I also asked professors in the Bible department and the English department for suggestions as well.

However, two specific people gradually became people who commented on everything I wrote for many years. One is a colleague in the Psychology Department, Art Nonneman. Art came to Asbury after nearly two decades on the psychology faculty at the University of Kentucky. He made invaluable comments on psychological issues as well as just great suggestions on a wide variety of topics. The other is Yvonne Moulton who taught English Composition for decades at Asbury College, and is the wife of my department chairman. Yvonne was always the final one to edit brochures and books. Of course, most of her comments were related to wording, punctuation, etc. but she also made content comments as well.

John Muehleisen, former student, missionary for three decades, great talent in website design, encourager, and heart for member care, was the one who convinced me that missionarcare.com was the best way to go. Not only that, he

did everything to get the websites going and maintain them for years.

## Summary at the end of October 2003

1 Website (on-line at end of October)

- Missionarycare.com

36 Brochures

2 Books

Database with 737 records

No statistics relative to page views or downloads were available during these five years when the resources were posted on the Asbury College website.

## Chapter 10

### The Second Five Years: November 2003—October 2008

#### Another website, a new series of brochures, and more books

About a year after [missionarycare.com](http://missionarycare.com) became a reality. Bonnie and I were meeting in Thailand with a group of teachers serving in five or six countries in Asia. They met in northern Thailand in January 2005 because it was a place where all 600 of them could gather and worship God openly.

When we passed out our card with our website ([www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com)) on it, many of them said, “We cannot (dare not) visit your website.” Realizing that many of those serving God in the most difficult places would risk their ministry, we resolved to create a website they could visit. We decided to keep our website an openly Christian one, but we made it a website that never mentioned “missionaries” or “evangelism” in any way. This was acceptable to the agency of the teachers we were serving.

After considering several names for the website, we chose [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com). Material on the website was clearly Christian and quoted scripture, giving the references. However, I went through all of the brochures and

books to remove all mention of missionaries. “What Missionaries Ought to Know...” was changed to “What Cross-Cultural Workers Ought to Know...,” and other necessary changes were made. It would have been nice if I could have done a simple “find and replace.” Then I could have clicked “replace all” for each brochure and each book. However, while that made sense much of the time, there were always times that the results were nonsensical. So, I had to click “find next” and then either click “replace” or “cancel” out of the “find and replace” window and key in a reasonable change.

Although I could do this for the things I had written, I could not do that for the material in the database. Those references included “missionary” words in titles and quotes, and I could not change them. So [crossculturalworkers.com](http://crossculturalworkers.com) contains all of the brochures and most of the books and I have written and could change, but it does not contain the database.

Making those changes took many months, and I had the approval of the agency for all of the changes so that their teachers could visit it (this was in the days when there were no ways to visit places on the Internet without IT people in the host country knowing one was doing so). By the end of October, 2005, [crossculturalworkers.com](http://crossculturalworkers.com) was in operation. By the end of October 2008 (3 years) people had downloaded 8802 books and 72,365 brochures from [crossculturalworkers.com](http://crossculturalworkers.com). Such a website was clearly needed. Of course, each agency has its own requirements about what their members can visit, so not everyone can visit this site—but many can.

Now all of the brochures and books are available on two websites, both [missionarycare.com](http://missionarycare.com) and [crossculturalworkers.com](http://crossculturalworkers.com). This makes them available to many people serving in limited access countries where missionaries are not allowed.

In addition to this new website, I presented another paper and published another journal article about missionary member care. In March 2006, I presented “Internet activity—A New data source: What people want to know about caring for

missionaries” at the annual convention of the Association for Psychological Studies in Cincinnati, OH. As I attended that convention, I realized how much I had changed. I was no longer interested as much in the integration of psychology and Christianity as I was in missionary member care. I also published a journal article, “Missionary member care: What people want to know” in the Fall 2007 issue of the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*.

### Brochures

During these five years, I continued to write brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to know...” series which appear on the crossculturalworkers.com website as well. I also encountered several issues that were important in the marriages of missionary couples, so I began a new series on “Missionary Marriage Issues.”

Additional brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to Know...” series.2003-2008

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Aging Parents
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Books for (and about) MKs and Other TCKs
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Children’s Adjustment
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Happiness, Comparison, and Envy
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Coping with Change
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Healing Memories
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Loneliness
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Managing Money
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Retirement

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Sexual Purity
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Suffering
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Suicide
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Thankfulness

Stewardship of Self (no new brochures)

New brochures in the Missionary Marriage Issues:

- Missionary Marriage Issues: What about Dorothy (Introduction)?
- Missionary Marriage Issues: What about Charlotte (Conclusion)?
- Missionary Marriage Issues: Computer Sex or Me?
- Missionary Marriage Issues: How Will We Discipline Them?
- Missionary Marriage Issues: Relationship Time
- Missionary Marriage Issues: Not Called, But Willing
- Missionary Marriage Issues: I Don’t Want to Go!
- Missionary Marriage Issues: Wounds, Scabs, and Scars

Additional brochures during 2003-2008

27 new brochures as follows:

13 brochures in the Ought to Know series and

8 brochures in the Missionary Marriage Issues Series

Total Brochures Available by October 2008

40 brochures in the Ought to Know series

9 Brochures in the Stewardship of Self series

8 brochures in the Missionary Marriage Issues series

57 total brochures

Brochures downloaded during these five years

- Missionarycare.com 236,671
- Crosscutlturaworkers.com 72,365

- Total 309,036

## Database

I also continued to add new references in the database. During this five year interval I added 110 new records, and by the end of October, 2008, there were 847 records in the database. People viewed 410,414 full citations during these five years.

## Books

I revised *What Missionaries Ought to Know* each year, and I added several other books to the e-books page. Here is a list of the books.

- ***What Missionaries Ought to Know...: A Handbook for Life and Service (2008)*** This revised version has 45 chapters.
- ***Understanding Adolescence (2005)***. This is a revised version of the book for parents of teenagers was first published by Victor Books in 1987. It views adolescence as a cultural creation.
- ***Third Culture Kids and Adolescence: Cultural Creations (2005)***. This is a companion book to the one above, but written for teenagers to show that both adolescence and TCKs are cultural creations.
- ***We're Going Home: Reentry for Elementary Children (2007)***. Written by both Ron and Bonnie, this book helps prepare children for reentry.
- ***I Don't Want to Go Home: Parent's Guide for Reentry for Elementary children (2007)***. This is a companion book to the one above, written for parents to help their children through the transition.
- ***Before you get "Home": Preparing for Reentry (2008)***. This book was written after we were asked to do a seminar for people about six months from reentry.

- ***Missionary Marriage Issues (2008)***. This book is only about half as long as it will be when finished, but we posted it knowing that we are going to write additional brochures that will be chapters in the book.

During these years I revised one book and added six new books. Thus a total of eight books are posted.

Books downloaded during these five years

- |                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| • Missionarycare.com       | 32,101       |
| • Crosscutlturaworkers.com | <u>8,802</u> |
| • Total                    | 40,903       |

## Summary at the end of October 2008

2 Websites (Pageviews)

- |                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| • Missionarycare.com       | 1,444,447      |
| • Crossculturalworkers.com | <u>105,046</u> |
| • Total Pages Viewed       | 1,549,493      |

57 Brochures (Downloads)

- |                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| • Missionarycare.com       | 236,671       |
| • Crossculturalworkers.com | <u>72,365</u> |
| • Total Downloaded         | 309,036       |

8 Books (Downloads)

- |                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| • Missionarycare.com       | 32,101       |
| • Crossculturalworkers.com | <u>8,802</u> |
| • Total Books Downloaded   | 40,903       |

Database (only on missionarycare.com)

- |                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| • Records               | 847     |
| • Full citations viewed | 410,814 |

## Chapter 11

### The Third Five Years: November 2008—October 2013 Another website, a new series of brochures, and more books

Usually I received requests several times a year to translate some of the material on [missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) into another language. I routinely granted permission to translate whatever the person requested, as long as the translated material was made available free of charge. Usually some minor things were translated, but they had little circulation and little impact on missionaries in that other language.

However, in January 2011, three Korean men associated with a Korean congregation right here in our county met with me. We agreed on their translating material into Korean. The day after we met, I sent them the following email.

I give Hunn Choi and/or John Choi permission to translate any or all of the brochures or books (except one) on [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) and/or [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com) into Korean. I do not hold the rights to the book *Raising Resilient MKs* so I cannot grant permission for that. If you ever want to

translate that book you would need to get permission from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in Colorado Springs, CO. You have my permission to post these translations on your website as long as Korean missionaries are allowed to download them free of charge.

The translator for the project was Meesaeng Lee Choi, wife of Hunn Choi. Meesaeng was born and educated in Korea, came to the USA when she was in her 30s, and is now Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary. She and Hunn have taken the Member Care Training Course at Heartstream Resources in PA. They are developing Korean member care in central Kentucky and have founded the All Nations Mission Center (ANMC) at <http://www.anmcusa.org/>.

In June 2013 the ANMC posted 52 brochures of the “What Missionaries Ought to Know...” series in Korean at <http://www.anmcusa.org/>. By the end of October, 2013 they had posted four more, and people had downloaded 323,757 copies of the brochures in Korean!

An interesting finding occurred during the first 15 months these were posted. From June 2012 through September 2013 no additional brochures were posted, and the posted brochures were always in the same order with 20 per page (20 on the first page, 20 on the second page, and 12 on the third page). It was very clear that the page on which they were posted greatly influenced downloads. Here are averages (means) for each page:

- Page 1: Mean= 6899 downloads
- Page 2: Mean= 4328 downloads
- Page 3: Mean= 4068 downloads

In fact, not a single brochure on page 3 had as many downloaded as the lowest one on page one. Only two of the 20 brochures on page 2 were as large as the lowest on page 1. Clearly, which page a resource is posted makes a difference.

## Brochures

During these next five years, I continued to write brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to know...” series and the “Missionary Marriage Issues” series, and these also appeared on the [crossculturalworkers.com](http://crossculturalworkers.com) website as well. I also began receiving email from unmarried missionaries who pointed out that I had material for Third Culture Kids and for married couples, but I was ignoring about a quarter of the missionary force; so I began a new series on “Missionary Singles Issues.”

Additional brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to Know...” series.2008-2013

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Bribes
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Compassion Fatigue
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Generational Differences
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Groupthink
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Children of Helicopter Parents
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Laughter
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Nepotism
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Panic Attacks
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Passive-Aggressive Behavior
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Premature Departure from the Field
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Rumors
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Sarcasm
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Those Who Stay When Others Leave

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Uncompleted Transitions
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Victim Mentalities

Stewardship of Self (no new brochures)

Additional brochures for the “Marriage Issues” series.2003-2008

- Missionary Marriage Issues: Digital Distractions
- Missionary Marriage Issues: Marriage or Ministry?
- Missionary Marriage Issues: I’m Marrying a National!
- Missionary Marriage Issues: This Is No Honeymoon!
- Missionary Marriage Issues: I Wish Your Parents Would Leave Us Alone
- Missionary Marriage Issues: FUNd raising Isn’t FUN
- Missionary Marriage Issues: Spent It on WHAT?
- Missionary Marriage Issues: I’m Just a Trailing Spouse

Singles Issues

- Missionary Singles Issues: Arranged Marriage
- Missionary Singles Issues: Celibacy and Chastity
- Missionary Singles Issues: Contentment and Comparison
- Missionary Singles Issues: Housing
- Missionary Singles Issues: Identity
- Missionary Singles Issues: Love
- Missionary Singles Issues: Loneliness
- Missionary Singles Issues: Masturbation
- Missionary Singles Issues: Matchmakers
- Missionary Singles Issues: The New Singleness
- Missionary Singles Issues: Sexual Fantasy
- Missionary Singles Issues: Single Again
- Missionary Singles Issues: Is Singleness OK?

- Missionary Singles Issues: The Ticking Clock

Additional brochures during 2008-2013

37 new brochures as follows:

15 brochures in the Ought to Know series and

8 brochures in the Missionary Marriage Issues series

14 brochures in the Missionary Singles Issues series

Total Brochures Available

55 brochures in the Ought to Know series and

9 Brochures in the Stewardship of Self series with Dr. Seitz.

16 brochures in the Missionary Marriage Issues series

14 brochures in the Missionary Singles Issues series

94 total brochures

Brochures downloaded during these five years

- Missionarycare.com 441,588
- Crosscutlturaworkers.com 192,459
- ANMC (Korean) 323,757
- Total 957,804

## Database

I also continued to add new references in the database.

During this five year interval I added 52 new records, so by the end of October, 2013, there were 899 records in the database.

People viewed 422,659 full citations during these five years.

## Books

I revised *What Missionaries Ought to Know* each year, and I added several other books to the e-books page. Here is a list of the books added.

- ***What Missionaries Ought to Know...: A Handbook for Life and Service (2013)***. This revised version has 60 chapters.
- ***Raising Resilient MK's: Resources for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers*** (edited by Joyce Bowers, ACSI, 1998) (2009). When this valuable book went out of print, I contacted ACSI for permission to post it online for missionaries to download free.
- ***Reentry after Short-Term Missionary Service (2010)***. Several people pointed out that those returning from serving a few weeks to a couple years usually experienced different issues upon reentry, so I wrote this book.
- ***Psychology for Missionaries (2011)***. In past years I had written books for other audiences, such as *General Psychology for Christian Counselors*, and it occurred to me that such a book may be helpful to missionaries as well.
- ***Missionary Singles Issues (2011)***. Unmarried missionaries wrote to say that they had issues as well, but some were different from people who are married.
- ***Missionaries and Bribes (2012)***. Missionaries talking with us sometimes felt guilty whether they paid “bribes” or not. I wrote this book to help those people make decisions and discriminate between bribes and extortion.
- ***Bribery and the Bible*** (Written by Richard Langston, published by Campus Crusade Asia Limited in 1991) (2012). While I was writing *Missionaries and Bribes*, someone sent me a copy of this book. I found it very helpful, located the author in Singapore, and asked him if I could post it online since it was out of print.
- ***Missionary Member Care: An Introduction (2013)***. I received many questions about missionary member care and how to become involved in it. I was writing the same things to person after person, so I realized that

there was a real need for an introduction to member care.

Books downloaded during these five years:

- |                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| • Missionarycare.com      | 168,028       |
| • Crosscutluraworkers.com | <u>31,214</u> |
| • Total                   | 199,242       |

### E-readers

Although the Amazon Kindle was an instant success in the USA when it was first launched in October, 2007, we did not see a lot of missionaries on the field with them. They cost \$400 and could not be used outside of the USA. However, after Amazon announced an international version which could download titles in more than 100 countries in 2009, and prices below \$200 in 2010, we began to see Kindles and Nooks “everywhere.” E-readers seemed to be the perfect fit for missionaries because they could carry thousands of books in a small device that weighed a few ounces rather than lugging around books weighing hundreds of pounds.

In January, 2011, we began posting two additional formats of each book available. One format is the .mobi format for the Amazon Kindle, and the other format is the .epub format for Barnes and Noble’s Nook as well as most of the other E-readers. By the end of October, 2013, people had downloaded 31,104 books in E-reader formats—all of this in less than three years.

### Brigada Today and GMCN Newsletter

When the material was first posted, I tried various means of publicizing it. I presented papers at meetings and handed out floppy disks containing the material. I sent individual emails to the member care people at all IFMA and EFMA (now combined as Missio Nexus) agencies announcing

the material. I put classified ads in EMQ (*Evangelical Missions Quarterly*). I put quarter-page ads in EMQ. Nothing had a significant effect on the number of books or brochures downloaded.

During the seven years from the time the first e-books were posted until October, 2010, the largest number of books downloaded in a single month was 1898, and that was far above the next largest number downloaded. I had submitted several items to Brigada Today (<http://www.brigada.org>) saying in different words each time that “there is a lot of free material on missionarycare.com including lots of brochures and some good books.” I had tried listing some of the brochures and/or books. Those items made very little difference in the number of items downloaded.

During the late summer of 2010, Brigada Today had been sporadic, and the editor sent six of the newsletters during one week about the middle of October to catch up. Right in the middle of that week one subject line read “October 13<sup>th</sup> Mailing of 2010/08/08—Brigada Today.” Item number 4 was titled: “4) Snag this 62-page eBook on Missionary Marriage Issues —“ It said:

Hats off to Ron, a Member Care Consultant for Go International, for making his ebook available free and online at...  
[http://www.missionarycare.com/ebooks/Missionary\\_Marriage\\_Book.pdf](http://www.missionarycare.com/ebooks/Missionary_Marriage_Book.pdf)

Learn about raising third-culture kids, marrying a national, ministry separation, and much more. And with this price, why wouldn't we ask \*everyone\* to read it! :-

Of course, I was glad that someone had placed the item in Brigada, but it was in the middle of a week of Brigada issues. It was such a short item, and the link took the reader directly to the .pdf download rather than to the page which included the description of the book and all of its formats, as well as all the

other available books. In addition, the book was really only half as long as planned. Even though it was nice to have the item, I thought that little would come of it.

Much to my surprise, it resulted in not only a dramatic increase in the number of marriage books but also to the largest number of books overall that had ever been downloaded. Even though that October was half gone when the item appeared, 2543 books were downloaded during that month, followed by 2018 during November. During the next three years only three months fell below the previous record of 1898. All three of those were times when I went several months without submitting a book item.

During 2013, I began submitting similar items during the same month to the Global Member Care Network (GMCN) Newsletter (<http://www.globalmembercare.com/>) as well. The combined effect of both monthly newsletters set a new record of 9801 downloads during the month of September 2013. Brigada Today reaches thousands of people interested in the missionary enterprise generally, and GMCN reached thousands interested specifically in member care.

During those first seven years that books were available online, people downloaded a total of 71,829 books (mean of 10,261/year). During the three years that followed (when I submitted items to Brigada and GMCN), people downloaded a total of 168,316 (mean of 56,105/year).

I have also noticed that the effect of items in these newsletters is different from some other “advertising.” The first few days show the same “spike,” with the first day having the largest number of downloads, the second day about half as many, the third day about half of that, etc. However, the decline is less with these newsletters in that the effect lasts nearly two months. Of course, the first month has the most, but the increase is still noticeable the second month.

During October 2013, I placed the following item in both newsletters.

For Your Korean Colleagues....: Free Downloads—

Member Care brochures from the "What Missionaries Ought to Know...." series are available from the All Nations Mission Center where 52 of the brochures are available in Korean as free downloads in pdf. If you are on a multicultural team or know other Korean missionaries, please send them this link. They can't beat the price. Find the brochures at...

<http://www.anmcusa.org/brochures>

I had doubts about the effect this item would have. Previously I asked readers to download a book which was just a click away. This time I was asking them to contact other missionaries, and those were missionaries from a different country who spoke a different language. I was pleasantly surprised!

The previous record number of brochures downloaded from the Korean website during a single month was 38,597. During October people downloaded 50,374, and during November they downloaded 56,192. Clearly Items in Brigada Today and GMCN have a great effect.

### Summary at end of October 2013

#### 3 Websites (Pageviews)

• Missionarycare.com	3,410,550
• Crossculturalworkers.com	445,014
• All Nations Mission Center	N/A
• Total Pages Viewed	3,855,564

#### 94 Brochures (Downloads)

• Missionarycare.com	678,259
• Crossculturalworkers.com	264,824
• All Nations Mission Center	323,757
• Total Downloaded	1,266,840

#### 15 Books (Downloads)

• Missionarycare.com	200,129
• Crossculturalworkers.com	<u>40,016</u>
• Total Books Downloaded	240,145
Database (only on missionarycare.com)	
• Records	899
• Full citations viewed	833,473

## Chapter 12

### **The Fourth Five Years: November 2013—October 2018** More brochures and books and two new websites

(Only about three years has passed at this time, so take that into consideration as you read)

One of the unexpected major changes in this decade was the change in the rate of downloads of the Korean brochures. After nearly a year of downloading many thousands of brochures each month, the number of downloads dropped rapidly. During November 2013, people downloaded 56,192 brochures, but by May of 2014 downloads had dropped to only 2! In January of 2014, I noticed that “something” was happening to downloads on the Korean website. They had dropped by nearly 50%. When I notified the Koreans, they reassured me that all would be better when their new website was completed. However, the decline continued until they nearly disappeared. In May 2016, only 30 Korean brochures were downloaded. The new website is much larger and more “attractive,” but it does not lead to getting brochures into the computers of missionaries.

## New Websites

As we moved into the second decade of the twentieth century, people began visiting websites on the Internet through devices with smaller screens than on desktop or laptop computers. People were using their smart phones or tablets. Websites designed for computers with large screens could be viewed by people with smaller screens, but sometimes it was rather inconvenient. Soon, more than half of the traffic on the internet was people with smaller screens. With responsive web design the website being visited can detect the size of the screen on the viewing device and send a page that is more appropriate for a screen of that size. Of course, people visiting a website prefer a page that “fits” their screen.

On June 1, 2016 we launched [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com) and [www.crossculturalworkers.com](http://www.crossculturalworkers.com) as new websites with responsive web design sites. The results have been interesting and surprising. The number of books downloaded has remained nearly the same. However, the number of brochures viewed or downloaded has increased greatly. During the last six months of the old websites, the average number downloaded each day was 252. During the first six months of the new websites, the average number of brochures each day was 612. That is more than double the number downloaded from the old websites.

## Brochures

During these next five years, I continued to write brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to know...” series. Additional brochures for the “What Missionaries Ought to Know...” series, 2013-2018, are:

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Attrition
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Confrontation
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Contentment

- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Danger and Risk
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Difficult Leaders
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Dissatisfaction
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Millennials as Adults
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Memory
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Perfectionism
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Pornography
  
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Rejection and Betrayal
- What Missionaries Ought to Know about Same-sex Marriage

Stewardship of Self (no new brochures)

Marriage Issues (no new brochures)

Singles Issues (no new brochures)

## Database

2014 added 22 new references.

Not able to be searched on line, but it may be downloaded and searched in one’s computer if one knows Access.

## Books

- ***Missionary Transitions (2015)***. We had led 35 reentry retreats and written five books about reentry, so we had dealt with the reentry transition. This book mentions

them but adds other transitions such as going to the field, family transitions, ministry transitions, field transitions, retirement, and to heaven.

- ***In Their Own Words: Email to missionarycare.com (2016).*** During the last decade people I have never met wrote 3000 emails. After consulting several people about ethical issues, I compiled some of these into a 100-page book. This book is for those serving in member care, so I am send it to those who request a copy rather than posting it on-line for the general public. It is especially helpful for those new to member care.
- ***Memories and Musings about Missionary Member Care (2017).*** This book was posted in January, 2017, and it contains information about how I became involved in missions and member care as well as the story of the websites.

Books downloaded during these 3 years and 2 months

- Missionarycare.com 116,894
- Crossculturalworkers.com 15,680
- Total 132,574

**Summary at end of December 2016**

3 Websites (Pageviews)

- Missionarycare.com 4,257,223
- Crossculturalworkers.com 610,640
- All Nations Mission Center N/A
- Total Pages Viewed 4,867,863

104 Brochures (Downloads)

- Missionarycare.com 957,922
- Crossculturalworkers.com 356,824
- All Nations Mission Center 482,009
- Total Downloaded 1,796,755

17 Books (Downloads)

- Missionarycare.com 317,023
- Crossculturalworkers.com 55,696
- Total Books Downloaded 372,719

Database (only on missionarycare.com)

- Records 930
- Full citations viewed 906,304

**Looking toward the next two years**

The Koreans have translated some more brochures during the last year, and they have plans to translate more books into Korean and post them online. Here is a note from the All Nations Mission Center Newsletter in 2016:

The work of translating member care resources by the Onnuri volunteer translators, which started in 2015, is now close to completion. The plan is to edit and modify the received resources and upload them to the All Nations website (www.anmcusa.org), and then to publish brochures which will be available to missionaries from all nations. Dr. Koteskey’s work, “What Missionaries Ought to Know,” and the following topics will be made available as resources:

1. • Marriage & Singles Issues
2. • Raising Resilient MKs
3. • Missionary Member Care: An Introduction
4. • Understanding Adolescence
5. • Cultural Creations: TCKs and Adolescence

This all bodes well for the future.

## Other E-Books by the Author

<http://www.missionarycare.com/ebook.htm> contains more than a dozen E-books by Ron which can be downloaded free of charge by anyone, anytime, anywhere. These books may be downloaded as .doc, .pdf, and .zip, files to be viewed on a computer or as .mobi or .epub files to read on a Kindle, Nook, or other e-reader. They may also be distributed to anyone as long as they are given to others free of charge and unchanged.

- *Missionary Member Care: An Introduction* is written in a question/answer format and is useful for missionaries wondering about doing member care or in using it.
- *What Missionaries Ought to Know...: A Handbook for Life and Service* is a compilation of many of the brochures about missionary life.
- *Psychology for Missionaries* which considers implications of general psychology for missionaries.
- *Missionary Marriage Issues* is a compilation of many of the brochures about married life on the field.
- *Missionary Singles Issues* is a compilation of many of the brochures about single life on the field.
- *Missionary Transitions* is a book about the many kinds of transitions missionaries face throughout life.
- *Before you get "Home": Preparing for Reentry* is written for use several months before returning.

- *Coming "Home": The Reentry Transition* can be used as preparation for debriefing in a group, when being debriefed, or to debrief yourself.
- *Reentry after Short-Term Missionary Service* is for people serving from a week to a couple years.
- *We're Going Home: Reentry for Elementary Children* is a story and activities for children 6-12 years of age.
- *I Don't Want to Go Home: Parent's Guide for Reentry for Elementary Children* is a companion book written specifically for parents to help them assist in their children's reentry.
- *Third Culture Kids and Adolescence: Cultural Creations* is written specifically for adolescent TCKs but is also applicable to other adolescents.
- *Understanding Adolescence* is a companion book written specifically for parents of adolescents.
- *Missionaries and Bribes* is written to help missionaries decide what they should do when facing a situation that seems like bribery.
- *In Their Own Words* During the last decade people that Ron Koteskey has never met wrote 3000 emails to [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com). He compiled some of these into a 100-page book available from him at [ron@missionarycare.com](mailto:ron@missionarycare.com).

The following two books are not by Ron, but they are relevant to missionary member care, are out of print, and are available free of charge on the same website.

- *Raising Resilient MKs: Resources for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers* was edited by Joyce Bowers and first published by ACSI in 1998.
- *Bribery and the Bible* was written by Richard Langston and first published in Singapore by Campus Crusade Asia Limited in 1991.