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Wayfinding: Spiritual Resilience for Global Servants

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WAYFINDING:

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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DEDICATION

To my husband, David, my partner in life and ministry.

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I am thankful for...

my IM colleagues, my wayfinding companions for over two decades,
my LSF4 cohort, who always had my back,
Alyssa and Susan, who never let me fall out of the boat,
my lead mentor, Dr. Mary Kate Morse,
my advisor, Dr. Carole Spencer,
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and my beloved family, who always encourage me to follow my dreams.

As we voyage we are creating new stories within the tradition of the old stories, we are literally creating a new culture out of the old.

Nainoa Thompson, Polynesian Wayfinder

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation proposes that mission agencies who develop a spiritual formation paradigm that incorporates the principles of wayfinding to navigate personal, vocational, and spiritual shifts enhance cross-cultural resiliency for missionaries (also known as global servants). Section One highlights the problem: mission agencies are not adequately addressing the numerous stressors that global servants constantly manage resulting in less healthy, unhealthy or toxic behaviors. In addition, organizational and historical mission culture often creates untenable expectations that contribute to the global servant's stress. Section Two analyzes how stressors might alternatively be addressed via pre-assignment counseling, sending churches, corporate support structures, or enhanced self-care. The findings suggest that even though mission agencies and corporations implement member care initiatives with the hope that employees will last for the long haul, very few implement an intentional spirituality that invites people to engage sustainable practices for long-term ministry. Studies show that spaces that allow for meaningful reflection and authentic community are factors that keep individuals grounded during stress. In response, Section Three proposes that mission agencies and global servants need to co-create an alternative organizational culture that no longer relies on historical, hierarchical, and imperialistic models. The concept of developing a spiritual formational model grounded in wayfinding, ancient practices of navigation for one's interior and exterior journey, will be explored. Section Four introduces the artifact: a spiritual formation curriculum that addresses the key components of a global servant's journey from pre-assignment to retirement incorporating soul care, self-care, and community care practices in addition to specific wayfinding principles. Section Five

offers a detailed description of the curriculum including the goals, content, and implementation. Finally, Section Six is a reflection on my learning through the dissertation process, with suggestions regarding further research.

SECTION I:

THE TOLL OF CROSS-CULTURAL STRESS

Introduction

M and C have been on the field for three years. Although both are ordained, C has more direct interaction with their national partner because the organization doesn't support women in ministry. C had planned on M being his full partner as they planted new churches. He now feels abandoned, inwardly resenting their international partner and sometimes his wife. M wonders why God has called her to serve as a missionary in a place where her gifts aren't acknowledged. Overwhelmed by doubts and insecurities they don't know how to verbalize, they each put on a brave face and soldier on.

K has served for seven years in economic development. Her partner is an association of twenty-seven churches spread over several thousand square miles. K is continually on the road as she ministers to very remote villages. Because she is single, the partner assumes she is always available for ministry. She is exhausted at multiple levels but doesn't know how to set healthier boundaries without disappointing her partner.

T and W are close to retirement. They have been missionaries for thirty years. Their host country feels more like home than their passport country. Their adult children are scattered around the world. The idea of negotiating such a huge move is overwhelming on every imaginable level.[1]

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[1] These case studies illustrate some of the typical stressors that can impact missionaries in cross-cultural settings. The characters are fictional. However, their circumstances and challenges represent a composite of real-life scenarios drawn from my own experience and work as a spiritual care advocate with missionaries.

Global servants[2] struggle with a variety of factors over the course of their ministry. Isolation, medical needs, language acquisition, educational needs of their children, unclear expectations with host partners, life transitions, donor relationships, and spiritual doubts can assail a cross-cultural worker at any time. This section will explore the research that identifies cross-cultural stress and fatigue. After examining these factors, I will then look at some of the historical paradigms that can contribute to a global servant's stress. Additionally, I will delve into international partnerships and how they add to this scenario. Finally, I will explore the stress of missions and finance. The goal of this compiled research is to evaluate how the mission agency's member care policies, or lack thereof, impact a global servant's ability to manage cross-cultural stress. The practical implication of these positive and negative findings is to discover what type of member care model reduces stress and amplifies resiliency.

Cross-Cultural Stress

Global servants minister in a variety of cross-cultural environments. Different factors contribute to a global servant's ability to navigate change and to manage stress as they attempt to adapt to unfolding scenarios. Various studies over the last thirty years have sought to identify the primary stressors impacting a missionary's physical and mental health. Johnson and Penner surveyed fifty-five North American Protestant mission agencies and ranked "relationships with other missionaries, cultural adjustment,

[2] Many mission agencies now use the term global servant or global worker to replace the word "missionary," as the latter term often has negative connotations of imperialism and paternalism. I will use the terms interchangeably throughout this document.

managing stress, and raising children as the significant problems."[3] Dorothy Gish surveyed 549 missionaries regarding sixty-five stressors. The top stressors her research uncovered were "confronting others when necessary, communicating across language and cultural barriers, time and effort need to maintain donor relationships, managing the amount of work, and establishing work priorities."[4] Author and missionary Phil Parshall took a slightly different approach when he targeted spirituality adjustments. His sample of 390 missionaries showed "the greatest spiritual struggles were maintaining a successful devotional time, experiencing spiritual victory, and managing feelings of sexual lust."[5]

Field research[6] conducted with a sample of global servants discovered similar stressors. Global servants who were in their first term of service indicated that geographical location, language acquisition, establishing new friendship circles, seeking medical assistance, and negotiating new host country partner relationships were initial challenges that caused various degrees of stress. For global servants who had served multiple terms, their stressors shifted to include maintaining and cultivating healthy donor relationships, re-imagining host country partner relationships, and addressing unfolding family concerns such as children's education or a spouse's periodic depression.

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[3] Kelly O'Donnell and Michele Lewis O'Donnell, "Understanding and Managing Stress," in *Missionary Care: Counting the Cost for World Evangelism*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 112.

[4] Dorothy J. Gish, "Sources of Missionary Stress," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 3 (September 1983): 239, https://doi:10.1177/009164718301100309.

[5] O'Donnell and O'Donnell, "Understanding and Managing Stress," 112.

[6] Joyce Reed, "Cross-cultural Stress on the Mission Field," field research by author, confidential Zoom interviews conducted during May 2019.

Defining Stress and Stressors

Taking a moment to define the words "stress" and "stressors" is important as one investigates this topic. Kelly and Michele O'Donnell, established experts in the field of missionary member care, say "Stress is our response to various internal and external demands (stressors). Stress can affect your spirit, emotions, mind, and body."[7] Their holistic approach to stress allows a global servant to evaluate internal stressors such as "doubt, grief, or illness" separate from external stressors such as "work, financial difficulties, or friction with colleagues."[8] Internal and external stressors together can "develop into things like insomnia, hypertension, and headaches, as well as irritability, depression, spiritual doubts, and apathy."[9] Recent research has also discovered that stress impacts premature cellular aging. The human body has a telomerase enzyme that "can either trigger an early disease or work to keep your cells healthy."[10] If one looks or feels older than one's age, then the overall health of their cells might be the culprit.

These observations reveal that there are multiple layers to understanding a cross-cultural worker's stress. "I'm stressed," "I feel overwhelmed," "I miss my friends," or "Living in another country is harder than I expected," are symptomatic responses and merely the tip of the iceberg. What lies beneath the surface, either purposely or from lack of self-awareness, needs to be examined to effectively address a global servant's concerns.

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[7] O'Donnell and O'Donnell, "Understanding and Managing Stress," 110.

[8] O'Donnell and O'Donnell, "Understanding and Managing Stress," 110-111.

[9] O'Donnell and O'Donnell, "Understanding and Managing Stress," 110-111.

[10] Elizabeth Blackburn and Elissa Epel, *The Telomere Effect* (London, UK: Orion Spring, 2017), 20.

The importance of not only acknowledging, but also proactively addressing the stressors of global servants, becomes apparent when viewing how missionaries score on a modified version of the Holmes-Rahe scale used to assess stress in an individual's life. Psychiatrists Holmes and Rahe wanted to determine if there was a link between stress and illness. They developed a scale that listed forty-three life events called a Life Change Unit (LCU). Five thousand medical patients were surveyed to ascertain their levels of stress in these forty-three areas over a two-year period. The inventory scores were designated as the following:

> **150 points or less**: a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.
> **150-300 points**: 50% chance of health breakdown in the next 2 years.
> **300 points or more**: 80% chance of health breakdown in the next 2 years.[11]

A modified version of the Holmes-Rahe Inventory was used to assess missionaries by psychologists Larry and Lois Dodds. They surveyed 582 missionaries over five years. The missionaries originated from more than twenty countries and served in forty countries.[12] The typical missionary's score was 600 or higher year after year. New missionaries to the field peaked at 900.[13] Regarding these startling findings, the Doddses say:

> In typical missionary life, the stresses keep mounting up at a pace far faster than one can assimilate. Seldom is there time to fully adjust to one change and regain equilibrium before the next demand for adaptation hits. This means the life style itself becomes chronically full of high stress. The 'tails' from stress-upon-stress

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[11] The American Institute of Stress, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," 1979-2018, http://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory.

[12] Lois A. Dodds and Lawrence E. Dodds, *Love and Survival in Life and Mission* (Liverpool, PA: Heartstream Resources, 2018), 8-10.

[13] Dodds and Dodds, *Love and Survival in Life and Mission,* 8-10.

> stretch out for years. Physiologically, this means living for years with increased adrenalin, which leads to physical changes in the brain and other body systems.[14]

The Doddses' research was affirmed by psychiatrist, medical doctor, and former missionary Marjory Foyle, who says,

> Moving cross-culturally, especially when expatriation is involved, adds an extra dimension which demands a massive adjustment. Every aspect of personal and family life is affected. Language, food, climate, housekeeping, job patterns, local politics, geography and history, the impact of the move on children, separation from parents, siblings, friends and church, are all exchanged for a new situation which has to be organized and assimilated before people can begin to feel at home. It is the totality of the impact of the unfamiliar that some people find stress-inducing.[15]

Missionaries I interviewed mentioned many of these same stressors. They spoke of traffic, safety issues due to political and civil unrest, making new friends, helping their children adapt to new schools, separation from aging parents, failure to comprehend subtleties of their host culture, navigating an unfamiliar health care system in a foreign language, and maintaining donor relationships.

Despite the significant stressors found in the field, Foyle finds, perhaps surprisingly, that a mission agency can spend too much time talking about stress and how to handle it as they prepare missionary candidates for the field. Global servants can become pre-conditioned to only recognize the negative, which can create a mindset of seeing their situation as a glass half empty instead of half full. Foyle advocates for also emphasizing the positive aspects of cross-cultural living and partnerships so that stress management training is kept in healthy perspective.[16] My field research supports these

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[14] Dodds and Dodds, *Love and Survival in Life and Mission*, 12.

[15] Marjorie F. Foyle, *Honorably Wounded: Stress among Christian Workers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch Books, 2001), 25-26.

[16] Foyle, *Honourably Wounded*, 25.

statements. Missionaries felt that while their first years on the field were challenging, they were not overwhelming. Many commented that their orientation and language school training provided adequate resources to address the stress they encountered. Gish writes, "Stress depends in part on whether an individual appraises a given situation as benign, neutral or stressful. Even appraising a situation as stressful does not necessarily result in distress for those who view it as a challenge."[17] Individuals respond to stress differently depending on their appraisal of the events and their coping mechanisms.

Stress and Trauma

As one interacts with individuals in stress-filled and stress-full situations, it becomes apparent that there are different types of stress. While some stress can be addressed through more intentional self-care and soul care measures, other types of stress may require professional intervention from counselors, pastors, or licensed therapists. Stress that can't be addressed by one's own efforts falls into one of four categories:

1. **Critical incident stress**. This occurs when an individual is seriously threatened by harm or death.[18] An armed robbery, rape, or accident are examples. This type of stress tends to have parameters of a particular place and time.

2. **Traumatic stress**. This occurs when a person reacts to any challenge, demand, threat or change that exceeds his/her coping resources and results in distress.[19] Traumatic stress is common during war, mass riots, pandemics, repetitive abuse, and natural

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[17] Dorothy J. Gish, "Sources of Missionary Stress," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 3 (September 1983): 236, http://www.doi.org/10.1177/009164718301100309.

[18] Lisa McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress: Online Training Module One" (Pasadena, CA: Headington Institute, 2007), 8, https://headington-institute.org/files/understanding-and-coping-with-traumatic-stress_updated-nov-2014_63458.pdf.

[19] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 8.

disasters. It can also trigger memories of past trauma, thus compounding a person's response to the present situation.

3. **Vicarious or secondary trauma**. This trauma occurs in response "to witnessing or hearing about a traumatic event experienced by others. It can trigger some of the same symptoms as a critical incident but usually at a lesser degree."[20] This type of stress is especially common to humanitarian aid workers and/or global servants who serve in areas of civil unrest or who serve with marginalized populations (e.g., refugee settlements or victims of trafficking). Counselors, medical personnel, teachers, and pastors are also susceptible to secondary trauma.

4. **Cumulative stress**. This is perhaps the most common dilemma that cross-cultural global servants experience. As stressors build up over time, and if ministry is high-impact work, then the danger of burnout can happen in three to five years.[21] High-impact work, in this context, would be ministry priorities established by the mission agency that are considered essential to achieving its vision and mission. Examples of cumulative stressors could be any of the following:

- A chaotic and reactive work environment
- Feeling overwhelmed by unmet needs
- Tight deadlines and stressed coworkers
- Communication difficulties due to personality and cultural differences
- Inadequate preparation and briefing
- Being asked to complete tasks outside your area of training
- Facing moral and ethical dilemmas
- Isolation from your familiar social support network
- Chronic sleep deprivation
- Travel difficulties and delays[22]

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[20] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 8.

[21] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 9.

[22] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 9.

No one is immune to stress. If no member care initiatives are in place—either from a personal or organizational standpoint—then the combination of cumulative stress with compassion fatigue creates an unstable, and potentially uninhabitable, environment for a global servant. Stress and trauma are now studied in connection to The Polyvagal Theory, which looks at the interplay between the physiological and sociological responses to safety and danger. The human brain is built to allow human beings to function as a tribe.[23] Community is imperative to health. How a mission agency monitors and helps mitigate stress for home office staff and global servants determines the resilience of its personnel for the long haul.

Cultural Dimensions of Stress

The way individuals respond to stress and trauma at a physical and emotional level is rather similar all over the world. However, culture does impact a person's interpretation of stress. This is especially evident in individual vs. collective cultures, which are also sometimes referred to as hot-climate (relationship-based) and cold-climate (task-oriented) cultures.[24] Initial questions global servants need to ask are: "How does my host culture define stress and trauma? Is it similar or dissimilar to my birth culture?"[25] For example, some cultures define stress from an individual perspective, and others as something that happens to the entire family system. One culture might see stress through a psychological lens, while another views it from a socio-economic lens. These are key

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[23] Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 80.

[24] Sarah A. Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar* (Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing, 2000), 16.

[25] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 11.

factors to try to understand, especially as they shape how a global servant responds to stress in a cross-cultural setting, and also how a caregiver might address the situation. Another question to consider: "How does my host culture experience stress?" The answer to this question requires a careful study of one's context. Do individuals only speak of physical symptoms like a headache or fatigue, or do they also include emotional symptoms like anxiety or mood swings? There can be mental symptoms like confusion and difficulty making decisions, as well as spiritual symptoms such as loss of meaning, anger at God, and doubt. And finally, this question: "How does my host culture traditionally deal with stress?"[26] For example, someone from the Eastern United States might have learned that during stressful situations you're on your own. You are responsible for identifying and finding the resources you need. Whereas a person in Latin America would have learned to resource family, friends, and even larger communities like a church congregation. Mitigating stress is directly tied to one's cultural upbringing, and often one initially reverts to their culture because it is so deeply buried in the psyche.

Clinical psychologist Karen Carr says that to understand a person's reaction to trauma, it is imperative to understand their context. She states that one needs to examine what was happening in the person's life before the trauma, ask specific questions about the trauma itself, and then learn how others have responded to the person since the trauma, which indicates the level and type of support available.[27] If it's not adequate, then the caregiver can strategize other options with the global servant. All mission agencies have experienced an occasion where a global servant has lived through a crisis such as

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[26] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 11.

[27] Karen Carr, "Resources for Effective Support," in *Trauma and Resilience: Effectively Supporting Those Who Serve God*, eds. Frauke C. Schaefer and Charles A. Schaefer (n.p., Condeo Press, 2012), 45-46.

the death of a loved one, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, natural disaster, civil war, evacuation, etc. In any of these situations, an awareness of any previous trauma in a global servant's life would allow a caregiver to be more cognizant of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) symptoms. But even if PTSD is not a factor, Carr points out that grief and loss can be triggered as well as questions about suffering, issues of control (hypervigilance), and an increasing sense of anger and injustice. She encourages the question, "What was going on in your life just prior to this event?" to not only learn potential risk factors, but also to assess a person's pre-trauma strengths and resources.[28]

What mission agencies might be surprised to learn is that their organizational culture is also a determining factor in how a global servant manages stress. The Headington Institute, which collects data and resource to promote resilience among humanitarian aid workers, discovered that "organizational factors such as team relationships, leadership, clarity of mission objectives, and agency structure as their primary cause of chronic stress."[29] Traditionally, many mission agencies were connected to mainline denominations (Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist), and personnel were hired from those respective pools. The dramatic decline of denominational institutions, as well as the fact that denominational theological constructs are becoming less of a priority to the general public, has caused a major shift in the demographics of many historic mission agencies. International Ministries, a 206-year-old mission agency that used to be comprised exclusively of American Baptists, now has employees who are not Baptist. When someone is hired, it also stands to reason that the historical and theological

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[28] Carr, "Resources for Effective Support," 47.

[29] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 15.

orientation of each mission agency varies widely from one to the next. One can perceive how stress around organizational culture can escalate depending on a person's circumstances. It should be pointed out that a global servant can experience organizational stress not only with the sending agency, but also with an international host partner. International hospitals, schools, and churches are also cultures unto themselves. If a global servant receives no training about how to define, explore, and grow within these situations, then stress will mount.

Burnout

Psychologist Christine Maslach defines burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind."[30] She continues, "It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit and will—an erosion of the human soul."[31] Her work became groundbreaking because she shifted the focus from the individual to their social environment. To assess burnout, she designed the MBI: the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Joining efforts with Leiter, Maslach examined the following factors of work environment: work overload, lack of control, insufficient reward, unfairness, breakdown of community, and value conflict.[32] Maslach's research revealed that burnout is closely related to work engagement. Persons who have high negative feelings about their job

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[30] Chi-En Hwang, Robert F. Sherer, and M. Fall Ainina, "Utilizing the Maslach Burnout Inventory in Cross-Cultural Research," *International Journal of Management* 20, no. 1 (March 2003): 3.

[31] Christine Maslach and M.P Leiter, *The Truth about Burnout* (San Francisco, CA: Joseey-Bass, 1997), 17.

[32] Thomas M. Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout and Compassion Fatigue and Self-Care Strategies for the Helping Professions* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 104.

usually have increased burnout symptoms. Exhaustion, cynicism, lack of interest, unrealistic self-expectations, unbalanced priorities, and/or inadequacy can all be symptoms that lead to burnout. Work engagement is the opposite. Work engagement is a state of mind which encompasses energy, dedication, and absorption at work. There is high mental resilience and persistence when facing difficulties.[33] The importance of tracking work engagement and burnout with employees is that they tend to predict general life satisfaction and depressive symptoms.[34] Therefore, how someone is handling their workload, long working hours, time pressures, emotional strains, and even problems with equipment (e.g., computers) can impact psychological and emotional stress if the effort required to sustain them is constantly high.[35] Self-efficacy, self-esteem, resilience, and optimism can counteract these types of negative job demands. Maslach's MBI is a tool often used by mission agencies because of its "stability in different occupations, countries and languages."[36] However, my experience is that the MBI is either used as an assessment tool during the hiring process, or occurs much later during a term of service as an assessment of burnout within a cross-cultural work context. Rarely are mission agencies using it as a self-assessment tool of how the organization is contributing to a

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[33] W.B. Schaufeli, A.B. Bakker, and M. Salanova, "The Measurement of Work Engagement with a Short Questionnaire: A Cross-National Study," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 66, no. 4 (2006): 701-716, http://www.doi.org/10.1177/0013164405282471.

[34] J.J. Hakanen and W.B. Schaufeli, "Do Burnout and Work Engagement Predict Depressive Symptoms and Life Satisfaction? A Three-Wave Seven-Year Prospective Study," *Journal of Affective Disorders* 141, no 2 (2012): 424-425, http://www.doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2012.02.043.

[35] A. Bakker, E. Demerouti, and W. Schaufeli, "Dual Processes at Work in a Call Centre: An Application of the Job Demands-Resources Model," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 12, no. 4 (2003): 393-417.

[36] Hwang, Sherer, and Ainina, "Utilizing the Maslach Burnout Inventory in Cross-Cultural Research," 4.

global servant's stress. Addressing systemic stress and burnout is a growing edge for mission culture.

A final note about burnout is that many global servants do not see it coming. They lack sufficient self-awareness to recognize the scope of its pervasive nature. Global servants can be aware that they are not operating at an optimal level—physically, emotionally, mentally, and/or spiritually—but they can also be quick to minimize their symptoms. Global servants have high performance expectations that are often reinforced—verbally or nonverbally—by their mission agencies and even their donor support base.[37] This is why it's important to build trusted, accountability with member care personnel to evaluate one's situation. If the mission agency provides assessment in a regular, non-threatening, and safe manner, then when a crisis does unfold, the global servant already has support persons in place to offer counsel. Accountability partners cultivated on the field can also be another source of support.

The Danger of Long-Term, Chronic Stress

The human body regulates stress by balancing the tension between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The sympathetic nervous system is what kicks in when a challenge presents itself. It causes the heart to beat faster, the blood to pump more vigorously, blood pressure to rise, and breathing to become faster and deeper.[38] The brain is flooded with 1,500 biochemical reactions. Adrenaline and cortisol

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[37] Jarrett Richardson, "Psychopathology in Missionary Personnel," in *Missionary Care: Counting the Cost for World Evangelization*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 97-98.

[38] Marcelle Pick, *Are You Tired and Wired?* (New York: Hay House, 2011), 11.

are unleashed and trigger the fight, flight, or freeze response.[39] When the situation that caused the stress has dissipated, then the body returns to the parasympathetic nervous system. This system moves the body back into a relaxed state. It also stores energy so the body can "rest up and prepare for the next challenge."[40] It supports the digestive and immune functions to keep a person in optimal health. The sympathetic and parasympathetic systems are meant to work in tandem. The body is designed to operate from "a challenge-relax mode; stress was never meant to be a permanent condition."[41]

But what happens if a stressful situation continues? Or, what happens if the situation becomes less intense, but the person doesn't allow his/her parasympathetic system to truly rest? Long-term, chronic stress takes a huge toll on the body. Chronic stress has been linked to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, migraines, thyroid abnormalities, backaches, digestive disorders, and autoimmune diseases.[42] It wreaks havoc on all the major systems of the body, including reproductive and sexual functions.[43] The medical profession now calls this allostatic overload. Allostatic overload was coined in 1993 by researchers Bruce McEwen and Eliot Stellar. They discovered that long-term chronic stress burdens the brain and the heart to the extent that the circulatory, nervous, endocrine, digestive, and immune systems are impacted.[44] Responses to chronic

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[39] McKay, "Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress," 12.

[40] Pick, *Are You Tired and Wired?,* 11.

[41] Pick, *Are You Tired and Wired?,* 10.

[42] Pick, *Are You Tired and Wired?*, 15.

[43] Pick, *Are You Tired and Wired?*, 15.

[44] Pick, *Are You Tired and Wired?*, 39.

stress differ. Some become exhausted, while others have a constant adrenaline rush; some are both tired and wired.

Cross-cultural workers are vulnerable to and often become adept at sustaining chronic stress. The Doddses' research with the Holmes-Rahe test proves this point. Global servants can get stuck in allostatic overload and, like burnout, fail to recognize it. Despite the medical community's awareness of the danger of long-term stress on the human body, few are trained to help cross-cultural workers navigate this maze. For example, I remember how my blood pressure and cholesterol kept creeping higher and higher in my early forties after I'd been serving cross-culturally for five years. My primary care physician pointed me toward the standard protocol of changes in diet and regular exercise, but this made little difference. Not once did my doctor discuss the stressors of my vocation and how it could be impacting my physical symptoms. To be honest, even if she had, I'm not sure I would have realized or even acknowledged I was stressed. Global servants become adept at normalizing the stressors of cross-cultural living. They fail to understand that the accumulative stress of constantly managing another climate and a new diet, assimilating a new language and cultural customs, exploring new friendships, and ministering with national partners is rewiring the brain to accept low-level stress as normal. Throw in an unexpected illness (like dengue fever or typhoid), an accident (where adequate medical response may or may not be available), a child's inability to adapt to a new school (or any situation involving one's spouse or child), or a natural disaster (like an earthquake or a hurricane), and the stress is amplified. Additionally, the majority of global servants are high achievers with a high work ethic who find it difficult to take days off and/or to turn off thoughts about their ministry

contexts. This scenario is comparable to an ecosystem that creates the perfect storm. If the rhythm of challenge-relax is disrupted over and over, then the sympathetic system never shuts down. From my own experience of serving twenty years on the mission field, and from listening to countless stories of others who have served ten-plus years, I have no doubt that many global servants are exhibiting the preliminary symptoms of an allostatic state. If never addressed, how many will fall prey to allostatic overload?

How Historical Views Contribute to Global Servant Stress

What is a "Normal" Missionary?

Adoniram and Ann Judson were appointed to serve in Burma (Myanmar) in 1812 by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.[45] They served for ten years before they saw one person choose to follow Jesus. Ann and their surviving child died the following year. Adoniram continued in ministry, dedicating his entire life to translating the Bible into Burmese. He suffered disease and imprisonment. He gave his life in service to Jesus and the Burmese people.[46]

This brief synopsis of the Judsons' lives points to another component of a global servant's potential stress: Am I measuring up to what a missionary is supposed to be? Skimming through the biographies of missionary trailblazers like William and Dorothy Carey, David and Mary Livingstone, and Amy Carmichael, one reads about suffering, hardship, and death. Serving as a missionary in the 1800s was physically, mentally,

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[45] "A Past, Present and Future as Bright as the Promises of God," International Ministries, last modified 2017, https://www.internationalministries.org/history/.

[46] Jason G. Duesing, *Adoniram Judson: A Bicentennial Appreciation of the Pioneer American Missionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 80-99, Accessed October 10, 2020, ProQuest Ebook Central.

emotionally, and spiritually costly. But how do these stories impact global servants today? "Do we carry with us a mental picture or norm for missionary service that was created 100 years ago, when it took several months to physically get to the field and people often got sick or died in a matter of a few years or even months, and if they survived they labored long years without even returning to the country of origin?"[47] Questions of "What *is* normal for missionary service?" and "How much am I expected to sacrifice?" are ones many global servants wrestle with.

Missionaries on a Pedestal

It is not uncommon for a missionary to hear statements like: "You've sacrificed so much! I could never do what you're doing." These phrases imply a preconceived notion that missionaries somehow struggle and suffer at a level not experienced by people living outside the majority world.[48] Missionaries are often put on a pedestal as paragons of Christian virtue. Upholding these ideals can elevate a missionary's stress as they try to keep untenable standards. Dr. Frances Adeney, Professor of Evangelism and Global Mission at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, contributes:

> Bulletin boards, replete with maps and photos, along with frequent show-and-tell from missionaries visiting home churches reinforced a romantic theology that overseas mission work was the highest Christian calling—anything else was second-best. Narrative studies of Christian missionaries, however, need not

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[47] Paul McKaughan, "An Integrated Model of Missions," in *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, ed. William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), 16.

[48] "Majority world" is now the preferred terminology instead of "developing world" or "third-world countries."

> glamorize Christian mission in this way. One needs to be willing to study their lives, warts and all. To do that, we must move beyond this prejudice.[49]

Missionaries long to find safe people with whom they can be authentic and they are seen as normal people. When we aggrandize missionaries, we forget that every Christian has been called to a missional life. "Serving cross-culturally is definitely a valid response to the Gospel, but it is not the *only* valid response to the Gospel."[50]

The Pressure to Fulfill the Great Commission

The word *missionary* carries a historical, preconceived mindset. Biblically, missionaries were people sent out to teach and preach the Gospel to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus' last words to his disciples are called the Great Commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV) The Apostle Paul is the primary missionary in the New Testament. The Christians in Jerusalem commissioned him to the Gentile nations to grow the Christian community. Without his efforts and those of many others, the movement would have stayed localized to Jerusalem. More importantly, Jesus' last commandment would have gone unfulfilled. Evangelism, discipleship, and church planting were the primary missions of the first-century Christians. But should this focus be the only definition of Christian mission in the twenty-first century? While there will always be a need to share the Gospel with unreached peoples, does the church's mission

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[49] Frances S. Adeney, "Why Biography? Contributions of Narrative Studies to Mission Theology and Mission Theory," *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies* 26, no. 2 (October 2009):159, http://www.doi.org/10.1163/016897809X12548912398758.

[50] Jonathan Trotter, "The Idolatry of Missions," A Life Overseas, November 9, 2014, http://www.alifeoverseas.com/the-idolatry-of-missions/

need to expand its focus to include spiritual formation, which invites people to deepen and mature in their faith? Mission theology shapes perceptions. Adeney challenges:

> What should we be aiming for—the salvation of individuals, the shalom of Christian community, the realization that mission comes from God and is God's project, the building of God's kingdom, the expansion of the church? How shall we go about attempting to reach those goals—social service, political action, evangelism projects, planting churches, faithful liturgical practice? Mission theologies provide distinct and often differing answers to those questions.[51]

There is often a disconnect between the missiology of the global servant and the missiology of the person sitting in the pew, a tension that invites stress. The expectation that one's ministry is defined by confessions of faith and the number of baptisms not only undermines a missionary's self-worth, but also narrowly defines their call.[52] The pressure to constantly define one's cross-cultural ministry as a numbers game, often to gain financial support, increases mental and emotional stress.

Navigating the Stress of International Partnerships

Just as the definition of missionary has undergone a metamorphosis, so too has the understanding of international partnerships with national leaders. Historically, missionaries were sent to parts of the world that had never heard the Gospel. They were usually from Western Europe, the United States, or Canada. These men and women imposed their cultural and theological views on local peoples with little or no regard for the context in which they lived. Thankfully, cross-cultural training and the contextualization of missions is now adopted and practiced by many mission agencies.

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[51] Adeney, "Why Biography?" 155.

[52] Jonathan Bonk, J. Nelson Jennings, Jinbong Kim, and Jae Hoon Lee, eds., *Missionaries, Mental Health, & Accountability: Support Systems for Churches and Agencies* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2019), 45, 55.

The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, also known as International Ministries (IM), develops partnerships with Baptist conventions and organizations around the world. IM converses with these partners to assess their ministry needs. The partner is then asked how a global servant might help them meet those needs. A global servant does not show up to impart his or her agenda on that nation, but is invited to go and join a ministry already set in motion by the partner.[53] Despite this effort to model healthy partnership, global servants still find themselves navigating difficult spaces in these relationships, which amplifies their stress.

Some of the difficulties lie in unmet expectations. Before a global servant arrives, an area director has negotiated a job description with the international partner. However, the global servant may discover a totally new job description upon arrival. Or the parameters around the existing one have been rewritten.[54] Work ethics may differ. Cultural understandings of how many hours are in a workday, days off, and even vacations vary from country to country. Supervision or accountability may be an issue. If a global servant has entered a relationship with a new partner where there are no precedents, then expectations can be unclear for both parties. Differing styles of communication add to the mix. Direct vs. indirect communication can quickly heighten misunderstandings. Ideologies bring tension. Some international partners are interested in relationships that bring financial resources for their projects. If a global servant is desiring mutuality in a partnership but is constantly seen as a source of funding, resentment may occur. Sometimes a global servant is still battling old paradigms. One

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[53] "Core Values," International Ministries, last modified 2017, https://www.internationalministries.org/core-values/.

[54] This is based on my own experience, listening to conversations of my colleagues, and dialogue with Area Directors who serve with International Ministries.

missionary said, “My partner has hosted missionaries for years. They seem to have the expectation that we’ll come and take on ministries they don’t have time for, or don’t want to do. There’s a lot of nepotism.”[55] Surprisingly, there is also still a lot of cultural bias against non-white missionaries. Many countries still view "missionary" as a person who is white with access to money. One Latino missionary said, “I fit neither of those descriptions.”

Although relationships with international partners can be stressful, many global servants are eager to spend time and effort on changing old paradigms of partnership. Adopting a position of listening, they humbly defer to their cultural mentors. They wait until they understand the complexities of their situation before contributing a voice at the table. IM makes it clear to their global servants that their first term is about a ministry of presence. Listen, learn, and love.

Many partners are surprised when global servants arrive with a primary focus on building relationship and a secondary focus on ministry. Historically, a response of watching and learning has not been practiced. As missiology moves solidly from patriarchy to partnership, national partners are realizing that they have agency and autonomy. Global servants are invited to mentor, equip, and resource their partners with the goal of relinquishing all responsibility back to the national leaders.

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[55] Joyce Reed, “Cross-cultural Stress on the Mission Field,” field research by author, confidential Zoom interviews conducted during May 2019.

The Constant Dilemma of Funding

Centralized vs. Donor-Based Funding

There are a variety of funding models used in the not-for-profit sector. In the world of missions, centralized giving or donor-based giving are the two most common. The Southern Baptist Convention still maintains a centralized funding program. However, in 2015, they were forced to downsize their missionary force by 15% in order to maintain sustainable economic resources for their overseas staff.[56] IM, the international branch of American Baptist Churches USA, moved from a centralized funding model to a donor-based funding model in 2003. This decision was based on the growing trend of donors wanting to invest in relational ministry. Instead of giving to an annual institutional offering that benefitted missionary personnel as a group, donors now preferred to give to individuals with whom they had a personal relationship. Each global servant was given an annual support goal to raise that matched the cost of living expenses for their host country. However, while the new funding model matched economic giving trends, it created deeper financial distress for each global servant as the responsibility of raising support fell more squarely on their shoulders.

The Financialization of Mission

Perhaps more important than what type of funding model a mission agency employs is the question of whether the agency has succumbed to the financialization of mission. Gene Daniels, Director of Fruitful Practice Research, says, “It seems to me that

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[56] Bob Allen, “Southern Baptists to Cut Missionary Force by 15 Percent,” Baptist News Global, August 27, 2015, https://baptistnews.com/article/southern-baptists-to-cut-missionary-force-by-15-percent/.

many missionaries, and their agencies, have shifted focus from the God who provides to financial strategies, and from fulfilling their calling to increasing the donor base. Some people seem to have the mistaken impression that 'faith missions' is little more than a euphemism for 'raising support.'"[57] More intentional conversation around faith and finances would benefit all parties involved. Moving from the financialization of mission, and returning to mission's theological and missiological roots, could reframe a global servant's stress around financial sustainability.

COVID-19

Any discussion of stress in 2020 must acknowledge the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019.[58] Within one month, cases were being seen in Italy, the United States, and Germany.[59] To date there have been over one million deaths.[60] Dr. Kristina Gutierrez of Midwest Ministry Development in Columbus, OH, asserts that COVID-19 magnified existing stress and pressure points.[61] She says the pandemic has prevented the ability to make future plans. There have been sudden and complete changes in routines and daily life. In ministry positions, people are asking, "How can I meet expectations if I can't function in

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[57] Gene Daniels, "Finance and Faith in Mission," *Missio Nexus* 56, no. 2 (April-June 2020), https://missionexus.org/finances-and-faith-in-mission/.

[58] Jingchun Fan, Xiaodong Liu, Weimin Pan, Mark Douglas, and Shisan Bao, "Epidemiology of Coronavirus Disease in Gansu Province, China, 2020," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Emerging Infectious Diseases* 26, no. 6 (June 2020):1257-1265. https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2606.200251.

[59] Fan, et. al., "Epidemiology of Coronovirus," 1257-1265.

[60] Coronavirus Resource Center, Johns Hopkins University and Medicine, accessed October 9, 2020, https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html.

[61] Kristina Gutierrez, "The Many Forms of Trauma: Dealing with Stress and Other Consequences of Trauma," Zoom presentation with PowerPoint, October 8, 2020.

the role I've known for years?"[62] Psychologist Ann Masten says surge capacity has been disrupted. She explains: "Surge capacity is a collection of adaptive systems—mental and physical—that humans draw on for short-term survival in acutely stressful situations, such as natural disasters. But natural disasters occur over a short period, even if recovery is long. Pandemics are different—the disaster itself stretches out indefinitely."[63] When stress becomes chronic, depleted surge capacity struggles to renew. The indefinite uncertainty of the pandemic also emphasizes ambiguous loss. Family therapist Pauline Boss defines ambiguous loss as unresolved grief.[64] It is complicated by no possibility of closure. She says, "It's harder for high achievers. The more accustomed you are to solving problems, to getting things done, to having routine, the harder it will be on you because none of that is possible right now."[65] My ministry of spiritual care within International Ministries would concur that surge capacity is low and ambiguous loss is high as COVID-19 continues. Boss, however, offers hope to those of us in ministry vocations. She says, "Living with ambiguous loss requires a spiritual tolerance—no, spiritual comfort—with ambiguity. Simply put, it requires faith."[66]

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[62] Gutierrez, "The Many Forms of Trauma."

[63] Tara Haelle, "Your 'Surge Capacity' Is Depleted—It's Why You Feel Awful," Elemental, August 16, 2020, https://elemental.medium.com/your-surge-capacity-is-depleted-it-s-why-you-feel-awful-de285d542f4c.

[64] Pauline Boss, "The Trauma and Complicated Grief of Ambiguous Loss," *Pastoral Psychol* 59: 137 (2010), http://www.doi.org/10.1007/s11089-009-0264-0.

[65] Haelle, "Your 'Surge Capacity' Is Depleted."

[66] Boss, "The Trauma and Complicated Grief of Ambiguous Loss."

Conclusion

Research reveals that global servants are managing an incredible amount of stress. They face physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual challenges. Differences in ideologies and mission theologies add another layer of stress. Building and maintaining a sustainable donor base compounds this cumulative stress. Yet, despite the numerous cross-cultural stressors and historical mindsets they encounter, most global servants choose to remain on the field. In fact, even when tools like the Holmes-Rahe Inventory suggest they should be severely ill to the point of hospitalization, most missionaries dig deeper and practice amazing resiliency. Drs. Lois and Lawrence Dodds observe:

> The positive side, for those who survive, of the chronic high stress is that most missionaries do adapt over time, becoming more resilient and enlarging their repertoire of coping skills and attitudes. Even with such high stress scores, we don't find 90% of cross-cultural workers in the hospital. People stretch and grow. However, it is also just as likely that many drop out because they don't receive sufficient support in developing more coping skills and strategies. They may become either ill or discouraged with the chronic high stress lifestyle and give up in the face of insufficient support and guided recovery.[67]

The Doddses' work suggests that member care provided by the sending agency is paramount if a global servant is to thrive cross-culturally. Open, honest conversations around multiple stressors need to occur between the global servant, the mission agency, and the international partners. Falling back on "You can do all things through Christ"[68] can lead to feelings of shame and/or failure. As Lois Dodds points out, "there is no teaching on how to distinguish what Christ asks from what everyone else expects."[69] In

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[67] Dodds and Dodds, *Love and Survival in Life and Mission*, 8-10.

[68] Philippians 4:13.

[69] Dr. Lois A. Dodds, *Caring for People in Missions: Just Surviving—or Thriving* (Liverpool, PA: Heartstream Resources, 2018), 10.

addition to maintaining healthy boundaries, global servants need to look at how they minimize or dismiss stress. Foyle summarizes:

> There has always been a vocal minority that claims Christians should not feel stressed. In the old days to acknowledge that you felt anxious, depressed or stressed-out indicated spiritual backsliding, failure in your devotional life or your Christian service. As a result, many people kept quiet about it and just tried to cope. There is little evidence in Scripture for this belief.[70]

Biblical studies and conversations around stress in pre-field training could frame holistic theological perspectives.

The research correlates to the introductory story of M and C. Their situation revealed stress linked to the cultural adaptations of language and new role expectations which increased marital stress. The story also highlighted theological tensions with their international partners and hinted at ideological differences with their donors. One of these factors alone would not be so daunting. However, multiple moving pieces present a scenario that is cause for concern. Are M and C going to find a way to survive their situation? What is the role of the mission agency for this couple's care? How global servants and mission agencies take responsibility for addressing stress together is key to undergirding the resiliency of both sides of the equation.

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[70] Foyle, *Honourably Wounded*, 26.

SECTION II: WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN DONE?

Introduction

As global servants and mission agencies tackle solutions to navigate cross-cultural stress, it is important to examine what approaches have already been tried. International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches, USA, has been in existence for 206 years. It stands to reason that member care operated in various levels of implementation over those two centuries. Section Two will begin, therefore, by looking at the mission mindset of the 19th century followed by how the surprisingly high numbers of missionary attrition a century later bolstered the care of global servants. Practices being implemented by mission agencies today will also be reviewed. These pieces will assist the reader in comprehending what measures have been taken to specifically address stress and burnout in the lives of global servants thus far. Noting "What's missing?" becomes key.

Section Two continues by examining the role of the sending church in the care of a global servant. The theology of member care and who's responsible to address it is interwoven with the missiology of the local church. The theology of the global servant also impacts care initiatives. Section One pointed out that enduring high levels of stress is normalized within cross-cultural ministry. Discussing a global servant's biblical perspective on suffering cannot be excluded from this conversation.

Section Two then analyzes how the well-being of employees is handled by NGOs, nonprofits, and corporations. Is stress in other organizations—some who also work cross-culturally—just as high? Do their member care practices offer any directives for mission agencies? Standard and creative solutions will be discussed.

All organizations desire that their leaders and staff maintain some level of health. But how many are seeing their people thrive? Section Two will seek to uncover some answers.

The Mission Mindset of the 19th Century

The Protestant foreign mission movement in the United States took root in the nineteenth century. By 1900, over five thousand young American men and women were serving overseas.[71] Missionaries who were sent did not expect to come back. Mortality rates were so high that their belongings were shipped with them in a casket.[72] Bible verses like "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21) were taken literally. These men and women determined to be committed to a people and a geographic location until their last breath. Mission as a vocational calling was viewed as a life-long commitment. The anticipated cost of cross-cultural stress, burnout, and even death was not a deterrent. In fact, they were embraced whole heartedly.[73]

The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) provides one example from this era. In 1908, the ABFMS published a *Manual for the Use of Missionaries and Missionary Candidates*. The agency addressed member care from a basic and practical perspective. Candidates had to be younger than thirty, of sound health, and in good physical condition. They were to be educated, loyal to Christ, and confident in the

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[71] Michael Parker, *The Kingdom of Character the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions* (1886-1926) (New York: American Society of Missiology and University Press of America, Inc., 1998), 1.

[72] Dr. Reid Trulson, former Executive Director of International Ministries, interview by author, Zoom, September 20, 2019.

[73] Fritz Kling, *The Meeting of the Waters: 7 Global Currents That Will Propel the Future Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 15-28.

message of the Gospel. One mother said to her son, "If you are to be a missionary, you must stand high in scholarship. Do not let it be said that a second-rate man was palmed off on the Lord for missionary service."[74] Single women who desired to serve applied to the Women's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society for one-year, which included biblical training. Married women were considered associates and did not receive training or a formal appointment.[75]

New missionaries were required to attend a pre-field orientation that took place in Boston. It addressed ministry assignments, health, and aspects of living on the mission field.[76] Travel expenses and any special clothing requirements were covered by the mission agency. While character traits and spiritual formation were assessed before one went, the well-being of the missionary once he or she arrived on the field was only addressed through an annual conference for fellowship and spiritual renewal. A furlough was not granted until after seven years on the field.[77]

This example illustrates how missionaries serving during the 1900s suffered from a lack of emotional and psychological support once they arrived on the field. Well-known missionaries Dorothy Carey, J. Hudson Taylor, and Mary Livingstone were reported to have experienced varying degrees of mental illness.[78] Some scholars believe the Judeo-Christian "value of sacrifice and sole reliance on God for provision of all needs" was a

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[74] American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, *Manual for the Use of Missionaries and Missionary Candidates* (Boston, MA: ABFMS, 1908), 7-10.

[75] ABFMS *Manual*, 13.

[76] ABFMS *Manual*, 33.

[77] ABFMS *Manual*, 69.

[78] Claire A. Camp, Joy M. Bustrum, David W. Brokaw, and Christopher J. Adams, "Missionary Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Current Member Care Practices," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 47, no. 4 (2014): 360.

contributing factor to the slow development of member care by mission organizations during this era.[79] Spiritual care and formation were left to the individual missionary's discretion.

The dedication and perseverance of this generation of missionaries is astounding when one realizes how little support was provided or available after they set sail. But then, people choosing overseas missionary service began to radically drop off. Why? The lack of member care came under investigation.

The Impact of Missionary Attrition

From 1960 to the early 1970s, such a large number of missionaries returned from the field that social scientists began to research the factors of attrition. Why was overseas ministry service suddenly considered too hard? The Silent Generation of the great depression (born 1928-1945), "war-hardened pioneers who knew how to grin and bear with most anything life threw at them,"[80] were retiring. The Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) were more vocal about their cross-cultural service. They were returning from the field talking about emotional and relational pain. They were exhausted, trying to hold their marriages and families together intact. Responding to this emerging need, The Mental Health in Missions movement took shape and eventually became what today is known as the Member Care Movement.[81] This movement improved candidacy screening, pre-field training, critical incident report, family developmental support, vocational

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[79] Camp et al., "Missionary Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Current Member Care Practices," 360.

[80] Reagon Wilson and David Kronbach, *Tender Care: Providing Pastoral Care for God's Global Servants* (Rockford, IL: Barnabas Books, 2010), 195.

[81] Wilson and Kronbach, *Tender Care*, 194.

training, emotional support, and re-entry support.[82] Psychologist Kelly O'Donnell has become one of the leading voices of missionary member care in the last two decades. He defines member care as the following:

> Member care is the ongoing investment of resources by mission agencies, churches and other mission organizations for the nurture and development of missionary personnel. It focuses on everyone in missions (missionaries, support staff, children and families) and does so over the course of the missionary life cycle, from recruitment through retirement.[83]

However, even though mission agencies were now integrating member care more intentionally, attrition remained high. The World Evangelical Alliance commissioned an in-depth study of attrition from 1994-1997 called ReMAP (Reducing Missionary Attrition Project). The findings discovered "47% of career missionaries leave the field by year five, with 71% leaving over preventable character issues."[84] The conclusion stated there was still "a tremendous lack of resources to help the field missionary both to survive and to thrive in ministry."[85] From 2002-2003, the WEA commissioned ReMap II, which showed retention among agencies had improved, but "low retention agencies were still witnessing higher attrition over preventable reasons."[86] Remap II's stated it would be

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[82] Camp et al., "Missionary Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Current Member Care Practices," 360.

[83] Kelly O'Donnell, "To the End of the Earth, To the End of the Age," in *Doing Member Care Well: Perspectives and Practices from Around the World*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2002), 4.

[84] Rob Hay, *Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives on Best Practice in Missionary Retention* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007), 12.

[85] William D. Taylor, ed., *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), xi.

[86] Hay, *Worth Keeping*, 12.

"most cost effective to increase the time and budget for the support and care of the existing missionary."[87]

Missio Nexus conducted an attrition study of mission agencies in 2019.[88] The study discovered that how mission agencies leverage generational shifts are centered around member care priorities. Missionaries born after the baby boomers are seeking leadership by consensus, clarity around expectations, high communication, pastoral care for personal and/or family issues, opportunities for vocational and spiritual growth, mentoring relationships, and team-focused ministries.[89]

Why mention these studies? Attrition rates continue to reveal not only the importance of member care, but also the huge gaps in how it is implemented. In ReMAP II, mission leaders and mission agencies were surveyed, but the major stakeholders—the missionaries—were not.[90] Until mission agencies assess the missionaries' own perceptions of member care, it is difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of their member care programs. The Missio Nexus study uncovered that a generational perspective on mission issues cannot be overlooked. As the baby boomer generation of missionaries retires, high loyalty and respect toward the mission agency is no longer guaranteed. Member care for subsequent generations will look and feel different. The way an agency

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[87] WEA Mission Commission, *ReMap II: Worldwide Missionary Retention Study & Best Practices* (Wheaton, IL: World Evangelical Alliance, 2010), 10-15.

[88] Missio Nexus, *Field Attrition Study Research Report* (2019), https://adobeindd.com/view/publications/624b1574-7f5f-4fd0-b896-35739b18f6ed/elsv/publication-web-resources/pdf/Attrition_Study_2019_Final.pdf.

[89] Missio Nexus, *Field Attrition Study Research Report* (2019).

[90] WEA Mission Commission, *ReMap II: Worldwide Missionary Retention Study & Best Practices* (Wheaton, IL: World Evangelical Alliance, 2010), 10-15.

addresses stress and burnout is critical as Gen Z (born from 1996-2010) discern agency affiliation.

How Are Mission Agencies Mitigating Stress Now?

Today, the well-being of a global servant is considered from a variety of lenses in order to lessen overall stress and potential burnout. Larger mission agencies offer full-time candidates packages that include comprehensive benefits. Pre-field training is required. Some organizations offer training in-house while others contract with organizations like the Center for Intercultural Training (CIT) in North Carolina or Mission Training International (MTI) in Colorado. Both offer residency programs that address practical skills for cross-cultural adaptation, language acquisition skills, and how to maintain personal vitality and healthy relationships. Spiritual formation is addressed through prayer and Bible studies in small groups. Security training is also included in some agencies' pre-field training.

Mission agencies now require a host of tests to assess vocational and psychological aptitude for cross-cultural ministry. International Ministries asks that their candidates attend a Center for Career Development and the Ministry where ten psychological and vocational assessments are administered.[91] These tests are designed to teach applicants about themselves and their potential responses in a cross-cultural setting. One would hope that this battery of tests would provide adequate resources to help a person navigate stress once in the field. For the person who self-initiates and determines how to translate the test results when future situations unfold, then these tests continue to

[91] Email correspondence with Dr. Rodney Ragwan, Director of Mission Globalization, International Ministries, ABC-USA, May 15, 2020.

be valuable. However, most candidates take the tests, have a one- to three-day evaluation with the on-site psychologist, and then—barring no red flags—check off that box and move on to the next step of the application process. Very few agencies are educating global servants how these tests can be used as a baseline when one is under stress. Knowing one's strengths and growing edges are critical factors of self-awareness and self-regulation. However, it also should be noted that vocational and psychological assessments are subject to human error, and therefore not definitive predictors of what may happen in a cross-cultural setting.

The Eastern Mennonite Missions and International Ministries ask their global servants to form a Missionary Support Team or Missionary Partnership Team (MPT). This team is five to seven people selected from the global servant's home church. These teams develop systems of spiritual, relational, and financial support that are unique to each global servant. While these teams seem to be extremely valuable before leaving for the field, many global servants struggle to maintain the relationships once they arrive on the field. Unless members have served overseas, the team's cross-cultural comprehension and ability to truly empathize is limited.

Once a global servant arrives on the field, most agencies have Area Directors or Field Directors that oversee missionaries in each region of the world. While these persons are meant to provide both institutional and spiritual support, most admit that administrative responsibilities limit their spiritual care. TEAM is a mission agency based outside Chicago that has developed a Global Member Care Strategy. Their model is the most comprehensive one discovered during my research. They assign Regional Member Care Coordinators who have a background in counseling (or a related field) and cross-

cultural experience. These persons each have a team of Member Care Facilitators, global servants ministering in a region who are trained to be a support person on the ground. In the home office, TEAM maintains personnel to address medical, counseling, spiritual care, and missionary kid care concerns.[92] Their global servants are requested to hold an annual day of prayer to seek the Lord's guidance for their personal and professional growth. Each missionary then submits an annual growth plan to his/her supervisor. While other organizations incorporate personal and professional growth goals into their annual reviews, TEAM was the only one that provided space and guidelines for spiritual discernment to take place.

Two final pieces of member care that are present in most organizations are debriefings and annual conferences during U.S. assignment. Debriefings are intentional interviews between the global servant and selected home office personnel to process ministry experiences and personal adjustments during the cross-cultural context. Debriefings reduce isolation and help to normalize experiences. Global servants serving full time usually rotate back to their passport country every four to five years. During this time, they attend an annual conference hosted by the mission agency to provide rest and relaxation, to be updated on any new protocols, and to undergo training deemed necessary by the agency's leadership.

It is obvious that care for global servants has dramatically improved in the last 200 years. Yet, the emphasis is still heavily focused on pre-field training. (Studies reveal that on-field orientation or continuing training and development opportunities result in

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[92] Janice Brauer, TEAM Counselor, interview with author, TEAM headquarters, Carol Stream, IL, May 8, 2019.

higher retention.[93]) Area directors are overwhelmed and admit they rarely offer consistent care except in crisis situations. MPTs, while appreciated, don't close the gap. If debriefings and conferences only occur every four years, then one can comprehend why stress and burnout are high. The lack of intentional spiritual formation was apparent, too. Some argue, however, that member care is not the sole responsibility of the mission sending agency, but also the purview of the individual and the local church.

The Sending Church's Commitment to Care

The call to make disciples of all nations is based on Jesus' commission to his remaining eleven disciples before he ascended into heaven.[94] This call to be mission-minded is a foundational piece of each local Christian church. Churches' goals for evangelism and discipleship are wrapped around these last words of Jesus. The church is the body that equips and sends; the mission agency is the institution that provides support. Each global servant, therefore, begins his or her journey as a member of a local congregation. This is where the vocational call to missions is explored and nurtured. This is why some mission organizations do not provide long-term spiritual care and formation as part of their services. It is their belief that this is the role of the local church.

Global servants born before 1964 might tend to agree.[95] Many of them share that their call to international missions happened when they heard a missionary speak at their local church, or when they attended a national mission conference offered by their

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[93] "Going the Distance: Missionary Retention," *Missio Nexus*, June 26, 2017, https://missionexus.org/going-the-distance-missionary-retention/. Accessed October 20, 2020.

[94] Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-20, Luke 24:45-49.

[95] Fritz Kling, *The Meeting of the Waters: 7 Global Currents That Will Propel the Future Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 15-28.

denomination. They then shared this call with their pastor, acknowledged it with the congregation, and began a process of intentional discipleship that further shaped them for a life devoted to this calling. There was a deep connection that carried from home to overseas. Setting personal discipleship goals was expected. The spiritual disciplines of prayer, scripture study, and worship were considered necessary to maturing in Christ. Global servants were expected to maintain these disciplines to thrive. However, whether they actually did or not was rarely assessed.

Global servants who were born after the Baby Boomer generation share a greater variety of reasons when asked how they experienced their call to missions. While some still experience a call within their local denomination, others speak of short-term mission experiences that may or may not be connected to a Christian institution. They also speak of involvement in local justice issues that inspired them to seek out similar opportunities in other parts of the world.[96] Younger generations have had opportunities for global travel that opened their eyes to needs in other countries, and also inspired them to acts of service. Thus, people are still responding to the call, but the discipleship training piece has become less focused, or may even be nonexistent.

Even with a connection to a local church, many global servants express that their local congregations are not equipped to counsel them during issues related to cross-cultural stress and fatigue.[97] Few, if any, persons in the sending church comprehend how immersion in another culture pushes a person to come face to face with the shadow side of their personality. The initial adjustments are just the first step of the journey. The

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[96] Kling, *The Meeting of the Waters*, 41-43.

[97] Joyce Reed, "Cross-cultural Stress on the Mission Field," field research by author, confidential Zoom interviews conducted during May 2019.

longer one serves, the more one is transformed by the other culture. Learning to integrate one's emerging identity in a second culture is a growing edge for every global servant. Friends and supporters in the sending church often have little to contribute in this arena, and sometimes their lack of understanding adds to the global servant's stress.

Sending churches whose members go to visit the global servant in their overseas context build stronger relationships. Members come not as a mission work group, but as a support team for the missionary. This shifts the focus from the ministry to the missionary. This investment demonstrates a deep commitment and appreciation for the global servant as a person. It also allows the local congregation to truly glimpse some of the hardships and struggles the global servant faces on a day-to-day basis. In addition to personal visits, periodically asking, "How are you doing right now?" adds a layer of intentional care. A simple check-in also undergirds the relationship. When a church advocates for rest and renewal for its local *and* international leaders, the overall health of the global servant is strengthened.

Suffering, Hardships, and Trials

One of the greatest pushbacks to mitigating cross-cultural stress is the expectation that cross-cultural ministry is difficult. Sacrificing comfort, extended family relationships, friends, and material possessions is a given. The Bible teaches that maturing as a disciple of Christ involves suffering. Philippians 1:29 says, "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him." Christian service is not an exemption from suffering.

Dr. Robert S. Miller, president of the Identity School for Christian Ministry, encourages global servants to "become a student of the wilderness environment in which

your ministry will either rise or fall."[98] Pastoral care leaders at Barnabas International advocate that being transformed into the image of Christ requires adversity: "God has orchestrated the redemptive process to include hardship, affliction, various external trials, and mixed internal temptations... There is something about the human soul that require difficulties to reach maturity."[99] Affliction strengthens our faith.

But a life wrapped around a framework of perpetual suffering results in someone who is often depressed, anxious, and has difficulty making simple decisions.[100] Even Paul, as he languished in a Roman prison, countered suffering with joy when he said, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4) Cross-cultural mission work so strongly identifies with suffering that joy can be regarded with suspicion or guilt. The goal, then, is holding tension between suffering and joy.

Jesus provided a formational model held in tension with a missional model. His missional focus to save humanity led to the cross. His ministry with his twelve disciples and extended community never wavered from this goal. But he also celebrated, laughed, fished, shared meals, played with children, spent time alone in nature, and told stories. He modeled that life encompasses both suffering and joy.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are nonprofit national organizations that are independent of governments and international governments for policy, staff, and funding. The Anti-Slavery Society

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[98] Robert S. Miller, *Spiritual Survival Handbook for Cross-Cultural Workers* (Orlando, FL: Pioneers, 2011), 9.

[99] Wilson and Kronbach, *Tender Care*, 146.

[100] Northwestern University, "Chronic Pain Harms the Brain," *Science Daily*, February 6, 2008, http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/02/080205171755.htm.

established in 1845 is possibly the first international NGO. Other early NGOs were established to meet needs that resulted from wars: the Red Cross (1850s after the Franco-Italian War), Save the Children (World War I), and CARE (after World War II).[101] Due to their altruistic endeavors, many people are attracted to this type of work despite working conditions that are often in insecure and hostile environments. There is also a foundation of innovative thinking "when it comes to getting the most out of limited resources."[102] Today, there are approximately ten million NGOs worldwide, representing a billion-dollar enterprise.[103]

Because of their huge impact on global events, one might assume that humanitarian aid workers receive excellent organizational care. While care in 2020 has vastly improved compared to 1850, employees of NGOs remain exposed to high levels of environmental, political, medical, social, and organizational stress. The Antares Foundation, which provides staff care and psychosocial support for humanitarian, developmental, and human rights organizations worldwide, surveyed staff in Sri Lanka, Jordan, and Uganda. They discovered that one-half to two-thirds showed clinical levels of depression, one out of two had symptoms of anxiety, and one out of five had advanced signs of PTSD. Half said they'd experienced or been diagnosed with anxiety.[104] The Global Development Professional Network conducted a survey of humanitarian aid

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[101] Peter Hall-Jones, "The Rise and Rise of NGOs," *Global Policy Forum*, May 2006, https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/176/31937.html.

[102] Cigna, *Advancing Duty of Care and Healthy Workplaces Handbook for Non-Governmental Organisations* (Bloomfield, CT: Cigna Foundation, 2012), 5.

[103] IBSO, "Facts and Stats About NGOs Worldwide," *Global Leadership Bulletin*, October 6, 2015, https://www.standardizations.org/bulletin/?p=841.

[104] Wendy Ager, ed., *Managing Stress in Humanitarian Workers: Guidelines for Good Practice* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Antares Foundation, 2012), 10-14, https://www.antaresfoundation.org/filestore/si/1164337/1/1167964/managing_stress_in_humanitarian_aid.

workers in 2015. Of the 754 persons surveyed, 79% said they had experienced mental health issues, and 93% attributed it to their work.[105]

In 2017, the United Nations polled their global workers. At least half reported symptoms consistent with a mental health condition.[106] Liza Jachens embarked on a research project in 2018 that focused on burnout among humanitarian aid workers. Her worked uncovered that "32% were at risk for emotional exhaustion (emotionally drained and unable to unwind or recover), 10% were at risk for depersonalization (excessively distant, cynical attitudes toward affected populations), and 43% at risk for low personal achievement (ineffectiveness, inefficacy, and competence)."[107] Jachens concludes that the organizational dynamics, not the daily operational dynamics, were the primary cause of employee stress. She says, "Many people have become exasperated with heavy bureaucratic processes and organizational politics impeding their work."[108] Liz Griffin, a social-justice leadership coach, says that we must eradicate the cultures of overwork and martyrdom.[109]

Melissa Pitotti and Mary Ann Clements both experienced burnout as humanitarian aid workers. As Melissa recovered, she asked, "Why are so many people suffering in a

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[105] Holly Young, "Guardian Research Suggests Mental Health Crisis among Aid Workers," The Guardian, November 23, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/23/guardian-research-suggests-mental-health-crisis-among-aid-workers.

[106] United Nations, *Staff Well-Being Survey Data Report* (New York: United Nations, 2017), 45, https://www.un.org/en/healthy-workforce/files/Survey%20Report.pdf.

[107] Melissa Pitotti and Mary Ann Clements, *Working Well? Aid Worker Well-Being and How to Improve It* (Geneva, Switzerland: CHS Alliance, 2020), 8.

[108] Liza Jachens, Jonathan Houdmont and Rosylum Thomas, "Effort-Reward Imbalance and Burnout among Humanitarian Aid Workers," *Wiley Online Library* 43, no. 1 (June 12, 2018): 68-69, 74, https://www.doi.org/10.1111/disa.12288.

[109] Liz Griffin, "Five Things Managers of Human Rights & Humanitarian Organisations Can Do to Improve Staff Wellbeing," Liz Griffin (blog), July 17, 2019, https://liz-griffin.com/blog/five-things-managers-of-human-rights-humanitarian-organisations-can-do/.

sector that claims to care so much about people?" She concluded that sustaining quality work over a long term meant investing in people.[110] This led to her and Clements writing the report *Working Well? Aid Worker Well-being and How to Improve It* in January 2020. Their report sought to weave together mental health, people management, and organizational culture. They addressed diversity and equity, as well as care and compassion. Their research stated that supporting an aid worker's well-being needs sustained resourcing to connect and support people, uninterrupted attention from leadership (including boards and managers), and a working environment that better aligned with state humanitarian values.[111] Dr. Scott Breslin, Director of Operation Mercy, a Swedish relief and development NGO, describes three standards of care frameworks that organizations adopt:

1. **Safety (Minimalist) Standards**: Organizational focus is on complying with the law and not being found negligent, e.g., with regard to staff safety.
2. **Well-being Standards**: The organization is eager to meet or exceed industry standards and implement programs beyond what the law requires, e.g., smoking cessation, weight loss, stress reduction, burnout prevention.
3. **Thriving Standards**: These organizations go beyond legal compliance and industry standards and aim at becoming a healthy workplace where employees can thrive.[112]

Most NGOs' standards adhere to the first two. Very few are implementing standards where employees are actually thriving. The Global Development Professional Network survey mentioned earlier hinted that a culture of silence continues to perpetuate mental health issues. One anonymous contributor shared, "There is a culture where asking for conditions that benefit your own personal well-being (and mental health)

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[110] Pitotti and Clements, *Working Well?,* 3.

[111] Pitotti and Clements, *Working Well?,* 16.

[112] Cigna, *Advancing Duty of Care and Healthy Workplaces Handbook for Non-Governmental Organisations*, 6.

means you are not a 'true' humanitarian."[113] It appears that NGOs struggle just as much as mission organizations to maintain healthy work environments where employees thrive.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofits are businesses that have been granted tax exemption by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) because they further social causes that benefit the general public. Money received via donations is used to fund the organization's objectives and goals. They are formed for artistic, scientific, religious, literary, or educational purposes.[114] Organizationally, they usually have a governing board as well as an executive director or CEO. Thriving in the nonprofit sector is also a challenge. *The Happy Healthy Nonprofit,* by Kanter and Sherman, states, "Sacrificing one's health in service of a cause is a common narrative in the nonprofit sector."[115] Nonprofit leaders are known for giving up everything to further the cause. Long hours, ignoring physical and mental health, and the neglect of family are not unusual. Self-sacrifice becomes the cultural norm. Constantly scrambling for resources to meet overhead expenses, nonprofit leaders and employees look for multiple ways to make every dollar count. While this can lead to ingenious financial solutions, it can also lead to financial exhaustion. The constant struggle to fund overhead while at the same time wanting the organizational mission to thrive is causing burnout among nonprofit employees. Kanter explains how a scarcity mentality impacts self-care:

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[113] Young, *Guardian Research Suggests Mental Health Crisis among Aid Workers*.

[114] Grace Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work: Case Studies in Nonprofit Organizations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 24, ProQust Ebook Central, accessed December 9, 2020.

[115] Beth Kanter and Aliza Sherman, *The Happy, Healthy Nonprofit* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), 4.

> A scarcity mindset is defined as the belief that everything is limited. The scarcity assumption is based on: there's not enough of what our nonprofit needs to go around and there's more out there that our organization needs but we don't have it. Many nonprofit senior leaders believe that self-care is not work and that when employees practice it—like leaving the office after only 8 hours, the organization pays the price of not achieving results. This makes it difficult for staff to strike a meaningful, sustainable balance between work and self-care because it does not permeate a organization's culture or fundamentally change staff behavior.[116]

How are nonprofits discovering ways to maintain health in an environment designed to run them ragged? Lori Bartczak, Vice-President of Programs at Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, says leaders need "white space" to explore new ideas. This time for renewal and reflection, professional development, and self-care practices combats burnout in nonprofit leaders.[117] Some nonprofits have implemented sabbaticals, a four-day work week, unstructured creative play time for creative brainstorming, and outside walk and talk meetings to alleviate stress. Finding the right people and taking care of them is critical to any organization. Studies now show that an emotional culture of companionate love lowers stress and burnout levels.[118] When nonprofit corporations integrate care, compassion, tenderness, and affection into the workplace, people thrive.

Corporations and Employee Well-Being

Employee well-being traces back to after World War II when some companies began to build gymnasiums as part of their facilities. Businesses saw the benefits of

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[116] Beth Kanter, "How Can Nonprofits Switch from Scarcity to Abundance Mindsets When It Comes to Self-Care?" Beth's Blog (blog), November 17, 2015, http://www.bethkanter.org/scarcity-mindset/.

[117] Lori Bartczak, "Combatting Burnout in Nonprofit Leaders," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, May 21, 2014, 2, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/combatting_burnout_in_nonprofit_leaders.

[118] Sigal G. Barsade and Olivia A. O'Neill, "What's Love Got to Do with It? A Longitudinal Study of the Culture of Companionate Love and Employee and Client Outcomes in a Long-term Care Setting," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 59, no. 551 (May 2014), http://www.doi.org/10.1177/0001839214538636.

having healthy employees as their mental health became more consistent, and they missed fewer days due to illness. These programs took off in the 1970s and set the stage for the wellness programs seen today. The Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) began in the 1950s. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) emerged in the 1970s to combat work-related illnesses and accidents. And by the 1980s, wellness support programs were firmly established, offering support from stress management to smoking cessation.[119]

Today's major corporations offer a wide range of incentives as part of their benefits packages to help employees manage physical, emotional, and mental stress. Nike's two-hundred-acre campus in Beaverton, Oregon has a fitness center, Olympic sized swimming pool, running paths, and even a rock climbing wall. SpaceX, the aero-manufacturing plant in Los Angeles, offers discounted gym memberships and an in-house massage therapist. TransferWise, a company in the United Kingdom, has a built-in sauna. Expedia's UK office give their staff a wellness allowance for fitness-related purchases. Netflix offers unlimited time off for sickness and vacation days. They also offer a year's paid maternity or paternity leave after the birth of a child. The Los Angeles–based shoe and clothing retailer Zappos has a nap room for when an employee needs a quick recharge.[120]

A growing trend in overcoming workplace stress is the application of neuroscience. Justin J. Kennedy, a professor at Monarch University in Switzerland and the University of Pretoria in South Africa, has discovered that neuropsychology allows

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[119] Allan Khoury, "The Evolution of Worksite Wellness," *Corporate Wellness Magazine*, accessed July 2, 2020, https://www.corporatewellnessmagazine.com/article/the-evolution-of.

[120] Neelie Verlinden, "11 Best Employee Wellness Programs Examples," *Academy to Innovate HR*, accessed July 2, 2020, https://www.digitalhrtech.com/best-employee-wellness-programs-examples/.

people to become more resilient, mindful, and lucid as they problem-solve issues for their team.[121] Generational shifts are also impacting the workforce as millennials seek environments that weave in fun, humor, and play.[122]

But do all these creative efforts at relieving stress and enhancing work environments accomplish anything? The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne conducted a study in 2019 which concluded wellness programs don't change an employee's behavior by very much: "It turns out that those most likely to take advantage of their employer's wellness offerings are healthy people who don't spend a lot on health care, and employees with the highest health-care costs are the least likely to participate. Researchers also found that wellness had no impact on job satisfaction or productivity."[123] It's also been pointed out that a company can have an excellent wellness program, but if the overall culture is toxic, then employee stress is not alleviated. A focus on productivity and financial viability for projects and outcomes often supersedes the well-being of personnel.

This single-minded focus on growth and the bottom line undercuts the language of "balance between work and home" that so many corporate leaders espouse. Many CEOs are verbal advocates of family values, mindfulness practices, regular workouts, and environmental initiatives while at the same time generating deadlines that don't allow for days off, requiring interstate or international travel for protracted periods, or cutting

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[121] Kathleen Koster, "PRODUCTIVITY: Meditation at Work can Improve Focus, Lower Stress: Wellness Programs Take Advantage of Neuroscience to Coach Employees in Meditation, Mindfulness Techniques," *Employee Benefit News* 28, no. 4 (April 1, 2014): 16, ProQuest.

[122] B. Costea, N. Crump, and J. Holm, "Dionysus at Work? The Ethos of Play and the Ethos of Management," *Culture and Organization* 11, no. 2 (2005): 142.

[123] Rebecca Greenfield, "Workplace Wellness Programs Really Don't Work," *Managing Benefits Plans* 20, no. 3 (2018), Gale Database.

corners.[124] If leaders model over-functioning at the expense of self-care, then their staff will tend to adopt the same value for fear of losing their jobs. In fact, fear of losing one's job or social status is also what employees state as a major reason for not pursuing resources for mental and emotional stress. Effective communication, or the lack thereof, is the subtext of a majority of work-related stress. Why are employees reluctant to hold conversations with managers or co-workers that could result in life-giving, changed circumstances? While some of it may be attributed to the organizational culture and some to low self-efficacy, are there cultural dynamics in play, too? Stress is a word endemic to industrialized and economically developed nations. When one is mired in subsistence living, focus is limited to providing the basic needs of food and housing. Survival stress is not the same as consumer stress. People in Western industrialized nations desire work that is self-fulfilling, but also earns "a lot" of money. Can these two values co-exist, or is there always a trade-off? In a world driven by consumerism, having more seems to edge out rest and wellness.

Conclusion

Research shows that developing a culture of care where people thrive is a struggle not only for mission agencies but also for NGOs, nonprofits, and corporate organizations. The missiology of the local church, and a global servant's viewpoint on suffering contribute to the complexity of designing a holistic model within mission agencies. Stewart Friedman, director of the Wharton Work/Life Integration Project, says, "What

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[124] Don Clayton, *LeaderShift: The Work-Life Balance Program* (Camberwell, Victoria: ACER Press, 2004), 12.

has evolved in the past two decades is a culture of overwork and responsiveness 24/7."[125] One can note this even in Christian circles of employment. The answer, then, needs to be more than simply strengthening member care policies. The overall culture of the organization is key. An employee can be following best practices in self-care, soul care, and community care, but if the organizational culture continually promotes un-health and dis-ease, then it's like slapping a band-aid on a gaping wound.

Dr. Gemma Houldey, a facilitator for well-being in the aid and development sector, wants to push people beyond the problem-solving that has dominated Western society for decades. "Our habit over so many years to be led by our brains does little to connect us to the lived experiences of others. It is through our bodies and our emotions that we can feel this more clearly, as I myself have learned."[126] She sees the need for holistic care and intentional formation.

This intentional formational piece is what was lacking in the models examined in Section Two. Even though mission agencies employ member care initiatives with the hope that global servants will last for the long haul, very few agencies have a spiritual formation paradigm that engages people from pre-assignment to retirement. One viable solution is for the mission agency to create and sustain a healthy organizational culture to bolster the overall resilience of global servants, so that thriving for the long-haul becomes a priority. However, Section Two revealed that a healthy culture, while important, is not sufficient.

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[125] "Stressed Out by Work? You're Not Alone," *Knowledge @Wharton*, University of Pennsylvania, October 20, 2014, https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/stressed-work-youre-alone/.

[126] Houldey, "Cultivating Collective Care and Awareness in these Times and Beyond."

The paradigms mission agencies have relied on for centuries are shifting, and reveal that deep transformation is needed.[127] This means that traditional member care methods will need revision, too. I suggest that home office staff and global servants enter a crucible of co-creation. Member care becomes a holistic endeavor that everyone must undertake for the sake of the whole. It's a movement beyond corporate organizational culture into a framework where resilience in stressful circumstances is rooted in spiritual wayfinding. Section Three will show how incorporating the ancient skills of wayfinding into a mission agency's organizational culture can provide a model of care that holds steady during linear or non-linear events.

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[127] I refer especially to the paradigm of the minority world sending white missionaries to evangelize brown and Black persons in the majority world. Funding is still strongly tied and controlled by churches in the minority world. Member care has been based on mental health and spiritual care models that are rooted in Western Christianity. Globalization, urbanization and migration are also attributing to change. For additional reading:

Chris Pullenayegem, "Is the Western Paradigm for Global Mission Still Valid in Twenty-First Century?" *EMQ* 55, no. 2 (April-June 2019): 12-14.

Minh Ha Nguyen, "Globalization, Urbanization, Migration, and Rethinking the People Groups Concept," *EMQ* 56, no. 4 (October-December 2020): 32-34.

Alan R. Johnson, "Foundations of Frontier Missiology: Core Understandings and Interrelated Concepts," *EMQ* 56, no. 4 (October-December 2020): 12-15.

SECTION III: WAYFINDING LIMINAL SPACE

Introduction

Stress that stems from living cross-culturally requires continual adaptation to liminal space.[128] Liminal space is the disorienting space between orientation and reorientation. Liminal space invites one to stand on a threshold to discern where you've come from in order to discern where you're going next.[129] An important distinction is that liminal space is about transition and not about change. Change is something that occurs outside of a person. It happens relatively quickly and usually focuses on the future (e.g., graduating from high school). Transition is what happens on the inside.[130] It takes much longer. One must manage endings before committing to a new beginning (e.g., grieving friendships in one's passport country while establishing new friendships in another country). As one sits in the neutral zone somewhere between past and present, there are recognizable emotional states. When the event happens, the person usually presents with some type of denial. The ego cannot wrap itself around the tremendous upheaval taking place. Then there can be resistance. A person knows they can't return to the way it was, but going forward takes too much energy and focus to muster. The desire to want things to remain the same is strong. Over time, denial and resistance shift toward exploration. The person is willing to reframe the question to get a new answer in lieu of asking the

[128] Liminality was coined in 1909 by French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in *Les Rites de Passage*. His work was expanded by British anthropologist Victor Turner in 1964 in *Liminality and Communitas*. For an introduction to Turner's work: Harry Wels, Kees van der Waal, Andrew Spiegel, and Frans Kamsteeg, "Victor Turner and liminality: An Introduction," *Anthropolgy Southern Africa* 34, no. 1& 2 (2011): 1-4, https://doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2011.11500002.

[129] William Bridges, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* (New York: Lifelong Books, 2019), 136-160.

[130] Cynthia Scott and Dennis T. Jaffe, "Survive and Thrive in Times of Change," *Training & Development Journal* 42, no. 4 (1988): 25-27.

same question over and over. Finally, one steps out of the neutral zone and over the threshold, making a commitment to the new reality.[131] Wayfinding liminal space, a spiritual practice to navigate one's interior and exterior journey, is my proposed solution for global servants to lower stress and to enhance resiliency.

Sections One and Two have already demonstrated that mission agencies need to enhance member care initiatives. Despite pre-field training, psychological testing, and years of dedicated Christian service, global servants can still flounder in their cross-cultural settings. The present global context is to rush from one task to the next, one solution to the next. Home office or field staff rarely slow down long enough to engage the Spirit to listen to the deep interior places of their souls, or to the soul of their organization. In his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman identifies System 1 and System 2 thinking. System 1 is impulsive, automatic, and intuitive. In contrast, System 2 is thoughtful, deliberate, and focused on a task.[132] Kahneman says people spend 95% of their time functioning in System 1 and only 5% in System 2.[133] This 5% cannot be overlooked. Dr. Mary Kate Morse, Dean of Portland Seminary, teaches that spiritual formation happens in the 5%. She says, "We're losing the ability to rest the mind and go deep."[134] This ability to go deeper is what global servants yearn for but often lose sight of during high-anxiety, critical incidents, or chronic, long-term stress. What would rebuild their resiliency for the long haul?

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[131] Scott and Jaffe, "Survive and Thrive in Times of Change," 25-27.

[132] Daniel Kahneman, *Summary: Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Epic Books, 2019), 8-9.

[133] Jeremy Braune, "System 1 Versus System 2: Think the Way Your Customers Think," *Brandspeak* (May 8, 2019), https://www.brandspeak.co.uk/blog/articles/system-1-versus-system-2-start-your-brand-thinking-the-way-your-customers-think/.

[134] Mary Kate Morse, "Spiritual Formation," (Lecture, LSF4 Spring Residency, Cannon Beach, OR, February 27, 2019).

Section Three begins from the premise that for a mission agency to implement a holistic spiritual care paradigm, they must co-create and sustain a shared vision for the spiritual formation of an entire organization. If this goal can be attained, then navigating interior and exterior liminal spaces is met with lower anxiety and higher resilience. Section Three will suggest the spiritual components necessary for a global mission context, and then examine wayfinding as a paradigm that invites the mission agency into the 5% of deeper spiritual formation. An overview of the wayfinding methods of the Inuit, the Australian Aborigines, and the Native Americans of the U.S. and Canada will reveal how centuries-old practices offer wisdom during liminal space. Section Three invites the reader to consider wayfinding as a spiritual formation paradigm that can equip global servants to thrive during the transitions of liminal space.

Co-Creating a Shared Vision

Peter Senge, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT's Sloan School of Management, says, "At the heart of building shared vision is the task of designing and evolving ongoing processes in which people at every level of the organization, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and be heard—by senior management and each other."[135] People want to feel personally invested.

Research says that "engaged employees are passionate, feeling profound connections to their company, driving it forward. Disengaged employees are checked out

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[135] Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Ross, and Bryan J. Smith, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 299.

of their workday and can undermine their coworkers' accomplishments."[136] Senge cautions that one way leadership circumvents engagement is through sampling. Sampling is when leaders believe it's too hard and expensive to talk to everybody, so they get a representative sample.[137] This can be seen in mission agencies where personnel are scattered around the globe. Instead of allowing everyone to have a voice at the table, a select few are chosen to represent the entire group. Senge states, "This strategy might be effective in consulting but in co-creating it undermines whatever opportunities people feel to take on personal leadership."[138] It undermines the autonomy and buy-in an organization desires from every individual.

Co-creating a shared vision begins by first looking at each individual's personal vision.[139] Corporations who take this seriously create a space where each person develops a personal vision, and then compares it to the vision of the organization.[140] Do the two align? The greater the alignment, the healthier the culture. This process parallels the spiritual exercise of creating a Rule of Life.[141] An individual designs a Rule of Life to establish vital behaviors to maintain healthy life rhythms. If a global servant's Rule of Life, for example, aligns with their mission agency's vision, then one can see the synergy that could result. If this co-creative process reveals a huge disconnect between the

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[136] Beth Kanter and Aliza Sherman, *The Happy Healthy Nonprofit* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 112.

[137] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 325.

[138] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 325.

[139] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 323.

[140] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 324.

[141] For more information of how to create a Rule of Life, I recommend *Crafting a Rule of Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012) by Stephen A. Macchia or *God In My Everything* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013) by Ken Shigematsu.

individual's personal vision and the overall vision of the mission agency, then the opportunity to discuss and discern realignment would need to be explored.

Edwin Schein, a leader and researcher in the field of organizational development, says that "the espoused values of an organization may not reflect the real values that are driving organizational behavior and culture."[142] For example, an organization may have a value of dependence on God, but in reality relies on strategic planning that allows no space for spiritual discernment.[143] Or, from the leadership angle, a leader who focuses on planning and measurable outcomes might grow a task-focused spirituality while a leader who focuses on spiritual disciplines and personal discipleship might foster a more contemplative organizational spirituality.[144] Mission agencies tend to have layers of organizational leadership, which adds to the complexity of spiritual care. Some areas of the organization might feel healthy and vibrant, while others seem toxic and apathetic. This is when an organizational spirituality must renew focus on Christ as the center. Paul Bendor-Samuel emphasizes:

> Keeping Christ at the center in our organizations requires a commitment to deepening personal relationships in community. Leadership teams cannot practice spiritual discernment without a commitment to practicing community. Authentic organizational spirituality requires integrity, vulnerability, mutual support, and accountability in the whole community. This is a particular challenge to the modern mission movement, birthed and nourished by pioneers for whom individualism has been a badge of honor.[145]

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[142] Paul Bendor-Samuel, "Organizational Spirituality," in *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*, ed. John Amalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 203.

[143] Paul Bendor-Samuel, *Organizational Spirituality*, 203.

[144] Paul Bendor-Samuel, *Organizational Spirituality*, 204.

[145] Paul Bendor-Samuel, *Organizational Spirituality*, 206.

The vision is of a people who are Christ-centered and biblical with an emphasis on both action and contemplation.

Co-creating organizational spiritual alignment between the values of the mission agency and the personal values of each staff and global servant requires time and patience; it belongs in System 2 thinking.[146] The goal is for everyone to embody the same core values. Mission agencies talk about incarnational ministry and embodying the love of Christ, which staff and global servants usually model well to those in their international ministry contexts. Where these behaviors often break down, however, is in their relationships with one another. With the assumption that everyone is on the same page, decisions are made, policies are implemented, and then leadership is either surprised or cynically resigned when there is pushback and/or resentment. But when alignment is achieved, the organization flourishes. Evaluating spiritual alignment needs to become a regular practice of a mission organization's systemic check-up. It is a decisive outcome that flows from a spiritual formation paradigm.

What Is Spiritual Formation?

What is spiritual formation? Dallas Willard says, "Spiritual formation in the tradition of Jesus Christ is the process of transformation of the inmost dimension of the human being, the heart, which is the same as the spirit or will. It is being formed (really, transformed) in such a way that its natural expression comes to be the deeds of Christ

[146] Referencing Kahneman: System 1 thinking relies on easy, fast-track solutions. System 2 dives into relational, process-oriented conversations.

done in the power of Christ."[147] Robert Mulholland says "Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ."[148] Jeffrey Greenman crafted his definition as "Spiritual formation is our continuing response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world."[149] Richard Foster describes it as follows: "God gradually and slowly 'captures' the inner faculties: first the heart and the will, then the mind, the imagination, and the passions. The result is the transformation of the entire personality into the likeness of Christ. More and more and more we take on his habits, feelings, hopes, faith, and love."[150] All these definitions highlight "becoming like Christ" with a focus on inner and outer transformation as a lifelong process. Mulholland summarizes:

> When spirituality is viewed as a journey, however, the way to spiritual wholeness is seen to lie in an increasingly faithful response to the One whose purpose shapes our path, whose grace redeems our detours, whose power liberates us from crippling bondages of the prior journey and whose transforming presence meets us at each turn in the road. In other words, spirituality is a pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God's control of our life and being.[151]

My definition of spiritual formation is based on Mulholland's and Greenman's: "Spiritual formation is choosing to enter the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others." This type of spiritual formation does not happen through an individual's effort or will. Eugene Peterson says, "Spiritual formation is primarily what

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[147] Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Formation: What it is, and How it is Done," Dallas Willard Ministries, https://dwillard.org/articles/spiritual-formation-what-it-is-and-how-it-is-done.

[148] M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1993), 25.

[149] Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary Challenges," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, eds. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2010), 24.

[150] Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1998), 51.

[151] Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 12.

the Spirit does, forming the resurrection life of Christ in us."[152] We are being conformed by God; we are not conforming ourselves.

Being Conformed to Christ In Cross-Cultural Contexts

Ministering in another culture is a slow process. The rhythm is often three steps forward, two steps back. Formation happens at a steady, intentional pace that lasts a lifetime. Listening to God in a foreign land through a foreign language, a global servant learns to practice a new rhythm. What does it mean to be "the image of Christ" in a culture that is not one's own? Mulholland says, "The process of being conformed to the image of Christ takes place primarily at the points of our unlikeness to Christ's image."[153] Immersion in another culture pushes prejudices, biases, fears, and discomfort to the surface—all the places a global servant is unlike Jesus. Culture shock is sometimes analogous to "self-shock."[154] This is when a global servant "comes to see their own pride in the face of new cultural values that they must embrace if they are going to ever call their new location 'home.'"[155] Facing these types of inner biases and brokenness is an invitation to change. As someone becomes more conformed to the image of Christ, then the false-self loosens its hold. This setting aside of ego is crucial to cross-cultural ministry. Global servants come to partner with their international hosts. It is an intentional decision to not impose an outside set of cultural values on an existing culture.

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[152] Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 237.

[153] Mulholland, *Inviation to a Journey*, 37.

[154] Elliot D. Stephens, "Retention and Onboarding: Are We Ready to Ask the Hard Questions?" *EMQ* 55, no. 4 (October-December 2019): 17.

[155] Stephens, *Retention and Onboarding*, 17.

At the same time, there is the intentionality to invite people to "put on" the values of Christianity. Therefore, Eugene Peterson advocates, "Spiritual theology is the discipline and art of training us into a full and mature participation in Jesus' story while at the same time preventing us from taking over the story."[156] In *Renovation of the Heart*, Willard says, "If we are to be spiritually formed in Christ, we must have and must implement the appropriate vision, intention, and means. Not just any path we take will do."[157] This cross-cultural lens of a global servant's context is imperative for the entire mission agency to comprehend and embrace. The spiritual formation expected of global servants must be matched with an equivalent, authentic spiritual formation within the sending agency. While this may seem blatantly obvious, it needs to be emphasized. There are too many stories of misalignment and dysfunction between members of mission organizations, which undermines the witness and integrity of the ministry.

One suggestion of how "being conformed to the image of Christ" can be implemented throughout an organization is an invitation to walk in the classical steps of the Christian pilgrimage: awakening, purgation, illumination, and union.[158] Awakening is when a person/organization hears God's invitation to recognize a place of being unlike Christ, and then moves to respond. Purgation is God's invitation to let go, an increasing relinquishment, of this unlikeness. Illumination is God's invitation into a new paradigm of be-ing and do-ing. And union is when the path culminates in Christ-like-ness of that

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[156] Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 199.

[157] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 85.

[158] Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 79-80.

particular point in an individual's or organization's life.[159] This commitment to humility, surrender, confession, and transformation can begin to grow a mature base of leaders that influences every level of the mission agency, home and abroad.

A Global Mission Spiritual Formation Paradigm

Establishing that intentional spiritual formation is critical as a mission organization strives for spiritual alignment and holistic health, then what type of spiritual formation paradigm best fits a mission agency? First, I believe a model that incorporates servant leadership is imperative. Jesus exemplified servant leadership in the Bible. Northouse, in his classic text *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* says: "Servant leaders make a conscious choice to serve first—to place the good of followers over the leaders' self-interests."[160] In addition to servant leadership, I would also include adaptive leadership. Heifetz, in *Leadership Without Easy Answers,* contributes: "Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive."[161] It allows "for the use of a variety of abilities depending on the demands of the culture and situation,"[162] and "requires a change in values, beliefs, or behavior."[163] A synthesis of these two, and my definition of leadership, is: "Leadership is choosing to serve with humility and empathy, putting the needs of others before one's self, encouraging

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[159] Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 80.

[160] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 248.

[161] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2019), 258.

[162] Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994), 20.

[163] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 22.

followers to thrive in the midst of difficult circumstances, while holding open space for adaptive change to emerge."

Second, in addition to adaptive-servant leaders, I believe the paradigm needs to cultivate servant-learners.[164] Servant-learners access the creative arts, use imagination in everyday life, offer empathy, practice deep listening, and rely on close-knit relationships. A servant-learner holds space where questions can be safely asked, disparities examined, losses grieved, and innovation birthed. Servant-learners embrace rhythms that include movement *and* standing still. They pay close attention, asking, "What's missing?" They are investing for the long-haul, studying the landscape, and discerning how the Spirit is calling community from one place to the next.

Third, the paradigm then encourages adaptive-servant-leader-learners to form learning communities. Learning communities are more than sharing information; they foster formation and wisdom. They transition from "knowing facts" to "being known." In *Anatomy of the Soul*, Dr. Curt Thompson emphasizes how much our lives revolve around knowing the *right* stuff. "We have failed to see that this need to be right, to be rationally orderly and correct, subtly but effectively prevents us from the experience of being known, of loving and being loved, which is the highest call of humanity."[165] Being known in community is stepping into a vulnerable place where a person ceases to make judgments of others or oneself. This decision of surrender, to being in authentic relationship with God, oneself, and others, is the crux of spiritual formation.

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[164] Dr. Jay Matenga, Missions & Evangelism Director of the World Evangelical Alliance, discusses the need for servant learners in "Missions in a Covid Crisis: Identity Implications," WEA (World Evangelical Alliance), May 18, 2020, https://weamc.global/covid-identity/.

[165] Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2010), 17.

Fourth, embodiment is fundamental to the paradigm. Van der Kolk, in his book *The Body Keeps the Score,* teaches how our responses to life events, especially trauma, are stored in the body.[166] Our bodies hold memories that influence how we live in the present. Restoring equilibrium to out-of-sync systems begins as one relearns how to be in sync with oneself and others.[167] The Christian faith is steeped in body and embodiment language. Peace and justice advocate Meg Brauckmann says,

> Throughout the scriptures, the followers of Jesus also come to be referred to as the body of Christ. We are not called the spirit of Christ, but the body. To follow an embodied God, we must incarnate our faith; we must embody it in the flesh. We are called to be bodies and this is a radical calling that affects our entire posture before God.[168]

Our humanity is grounded in our bodies. How we listen to our own bodies, and to the "body" stories of others, shapes our embodied faith.

And finally, I believe the paradigm should provide meaning for liminal space. The word liminal comes from the Latin word "limen," which means threshold.[169] Liminal space invites one to stop, to linger, to discern where you've come from in order to discern where you're going next. It is also known as the neutral zone.[170] One must manage endings before committing to a new beginning.

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[166] Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 20.

[167] Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 124.

[168] Meg Brauckmann, "An Embodied Faith," (Sermon, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA, February 2011). https://emu.edu/now/news/files/2011/02/3rdSpeech2011MegBrauckmann.pdf.

[169] Charles La Shure, "What Is Liminality?" *Histories and Theories of Intermedia*, October 18, 2005, http://umintermediai501.blogspot.com/2008/12/what-is-liminality-charles-la-shure.html.

[170] William Bridges discusses the neutral zone in Chapter Six of his book *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* (New York: Lifelong Books, 2019), 136-160.

Figure 1—A Global Mission Spiritual Formation Paradigm

While I'm sure other components could be added, from my twenty-two years of cross-cultural experience, these five strike me as essential.[171] The faithful people of God have wrestled with how to serve, adapt, embody, and be community during liminal space for centuries. God offered this wisdom to the Israelites: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."[172] Note the directives of look, ask, walk, and find. The way is not hidden, but it does require initiative, perseverance, and discernment. These scriptures led me to the ancient methods of wayfinding. How did indigenous cultures navigate wild stretches of land and sea? How did they circumnavigate their interior and exterior lives? I believe this ancient way of knowing and being offer insights for traversing the constant

[171] Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) might suggest additional or alternative components to this model. Even though I have been immersed in cross-cultural ministry for two decades, I acknowledge that my primary lens is still of a white person from a majority culture.

[172] Jeremiah 6:16.

liminality that contributes to cross-cultural stress. Wayfinding provides a structure to find meaning when you don't know what anything means.

Wayfinding as a Spiritual Formation Paradigm

Wayfinding is a navigational method that does not rely on standard, scientific tools (like a compass, sextant, or map) for determining direction. Indigenous cultures around the world have implemented various methods of wayfinding that include star mapping, stone markers, storytelling, song-lining, and vision quests to find their way across vast expanses of land and sea. Why am I choosing wayfinding as a spiritual formation paradigm? Cross-cultural ministry invites one to hold multicultural stories simultaneously. It is an invitation to listen closely and authentically to what God is already doing in another part of the world. Global voices allow one to examine how other cultures value relationships versus tasks, the differences in communication styles, approaches to conflict and stress, models for authority and power, and viewpoints for community versus individualism. By studying wayfinding, I am seeking to compare similar principles that already exist within Christianity and apply them to how one finds meaning during liminal events.

The Polynesians are credited with being the first wayfinders of the open sea. Anthropologist Wade Davis informs us, "Five centuries before Columbus, the Polynesians had over the course of only eighty generations settled virtually every island group of the Pacific, establishing a single sphere of cultural life encompassing some

25 million square kilometres of the earth's surface."[173] To be a Polynesian was to identify with navigation.[174] Davis met a master navigator from Satawal in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia named Mau Piailug. His father and grandfather were both navigators.[175] Davis shares what he learned of Mau's childhood:

> At the age of one Mau was selected to inherit the ancestral teachings. As part of that training he was placed as an infant in tidal pools for hours at a time that he might feel and absorb the rhythms of the sea . . . . Mau learned not only to sail, but also to understand the secrets of the Big Water, both the physics and metaphysics of waves. It was said he could conjure islands out of the sea just by holding a vision of them in his imagination.[176]

Wayfinder Chellie Spiller says, "Wayfinding is an invitation to plunge into the reality of the journey—its sounds, colors, emotions, smells, sensations; it is whole-hearted, whole-minded and embodied engagement with the world."[177] Jesus calls us to this whole-hearted living when he says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31) Spiritual wayfinders embrace the journey with focus, perseverance, courage, and love. One's entire being is engaged and committed to the process.

As a seasoned wayfinder, Mau's diligent training and countless years at sea allow him to read and interpret every sign available to him. A cloud's shape, color, and place in

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[173] Wade Davis, *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World* (Toronto, ON: Anansi Press, 2009), 49.

[174] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 51.

[175] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 53.

[176] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 53.

[177] Chellie Spiller, Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr, and John Panoho, *Wayfinding Leadership: Ground-Breaking Wisdom for Developing Leaders* (Wellington, Aotearoa, New Zealand: Hula Publisher, 2015), 68, Kindle.

the sky all provide clues. The color of the sky, the way the stars twinkle and dim, the sun, the moon—all tell a story. The tone of the sky over an island is vastly different than over the open sea. A halo around the moon suggests rain. Wildlife provide other clues: a shark moving lazily, a lone bird separated from the flock, dolphins swimming towards sheltered waters, or the flight of a frigate bird heading out to sea are all significant. Even the salinity, taste, and temperature of the water are important.[178] Davis remarks, "Expert navigators like Mau can sense and distinguish as many as five distinct swells moving through the vessel at any given time."[179] Nainoa, who trained under Mau, adds, "It's one thing to know what to look for, these clues and signs and indications; it's quite another to pull it altogether and confront in the moment the ever-changing power and reality of the sea."[180]

Adaptive leaders observe, interpret, and intervene.[181] Heifetz uses the metaphor of "getting on the balcony" to gain a perspective that gives a complete picture. He says, "When leaders perfect this skill, they are able to simultaneously keep one eye on the events happening immediately around them and the other eye on the larger patterns and dynamics."[182] Spiritual wayfinders need to pay close attention to their context. Every piece of information, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, needs to be considered. And then, holding all the pieces, one is invited to fall from the mind to the

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[178] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 55-56.

[179] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 59.

[180] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 56.

[181] Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, "Becoming an Adaptive Leader," *Lifelong Faith Journal* 5.1 (Spring 2011): 29, https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/becoming_an_adaptive_leader.pdf.

[182] Heifetz, *Becoming an Adaptive Leader*, 30.

heart, from System 1 to System 2 thinking, and to seek God's wisdom to discern the next step. Quakers have a beautiful expression for this: way opening. It is a time of expectant waiting where one trusts God is at work even when no direction is yet evident.[183]

Wayfinders equip every person in the boat to be a leader. It is important that seeds of knowledge are planted in everyone. Each person's experience is critical to the voyage. "In extreme circumstances, survival of all depends on everyone being aware of and responding to the conditions, not blindly placing the burden of decisions and singular capability upon the leader."[184] Wayfinder Hotu inquires about what's going on in a proactive manner. He recognizes that when crews are comprised from all around the world, then it is important "to respect people's own histories, ancestral ties, and cultural wisdom."[185] Managing diversity is a crucial element. Wayfinders lead from the back of the boat. They seek to strengthen others so that the boat can continue to operate should something happen to the leader.[186] It is always a language of "we," and not of "I." Leadership consultant Margaret Wheatley observes,

> What gives power its charge, positive or negative, is the quality of relationships. Those who relate through coercion, or from a disregard for the other person, create negative energy. Those who are open to others and who see others in their fullness creative positive energy. Love in organizations, then, is the most potent source of power we have available.[187]

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[183] Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000), 38.

[184] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 82.

[185] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 94.

[186] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 112.

[187] Bennett Sims, *Servanthood: Leadership for the Third Millennium* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 113.

Spiritual wayfinders adopt a position of humility and servanthood. While undergirding their own skills, they are also equipping those around them. They model Jesus' words in Matthew 20:26—"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."—and Paul's words in Ephesians 4:2, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Dallas Willard says a leader is someone with a well-kept heart "who is prepared for and capable of responding to the situations of life in ways that are good and right."[188]

Spiritual wayfinders also foster resilient learning communities. Everyone's voice and role are valued. The body of Christ has many parts, but they form one body. "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26) Seminary professor Christine Pohl stresses why community is so important:

> Communities need more than shared history and tasks to endure. A combination of grace, fidelity, and truth make communities safe enough for people to take the risks that are necessary for growth and transformation. That same combination makes it possible for groups to handle disagreements without being torn apart and to minister to the world in ways that are far greater than the sum of the individuals involved.[189]

Pohl believes that the life-giving power and truth of the Gospel stands or falls with the character and practices of our spiritual communities.[190]

Wayfinders are taught to use their entire body as a perceptive instrument. They learn to attune to "the changing and often seemingly imperceptible signs of nature."[191]

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[188] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 199.

[189] Christine D. Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmaans Publishing Co., 2012), 4.

[190] Pohl, *Living into Community*, 8.

Wayfinder Mau Piailug would often lie in the hull of the boat so he could feel the frequencies of the various currents and swells. As he felt them pass through his body, he could gauge location.[192] Spiritual formation invites this type of embodied discernment. Paul, in Romans 12:1-2, says,

> Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good and perfect will.

Transformation begins by offering our bodies as a living sacrifice. It is an image of lying on the altar, listening to our bodies, listening to the Spirit move through our bodies, and then discerning God's invitation. Spiritual wayfinders are willing to lie down in the bottom of the boat to listen how God is speaking through the winds and waves around them.

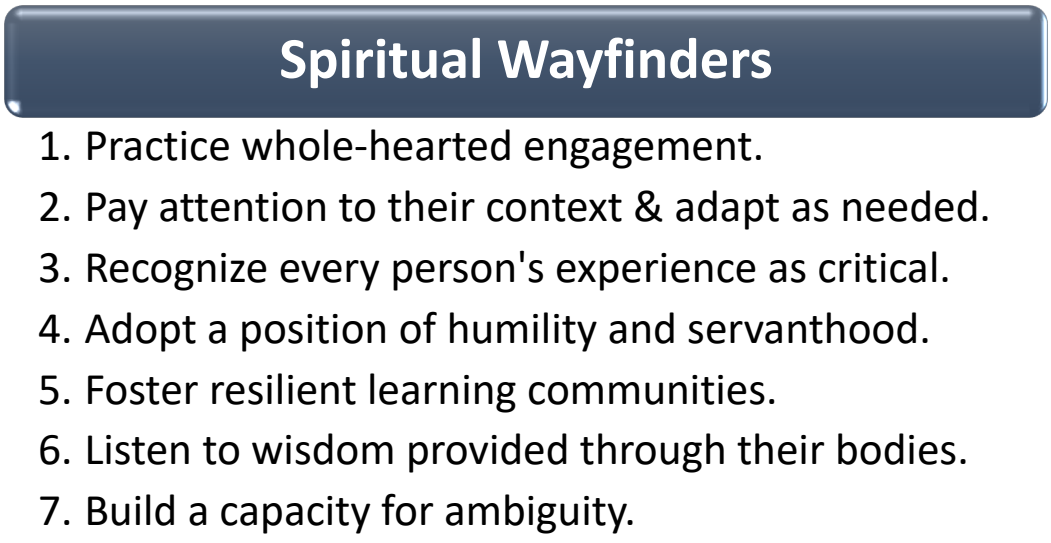

Figure 2—Spiritual Wayfinders

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[191] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 20.

[192] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 23.

Wayfinding navigation fascinates so many people because it does not rely on modern technology. It is human beings in step with God, creation, and one another. They are people who have built a capacity for uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity.[193] The wayfinder's world is "one of be-coming—which is very different to the usual model, which has us always going somewhere between a static world of fixed things—a be-going."[194] As one wayfinder explains, "Can I see the image of the island in my mind?"[195] Another added, "The island comes to you."[196] Spiritual wayfinders can be uncomfortable with liminal space, but learn resilient practices to better hold the ambiguity. They recognize that moving through liminality can result in be-coming Christ-like. Can they fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of their faith?[197] God meets us in our imperfections with unmerited grace. Christian psychologist David Benner says, "Christian spirituality involves a transformation of the self that occurs only when God and self are both deeply known. Both, therefore, have an important place in Christian spirituality. There is no deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of self, and no deep knowing of self without a deep knowing of God."[198] This deep knowing is what spiritual wayfinders lean into as they steer their boats into unchartered waters.

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[193] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 74.

[194] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 57.

[195] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 63.

[196] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 60.

[197] Hebrews 12:2.

[198] David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2004), 20.

Wayfinding with Global Servants

Section One introduced the reader to a case study of two global servants, M & C. In an unfolding situation of escalating stress, this couple pushed themselves to the edge of exhaustion, feeling a need to soldier on for Jesus. A first response to this scenario might be to invite M & C to consider a spiritual retreat, to offer a weekly support call, or to send their Area Director for a face-to-face visit. While helpful, those solutions may not be what they actually need. How can a wayfinding paradigm speak to their situation?

The experienced wayfinder in the boat is always empowering the crew, the less experienced wayfinders, to learn about their environment. Leading from the back of the boat, this wayfinder asks the others, "How do you interpret this scenario?" Then, if their choices need to be adjusted, the more seasoned wayfinder shares the "balcony view." A component of adaptive leadership is giving the work back to the people.[199] So, a first step with M & C's situation is asking, "What's going on here? What do you see? What do you need?"

Another aspect of wayfinding is remembering you're not alone. M & C need to be reminded that they are accompanied by experienced wayfinders, a learning community, from whom to seek wisdom. They can ask their Area Director to bridge a conversation with their international partners so ministry expectations can be revised. Are there any systemic dis-eases in the historical relationship with this partner contributing to the couple's distress? A spiritual director can provide space for listening to the movement of God in their context, and then help them connect the dots from a perspective they might

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[199] Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1994), 142.

not have the ability to recognize due to their exhaustion. A spiritual care provider within their mission agency can help them navigate cultural dissonance and identify cultural fatigue. Revisiting the results of personality assessment tests and the vital behaviors of a Rule of Life can be used to bring additional clarity around conditioned responses and the resiliency measures to counteract them. The Missionary Partnership Team can be contacted for prayer and encouragement. There may also be the voices of more experienced global servants living in their area of service who can offer insights from their life on the field, and their firsthand experiences with this particular international partner. And finally, because of the impact on their marriage, the services of a counselor may also be considered. All these different people can provide a holding environment that allows M & C to regulate and contain their stress.[200] The stress is not eliminated; it's reframed. As a final recommendation, M & C can pursue a one- to three-day retreat to hold all these conversations in prayerful discernment.

Wayfinders stop and listen to their bodies. M & C need to be encouraged to read the signs their bodies tell them when stress escalates. Did they ignore physical and emotional symptoms that were signaling they were running on empty? Slowing down and paying attention also encourages M & C to step off the merry-go-round of the crazy mental gymnastics with fear and anxiety and fall into a heart space where God's love can reorient and restore. Dr. Eloise Renich Fraser has learned:

> My body, once ignored and despised, has become an ally in the reorientation of my internal and external life. It lets me know when I'm running away, avoiding yet another of God's invitations to look into my past and the way it binds me as a theologian. I can't trust my mind as often as I trust my body. My mind tries to talk

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[200] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 106.

> me into business as usual, but my body isn't fooled. Insomnia, intestinal pain and diarrhea let me know there's work to be done.[201]

Ruth Haley Barton says, "our body is the first to know if we are overcommitted, stressed, uneasy or joyful, and when we need to attend to something that is causing us pain or disease."[202]

M & C can view their situation as an invitation to "being conformed into the image of Christ." The chaos of their present situation is the opportunity to mature as a disciple of Jesus, to lean in to the growing edges of becoming a servant leader. Listening to the wisdom of those around them, combined with their own initiative, and relying on guidance from the Holy Spirit, M & C can enhance resiliency to navigate their inner and outer liminal spaces.

Additional Wayfinding Principles

The Polynesians were not the only people to practice wayfinding. Other cultures have wisdom to contribute to this emerging wayfinding model.

Faithful Presence

Above the Arctic Circle, in the tundra biome of Alaska, Northern Canada, and Greenland, travelers can stumble across an inuksut. Inuksuit (plural of inuksut) are methods of wayfinding developed by the Inuit, Kalaallit, Yupik, and other indigenous peoples of these regions. Made of stones piled on top of one another, these rock cairns

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[201] Elouise Renich Fraser, *Confessions of a Beginning Theologian* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1998), 31.

[202] Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 85.

can reach heights of six to seven feet and archeologists have dated some to 10,000 years old.[203] Inuksuit were used as navigational beacons to guide people across the frozen tundra where few landmarks existed.

Stacking rocks as geographical and spiritual wayfinding is found in the Hebrew Scriptures as well. One of the most well-known passages is in Joshua 3-4. God told the Israelites to erect twelve stones as a geographical signpost to pinpoint where God held back the waters so the Israelites could cross the Jordan. The stones marked where God made a way where there seemed to be no way. God declares his faithful presence with his people Israel. God's faithful presence can also become a foundational signpost as one is moving through liminal space. Grounding oneself in God's faithful presence creates a container for the questions "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?"

Storytelling

Storytelling is a foundational piece of every culture. Images, myths, symbols, and dreams are woven into the fabric and mystery of daily life and historical narrative. Sacred storytelling often becomes an indirect (sometimes subversive) method of wayfinding during political upheaval, economic turmoil, and religious diaspora.

Klyne Snodgrass, New Testament Studies professor at North Park Theological Seminary, says context is at the heart of today's storytelling.[204] Global servants spend years comprehending their ministry contexts. It is a constant invitation to step away from imaginative gridlock. Edwin Friedman says, "Conceptually stuck systems cannot become

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[203] Peter Irniq, "The Ancestral Inuksuk," *Naniiliqpita Magazine* (Spring 2006):18–19, http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2006-Naniiliqpita-Spring.pdf.

[204] Irniq, "The Ancestral Inuksuk," 25.

unstuck simply by trying harder. For a fundamental reorientation to occur, a spirit of adventure that optimizes serendipity and enables new perceptions beyond the control of our thinking processes must happen first."[205] Storytelling invites the listener into possibilities instead of certainties. Liminal space allows experimentation with the emerging narratives in one's context. Freedom to fail becomes a vital behavior. Storytelling as wayfinding rests in the assurance that the Holy Spirit is drawing us toward the stories God desires to make known.

Empathy

First nations peoples of Australia developed a navigational system that uses fixed points in the night sky linked to geographical landmarks.[206] They also developed long-distance star maps that incorporated a songline, a mnemonic device used as a memory aid in teaching the route and the waypoints. Some of these songlines led to destinations 700km away (435 miles).[207] Aboriginal wayfinders taught the songlines from one generation to the next. Hebrews 12:1-2a allows one to grasp this concept from a spiritual context: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." The great cloud of witnesses represents those who have trekked ahead, learning the lay of the land, noting the waypoints that will keep one grounded, so

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[205] Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 1999), 37.

[206] Robert S. Fuller, "How Ancient Aboriginal Star Maps Have Shaped Australia's Highway Network," The Conversation, U.S. Edition, April 6, 2016, https://theconversation.com/how-ancient-aboriginal-star-maps-have-shaped-australias-highway-network-55952.

[207] Fuller, "How Ancient Aboriginal Star Maps Have Shaped Australia's Highway Network."

that others won't get lost. Jesus is the fixed point that never changes. Spiritual wayfinders compose a songline that becomes a lifeline. Even when someone falls deep into the unknown, when the constellations seem unrecognizable, accessing the star map of a faithful witness can lead one to quiet streams and still waters where there is rest for the soul. The skill of songlining resonates with empathy. Empathy is "our capacity to merge with, include, understand, or identify with the experience of another."[208] For spiritual leaders, it is the ability to come alongside and offer a songline of hope in the midst of suffering.

Discernment

The indigenous peoples of North America practice vision quests when seeking wisdom for liminal space. Professor and theologian Steven Charleston of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma says that a vision quest does not take away the struggles of life; instead, it shows people "how to cope with those struggles with confidence and hope."[209] He says that visions "acknowledge the power of God to change reality. We acknowledge that there is no history, whether personal or corporate, no matter how painful or distorted, that cannot be redeemed by God's intervention."[210] Vision quests were designed for an

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[208] Joan Halifax, *Standing at the Edge: Finding Freedom Where Fear and Courage Meet* (New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2018), 58.

[209] Steven Charleston, *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus* (New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2015), 38.

[210] Charleston, *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus*, 39.

individual to spend time alone to seek spiritual guidance.[211] And then, whatever was gleaned was shared with the entire community to revitalize relationships.[212]

Global servants hold this both/and discernment space that blends individual and community wisdom. Listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in humility and authenticity, they join *with* the people of another culture to attentively listen to God through a cultural lens that is not their own. Seeking to hear God through diverse voices expands their limited, individual perception. Discernment is not about "getting it right." It is choosing to surrender to the Divine Mystery of God. The journey becomes less about "What is God's prayer for me?" and more about "What is God's prayer for community?" Global servants become the bridge from one culture to the next, drawing humanity closer to Jesus' prayer that we become one.

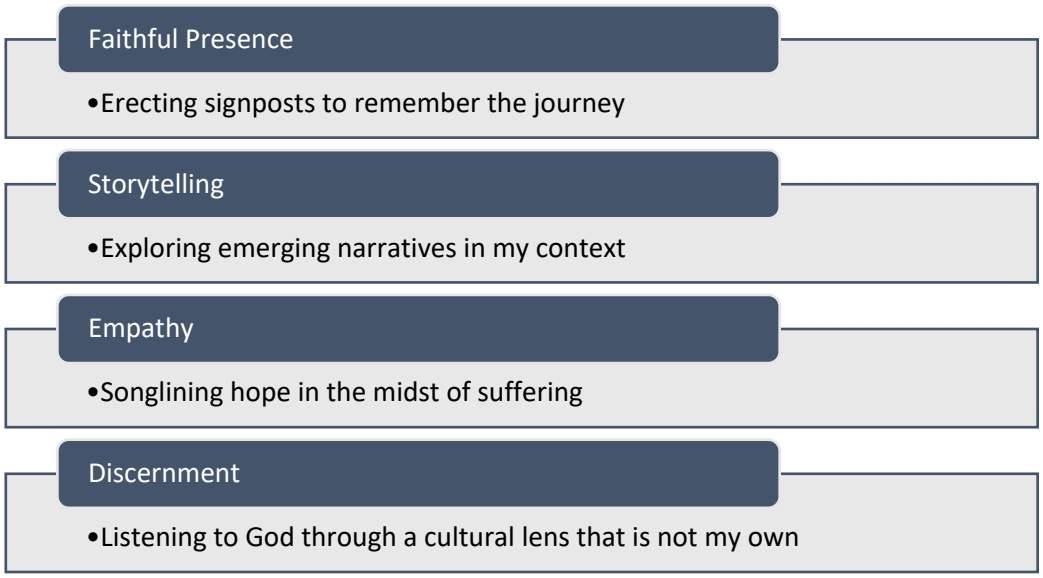

Figure 3—Additional Wayfinding Principles

[211] Rockey Robbins, "Vision Quest: The Intersection of Native American Spirituality and Family Therapy," in *Engaging Spirituality in Family Therapy: Meeting in Sacred Space*, ed. David Trimble (Boston, MA: American Family Therapy Academy, 2018): 107-122.

[212] Robbins, *Vision Quest*, 118.

The Artifact: A Wayfinding Resource for Global Servants

This thesis began by exploring the stress that global servants face in their cross-cultural contexts. How can global servants better navigate these liminal spaces when nothing makes sense? Spiritual director Susan Beaumont says "in the absence of meaning and purpose, people become fearful."[213] She advises that this is not the best time for strategic planning because it makes linear assumptions about how the future will unfold.[214] "In liminal space," she says, "we build the bridge as we walk it."[215] Questions of "Who am I?", "Who do I serve?", "What do I stand for?", and "What am I called to do next?" are reexamined.[216] To address these types of questions, I have designed an artifact that addresses key components of a global servant's journey from pre-assignment to retirement. The artifact will seek answers to Beaumont's questions through the practice of spiritual disciplines; self-care, soul care, and community care practices; and wayfinding principles.

Conclusion

Godly people who serve in mission agencies are aware that a culture of holistic care is vital. It's the implementation piece that lacks cohesion. Designing a spiritual care paradigm, therefore, needs to be undergirded by the mission's culture or it will be like the seeds that fell in shallow soil. They sprang up quickly, but withered because they had no

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[213] Susan Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 113.

[214] Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*, 114.

[215] Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*, 114.

[216] Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*, 114-128.

root.[217] Thriving in "good soil" requires intentionality. The member care model where the institution provided all the solutions is replaced by an alternative model of home office staff and global servants co-creating a shared vision around organizational spirituality. It allows the core values of a mission agency to be reflected in the personal values of each staff person and global servant. Co-creating relies on both individual responsibility and community responsibility for soul care, self-care, and community care. Member care is viewed as something "we're all doing together." If this alignment is reviewed on a regular basis, then adjustments can be made well before a situation becomes unhealthy or toxic. Spiritual alignment is undergirded by the mission agency's spiritual formation paradigm.

Spiritual formation is the process in which Christians mature as disciples of Christ. We are "being conformed to the image of Christ." This process of examining where we are unlike Christ invites a posture of humility and inner fortitude as everyone within the mission agency—home or abroad—is committed to working on inner transformation as led by the Holy Spirit. Colossians 3:12-15 summarizes the intent of Christian community:

> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Surrender and service to Jesus and to one another is what allows the Gospel to have integrity and authenticity in countries around the world. Member care is also how relationships are lived out with international partners.

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[217] The Parable of the Sower, Matthew 13.

Making this decision to walk together in accountability and grace, personnel of a mission agency realize the need for collective wisdom to navigate the liminal spaces before them. As spiritual wayfinders, they choose to be adaptive-servant-leader-learners who embody Christ as they trust the Holy Spirit to conform them into Christ's image. Navigating liminal spaces, whether external or internal, will cause stress and ambiguity. But the realization that these spaces are also where deep transformation and growth happen can allow them to become invitations instead of paralyzing events. Franciscan and author Richard Rohr says of liminal space:

> Get there often and stay as long as you can by whatever means possible. It's the realm where God can best get at us because our false certitudes are finally out of the way. This is the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is revealed. If we don't encounter liminal space in our lives, we start idealizing normalcy.[218]

As I write this, the COVID-19 pandemic continues. For many, it does feel like their world is falling apart. But for mission agencies, I see this time in history as an engraved invitation from God to dive into spiritual wayfinding principles. If a mission agency is spiritually aligned and vibrating at maximum member care capacity, then it has healthy, self-regulated global servants poised around the world listening to the heartbeat of God in multi-cultural contexts. As global servants and home office staff lie in the bottom of the boat to discern the theological and missiological implications during COVID-19, they have access to a view that churches and organizations landlocked in one country do not. What signs do we see in the world around us? What wisdom is God inviting spiritual wayfinders to embody as we keep heading into the unknown? Yes, one day the pandemic will cease to be liminal space, but something else will rise up to take its

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[218] Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 155-156.

place. What we learn and practice *now* strengthens and builds resilience for the future, too.

In his poem *For the Traveler,* Irish poet John O'Donohue captures the joy of discovery that awaits each one of us when we embark on a sacred pilgrimage. He leaves us with the image of spiritual wayfinders setting off on a journey together. Let me close with this stanza:

> May you travel in an awakened way,
> Gathered wisely into your inner ground,
> That you may not waste the invitations
> Which wait along the way to transform you. Amen.[219]

[219] John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 54.

SECTION IV: THE ARTIFACT

The artifact will provide a spiritual formation paradigm to navigate the inner and outer liminal spaces that a global servant experiences while living in a foreign culture. The classical steps of walking the labyrinth—awakening, purgation, illumination, and union—will be the overarching markers as a global servant moves from pre-assignment to retirement. International Ministries is one of the few remaining mission agencies that still equips missional leaders for lifelong service. This investment for the long haul has been tackled well from a practical, skills-related, spiritually gifted perspective. However, IM has never implemented a comprehensive member care initiative that also included intentional spiritual formation. This artifact will fill that gap.

The artifact's objective is to address the growing edge questions and circumstances that arise in each successive term. While not a linear process, cross-cultural spiritual formation does follow similar "currents and wind patterns" in each global servant's life. The artifact will assess these patterns through spiritual disciplines; self-care, soul care, and community care practices; and wayfinding principles. A curriculum for each five-year term of service will be suggested that includes learning outcomes and activities, media and book resources, and community building via a digital platform. This spiritual formation curriculum will provide consistent language and best practices that global servants and caregivers can hold in common. The artifact will be assessed with an annual survey in addition to a face-to-face assessment with global servants as each module concludes.

SECTION V: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS

ARTIFACT

Wayfinding is analogous to the interior and exterior liminal space a missionary navigates during cross-cultural service. Therefore, this artifact is a spiritual formation *waka*[220] for global servants of International Ministries that addresses key components of a global servant's journey from pre-assignment to retirement. The classic steps of walking the labyrinth will be the waypoints.[221] Each stage will incorporate learning outcomes and learning activities. To minimize cost and for ease of distribution, it will be provided in a digital format.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The goal is to provide a spiritual formation resource weaving together the principles of wayfinding, the spiritual disciplines, and components of a holistic care model to address key transitions of a global servant's journey from pre-assignment to retirement. Its design will include theological and practical application. It will be available in a digital format that will allow updates, changes, and corrections to be added/deleted with ease and efficiency. The content will be reviewed every three years by the Global Coordinators of Spiritual Care and the Member Care Working Team of International Ministries.

AUDIENCE

The artifact is designed for global servants and for IM personnel who provide member care for global servants. The curriculum will furnish consistent language, objectives, and practices to coordinate global servant spiritual formation within the organization.

SCOPE & CONTENT

I. Introduction
Leadership & Spiritual Formation
Wayfinding Liminal Space
The Limbic Brain & The Labyrinth
Knowing Your Mission's Organizational Culture
What is Spiritual Resiliency?

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[220] Māori word for canoe. The *waka* is the mode of transportation used by Polynesian wayfinders as they explore the seas. Resembling a *waka*, the artifact becomes the craft to carry global servants from one unexplored season of life to the next.

[221] In navigation, a waypoint is a reference point that allows one to know where you are and where you're going. While it may be longitude and latitude, it can also be a physical landmark.

II. Awakening (Remembering)

Pre-Assignment

Two years before a global servant leaves for the field, they begin to prepare for the journey.

Spiritual Practices:	Silence, Solitude, & Sabbath
Self-Care:	Family Systems Theory, Enneagram
Soul Care:	Rule of Life, Spiritual Direction, Journey Partners
Community Care:	Investing in People & Place
Wayfinding Principle:	Faithful Presence

III. Purgation (Releasing)

First Term

The first five years of a global servant's life are focused on developing and integrating one's cross-cultural identity.

Spiritual Practices:	Lectio divina, visio divina, & the Ignatian examen
Self-Care:	The window of tolerance, ambiguous loss, empathic fatigue, donor fatigue, cultivating new friendship, the Savior complex
Soul Care:	Theology of risk
Community Care:	Partnership vs. collaboration with international partners, the Colonial Mindset
Wayfinding Principle:	Storytelling

Second Term

The second five years are focused on becoming grounded in vocational identity.

Spiritual Practices:	Prayer, fasting, & discernment
Self-Care:	Maintaining healthy boundaries (co-dependency, triangulation)
Soul Care:	Theological shifts & how they impact vocational identity, the global servant's role with systemic sin (gender, race, economics, etc.)
Community Care:	(Mis)Alignment of personal expectations with expectations of national partner and/or IM, the challenge of cross-cultural teams
Wayfinding Principle:	Empathy

IV. Illumination (Receiving)

Third & Fourth Terms

Global servants explore the meaning and contextualization of their ministry.

Spiritual Practices:	Confession, hospitality, & worship
Self-Care:	Leadership styles (adaptive, servant, transformational, authentic)
Soul Care:	Revisiting one's context to deepen transformation,
Community Care:	Re-defining host international partnership after 10+ years on the field
Wayfinding Principle:	Discernment

V. Union (Resolving)

Fifth Term & Beyond
These terms are focused on legacy.

Spiritual Practices:	Surrender, simplicity, & mentoring
Self-Care:	Second half of life rhythms: Where do I belong now?
Soul Care:	Becoming a wisdom warrior
Community Care:	Equipping emerging wayfinders
Wayfinding Principle:	Mentoring

VI. Bibliography

BUDGET

The document will be available digitally at no cost to IM personnel. A third party wishing to reprint all or any part of the copyrighted work must first obtain the permission of the copyright holder.

PROMOTION

Initially, a digital PDF file of written content pieces will be available to all global servants and IM personnel who provide global servant member care. Lectures by guest speakers will be recorded and available on a secure website if permission is granted.

STANDARDS OF PUBLICATION

The artifact content will be an in-house publication for IM. After it is field tested, then distribution as an e-book may be explored.

ACTION PLAN

The artifact will be developed and written over the period of one year, with intended availability by 2022.

SECTION VI: POSTSCRIPT

Five years ago, International Ministries (IM) conducted an appreciative inquiry with all the major stakeholders of the organization that led to a document called *Responding to the Call*. One of the named focus areas was Care for Personnel. At that time, my husband David and I were serving as Regional Consultants for Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Care in Iberoamerica and the Caribbean. We were also undergoing training as spiritual directors. IM invited us, therefore, to oversee this care initiative. IM's initial goal was to determine lead measures that established a baseline of employee well-being, and to formulate best practices in this arena. There was also the hope of developing a plan of spiritual formation that would be implemented by 2021. As we began to interact with the global servants, conducting surveys and follow-up interviews, we quickly discovered a gap in IM's member care. Global servants were craving consistent, authentic care from spiritual companions to offer guidance as they navigated liminal events. With our background of thirty years as ordained pastors, seventeen years of service as global servants, and our pending certification as spiritual directors, we began to lobby for a new position at our organization. We and several executive staff brainstormed and co-created what this position might entail. The result was our appointment as Global Coordinators of Spiritual Care. This new position unfolded as I entered the LSF program at Portland Seminary. Designing my dissertation around the spiritual care of missionaries continued to equip me as I lived into my new responsibilities.

At an annual conference for overseas missionaries in 2017, David and I had the opportunity to converse with several global servants who had just completed their first

term of service. We learned that the level of member care they were receiving hardly differed from what we had received in 1999! Pre-field training was strong, but once a person was on the field, care dropped to a minimal level unless there was a crisis. As a result, one action step we implemented was a program to track new missionaries during their first year on the field. Over the last three years, this led us to consider how more spiritual care resources could be developed that matched each stage of a global servant's journey. Thus, the inspiration for my artifact.

I was inspired to use the concept of wayfinding as a spiritual formation paradigm when I crafted my Rule of Life in the fall of 2018. In a conversation with my spiritual director concerning vocational shift, I said, "I feel like I'm in a little boat surrounded by the ocean. I see no land. I don't even know which way to go to find land." She and I sat in silence with this image. And the thought came to me: "What if discovering land is not what I'm supposed to do anymore? What if I'm supposed to seek other people in their little boats? What if I'm supposed to help them navigate, to learn how to read the signs, so they're able to reach the land they're headed toward?" This led to my Rule of Life mission statement: "To companion global servant leaders as they navigate liminal spaces so that they thrive in their vocational callings, and remain rooted and sustained in their life with God."

As the dissertation unfolded, I started to weave in observations of how COVID-19 was impacting missions and member care. This pandemic isn't simply a linear event whose impact on the world will wane when science produces a vaccine, protocols become routine, and cultural dissonance lessens. I see the pandemic altering life at a systemic level (healthcare, education, religious practices, economics, social gatherings),

and believe its impact will be felt for decades. When systems are altered, the care people need shifts. Are the spiritual formation models churches and mission agencies have in place designed to hold the tension of liminality? The pandemic reminds us that exterior events can sometime impact the interior life of every person on the planet. David and I started COVID Discovery Groups within IM to create safe spaces to discuss questions of identity, vocation, and missiology. The impact of COVID-19 on the future of missions requires more time and research than this paper could address.

Spiritual formation and spiritual direction is a growing ministry among mission organizations. As this ministry expands, I perceive several challenges. First, it needs to be stated as a core value and integrated into every facet of the organization. Second, leadership needs to guard against the silo mentality, which stifles comprehensive implementation. Third, all the stakeholders' voices need to be included so that formation is shaped and owned by the entire community. And fourth, collaborative brainstorming among like-minded agencies can boost efforts towards transformation. These are not insurmountable obstacles, and I anticipate International Ministries will be one of the mission agencies that blazes a trail for others to follow.

APPENDIX A:

ARTIFACT SYLLABUS

International Ministries
A Spiritual Formation Paradigm for Global Servants

Vision	To nurture and grow resilient, spiritual wayfinder, global servant leaders that thrive for the long-haul.
Focus	Spiritual Formation, Leadership & Wayfinding
Focus Group(s)	Pre-Assignment to Retirement Global Servants
Time Frame	Each cohort is designed to meet once a month for the first year of each term, and then once a quarter for the remaining 3 years of each term. The Introduction Cohort is the exception. The Introduction Cohort is a self-study. Upon its completion, the global servant will schedule a zoom call with the facilitator(s) to discuss the content
Location	Online
Facilitators	David & Joyce Reed
Facilitators Phone	xxx.xxx.xxxx (David) & xxx.xxx.xxxx (Joyce)
Facilitators Email	joyce.reed@internationalministries.org, david.reed@internationalministries.org
Availability	Send us an email & we will respond within 24 hours.

Intent

The design of this program is to introduce global servants to the intersection of spiritual formation and leadership so that they can engage in an ongoing process of awareness, formation, and transformation. Global servants will draw their insights from the readings, videos, journals, creative projects, and the leading of the Spirit in their hearts, lives and ministries. They will then integrate these insights into written and oral reflections. Discussions and readings are structured around the basic themes relevant to the life and character formation of cross-cultural global servants. Spiritual formation, leadership, holistic care, and wayfinding principles are woven into each module. This is a pilot program so adjustments are expected and will be discussed and implemented by the facilitators in tandem with the global servants.

Course Outcomes

Immersion in this program will equip global servants:

1. To discuss components of spiritual formation and leadership through the lens of assigned readings, discussion groups, ministry contexts, and personal reflection.
2. To engage in ongoing self-examination aimed at deepening relationship with self, others, creation, and God.
3. To articulate the spiritual disciplines and their impact on identity, self-understanding, character, and vocation from a Biblical praxis.
4. To learn principles of wayfinding that enhance the navigation of liminal space.
5. To identify the subtle interior movements of the Holy Spirit.
6. To identify questions common to cross-cultural life.
7. To develop a personal and professional growth plan. (e.g. Rule of Life)
8. To understand how the creative arts intersect with life and spirituality.
9. To implement practices of soul care, self-care, and community care.
10. To become a self-regulated leader.

Course Delivery Format

Online: all instruction occurs when the global servant and facilitator are not in the same physical location, and the instruction is delivered through asynchronous and/or synchronous modalities via the Internet. Synchronous modalities allow individuals to interact online at the same time versus asynchronous modalities that allow individuals to log on at different times.

Technology Requirements

The ability to participate in live or recorded sessions using the Zoom meeting room.
The ability to participate in a WhatsApp chat group.
The ability to receive and respond to electronic mail.
The ability to receive and view recorded material from the facilitators.

Additional Course Information

Methodology: An online and asynchronous format. Participants are expected to complete learning activities on a monthly or quarterly basis and to interact with their colleagues. There will be discussions based on assigned readings and on each global servant's personal and professional experiences.

Attendance: Global servants are encouraged to be present as demonstrated by participation in the zoom calls and discussion forums. While not mandatory, regular participation builds group cohesion and community resilience.

Assignment Submission Policy: A personal and professional growth plan will be developed at the beginning of each term. Each year the global servant will be invited to review the growth plan to make any needed revisions. This growth plan will be shared with the appropriate Area Director and the Global Coordinators of Spiritual Care as a point of reference during future conversations. It can also direct personal and vocational goals discussed during annual reports. During the first year of each term, a 2-3 page monthly journal entry will also be encouraged for reflection and integration of spiritual and leadership principles.

Course Site Information

The Canvas Learning Platform will be used for the asynchronous e-learning environment, and zoom for synchronous discussions.

Support

The assumption is that all global servants are appropriately prepared for the content and technological requirements of these cohorts. Those requiring additional technical support should contact IT staff at IT@internationalministries.org

Required Texts and Materials

Required texts and materials are listed in each individual module. In most cases, global servants will not be required to read the entire book. Selected chapters will be highlighted. Texts listed in each module will be spaced over the four years of that particular missionary term.

Recommended or Optional Texts and Materials

Recommended or optional texts and materials are listed in each individual module.

Guest Speakers

The facilitators will invite guest speakers of diverse cultural backgrounds to engage in each module to address areas of expertise not in their skill set. (For example, family systems theory.)

Assignments

Journals

Description: There will be a monthly 2-3 page journal entry. The journal is a reflection on the journey of self-exploration and formation you (the global servant) are intentionally beginning. Take time to digest the material you are reading. Practice and reflect on the spiritual disciplines you are learning about. Try to make connections between what you are learning and how it impacts your relationship with self, family, God, and your international community. This assignment will help you track your journey of growth.

Use these questions to structure your monthly journal:

1. What questions, insights, observations, connections and challenges emerged from the readings and my life experiences this month?
2. Pick ONE particular theme that emerged, and comment on its relevance to your personal journey. How is God speaking to you through this theme? What are you hearing or not hearing?
3. Reflect constructively on the spiritual discipline you practiced this month. What did you experience? What was challenging? Where did you experience resistance? If you loved it and learned a lot, what did you learn and why?
4. From the readings, your reflections, practicing the suggested discipline, and discussions with colleagues, what are you learning about yourself? How is your self-understanding impacting your relationship with your self, family, God, and international community?

Group Discussion Forums

Description: There will be a monthly asynchronous discussion forum where global servants can post questions, observations, and theological reflection around that month's topic. Zoom discussions will happen once a month for further conversation of the written and recorded material.

Creativity & Spiritual Life Project

Description: Global servants will read an assigned text (e.g. David Benner's The Gift of Being Yourself) and then represent their identity with God through art, photography, music, drama, collage, poetry or short story. This is a tangible expression of spiritual life through artistic expression.

Requirement: Month 6 of the first year of each term.

Personal Spiritual Formation Strategy: Developing a Rule of Life

Description: A rule of life is a commitment to live your life in alignment with a chosen set of values and behaviors. It is an intentional plan to draw closer to God and to mature as a believer in Christ. It celebrates the rhythms of rest and action to encourage balanced engagement and restoration with one's self, others, and God. Stephen Macchia, author of *Crafting a Rule of Life,* describes it this way, "A rule of life allows us to clarify our deepest values, our most important relationships, our most authentic hopes and dreams, our most meaningful work, our highest priorities. It allows us to live with intention and purpose in the present moment." (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012, p. 14) Each global servant will be asked to design a Rule of Life during the first month of each term as a practical and spiritual guideline to live life to the fullest. One develops a Rule of Life with prayer, discernment, and deliberate thought. It is a living document whose intent is thriving for the long-haul.

Requirement: First month of each term.

One-Day & Three-Day Personal Retreat

Description: Everyone needs to set aside time to rest and to reflect. God modeled this to humanity from the very beginning when God rested after the creation of the world. (Genesis 2:2-3) This is an opportunity to step away from the normal activity of ministry and family responsibilities in order to simply spend time with God. Sleep, prayer, worship, and wonder are encouraged. The global servant can design the time to his/her preference. However, the facilitators can also provide resources if someone is seeking more structure.

Requirement: A one-day personal retreat will occur annually, and a three-day personal retreat will occur at least once during each term.

Course Schedule

Module I

Introduction

Session Topic: Introduction to spiritual formation, wayfinding as a spiritual paradigm, the limbic brain, organizational culture and spiritual resiliency.

Session Learning Outcomes (Course objectives in parenthesis)

At the end of this module global servants should be able:

1. To identify the principles of spiritual wayfinding. (C4)
2. To articulate the process of spiritual formation. (C1)
3. To understand the importance of organizational culture. (C1)
4. To define and pursue spiritual resiliency. (C2, C9, C10)
5. To comprehend the basics of the limbic brain and its impact on relationships. (C1)
6. To practice the discipline of curiosity and wonder. (C3)

Books Required:

1. Benner, David G. *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2004.
2. Cousineau, Phil. *The Art of Pilgrimmage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sa*cred. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press, 1998.
3. Mulholland, Robert. *Invitation to a Journey*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1993.
4. Paintner, Christine Valters. *The Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within*. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2015.
5. Tygrett, Casey. *Becoming Curious: A Spiritual Practice of Asking Questions*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017.

Learning Activities:

1. Watch the course introductory video provided by the instructors.
2. Read the introductory material provided by the instructors.
3. Watch the youtube video: Wayfinding Leadership: Wisdom for Developing Potential, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1-gmU04jhs
4. Watch the youtube video: The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=af_QsG16ixc
5. Read the article "Spiritual Formation: What it is and How it is done," by Dallas Willard, https://dwillard.org/articles/spiritual-formation-what-it-is-and-how-it-is-done
6. Practice the spiritual disciplines of curiosity and wonder.

Assignments Due:

1. At your own pace, read through the required books, paying attention to what captures your attention, what themes linger with you, and where do you experience resistance?
2. Write a list of questions that arose for you based on these readings & videos.
3. Answer the reflection questions interwoven in the Introductory material provided by the facilitators.

4. Write a 1-2 page reflection about your spiritual journey that weaves in themes from the readings, and post in Discussion Forum 1.
5. Schedule and participate in Zoom discussion with the facilitator(s).

Module II

Awakening: Pre-Assignment

Session Topic: Two years before a global servant leaves for the field, he/she begins to prepare for the missional journey. This module focuses on components of leadership and spiritual formation that strengthen survival skills and resiliency in a cross-cultural context.

Note: This module will be co-facilitated with the Director of Mission Mobilization (who hires and directly supervises the pre-assignment global servants) and the Global Coordinators of Spiritual Care.

Session Learning Outcomes (Course objectives in parenthesis)

At the end of this module global servants should be able:

1. To articulate the process of spiritual formation. (C1)
2. To practice the spiritual disciplines of silence, solitude and Sabbath. (C3, C5)
3. To understand and articulate one's Enneagram type. (C2, C10)
4. To comprehend the basics of Family Systems Theory. (C2, C9)
5. To develop a Rule of Life. (C7)
6. To explore the benefits of Spiritual Direction. (C2)
7. To name and define one's ministry context as it continues to unfold. (C6, C9)
8. To integrate the wayfinding principle of faithful presence. (C1, C4, C9)
9. To use artistic expression to capture one's spiritual journey. (C8)
10. To practice rest and renewal during a personal spiritual retreat. (C2, C9)

Required Books (Read & Discussed over two years as one prepares for the field):

1. Barton, Ruth Haley. *Invitation to Solitude and Silence*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010.
2. Bridges, William. *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes.* New York: Lifelong Books, 2019.
3. Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005.
4. Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. *Boundaries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
5. Friedman, Edwin. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1985.
6. Foster, RIchard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. London, England: Hodder & Stoughton, 2008.
7. Heuertz, Christopher. *The Sacred Enneagram: Finding Your Unique Path to Spiritual Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.
8. Johnson, John. *Missing Voices: Learning to Lead Beyond our Horizons*. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019.
9. Lingenfelter, Sherwood G. and Marvin K. Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for Effective Personal Relationships*. 3rd Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.

10. Peterson, Eugene. *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
11. Riso, Don Richard and Russ Hudson. *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1999.
12. Shigematsu, Ken. *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

Recommended Books:

1. Macchia, Stephen A. *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012.
2. Merrill, Nan C. *Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2007.

Learning Activities:

1. Read or watch . . .
2. Practice the spiritual disciplines of silence, solitude, and Sabbath.
3. Develop a Rule of Life.
4. Month Six: Creativity Project with art, music, photography or poetry
5. Schedule and participate in a half day or all day personal retreat.

Assignments Due:

1. Post an introduction of yourself with an embedded photo in discussion 2.0
2. Participate in discussion forums 2.1 to 2.12
3. Participate in Zoom discussions.
4. Write a monthly journal.

Module III

Purgation: First Term

Session Topic: The first five years of a global servant's life are focused on developing and integrating one's cross-cultural identity.

Note: The Area Directors will be invited to co-facilitate and/or participate in Module III. International Ministries presently has five area directors who supervise global servants in different regions of the world.

Session Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module global servants should be able:

1. To articulate one's longings for a deeper experience with God and the role of Spiritual disciplines. (C2, C3)
2. To practice the spiritual disciplines of lectio divina, visio divina and the Ignatian Examen. (C3)
3. To become familiar with the Window of Tolerance and how to use it as a tool of self-regulation.
4. To identify and name methods of response to ambiguous loss, empathic fatigue, and donor fatigue. (C1, C2, C6, C10)

5. To develop a theology of risk. (C1, C5, C6)
6. To comprehend the similarities and differences between partnership vs. collaboration with international partners. (C1, C6)
7. To integrate the wayfinding principle of storytelling.(C4)
8. To use artistic expression to capture one's spiritual journey. (C8)
9. To practice rest and renewal during a personal spiritual retreat. (C2, C9)

Required Books (Read & Discussed over four-year term):

1. Barton, Ruth Haley. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006.
2. Bausch, William J. *Storytelling: Imagination and Faith*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984.
3. Benefiel, Margaret. *The Soul of a Leader: Finding Your Path to Success and Fulfillment*. New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2008.
4. Dawn, Marva J. *The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, The Church, and the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006.
5. Hampton, Anna E. *Facing Danger: A Guide Through Risk*. New Prague, MN: Zendagi Press, 2016.
6. Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner. eds. *Christian Reflections on The Leadership Challenge*. SanFrancisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
7. Miller, Dr. Robert S. *Spiritual Survival Handbook for Cross-Cultural Workers*. Orlando, FL: Pioneers, Bottom Line Media, 2011.
8. Morse, Mary Kate. *Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.
9. Teague, David. *Godly Servants: Discipleship and Spiritual Formation for Missionaries*. n.p.: Mission Imprints, 2012.

Recommended Books**:**

1. Caliguire, Mindy. *Discovering Soul Care*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect, 2007.
2. Duckworth, Angela. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. New York, NY: Scribner, 2016.
3. Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christ-like Humility*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006.
4. Lanir, Sarah A. *Foreign to Familiar*. Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing, 2000.
5. Muyskens, J. David. *Forty Days to a Closer Walk with God: The Practice of Centering Prayer*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2006.
6. November, Juliet. *Honor/Shame Cultures: A Beginner's Guide to Cross-Cultural Missions*. n.p.: Juliet November, 2017.
7. O'Brien, Kevin. *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life*. Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2011.
8. Pigni, Alessandra. *The Idealist Survival Kit: 75 Simple Ways to Avoid Burnout*. Berkeley, CA: Parallex Press, 2016.
9. Richards, E. Randolph. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Cultural Blinders to Better Understanding the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012.

Learning Activities:

1. Read or watch . . .
2. Review one's Rule of Life and make any needed revisions.
3. Practice the spiritual disciplines of lectio divina, visio divina and the Ignatian Examen.
4. Month Six: Creativity Project with art, music, photography or poetry
5. Schedule and participate in a half day or all day personal retreat.

Assignments Due:

1. Participate in Discussion Forum 3.1 to 3.12
2. Participate in Zoom Discussions.
3. Write a monthly journal.

Module IV

Purgation: Second Term

Session Topic: The second five years are focused on becoming grounded in vocational identity.

Session Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module global servants should be able:

1. To conceptualize and maintain healthy boundaries.(C1, C2)
2. To Identify theological shifts and how they're impacting vocational identity. (C1, C2, C5, C6, C9)
3. To explore systemic sin and its implications for cross-cultural ministry. (C1, C2, C6, C10)
4. To practice the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and discernment. (C3)
5. To reexamine ministry expectations and goals with one's international partner. (C2, C6, C9)
6. To discuss the challenge of being a part of cross-cultural teams. (C2, C6, C9)
7. To integrate the wayfinding principle of song lining hope. (C4)
8. To use artistic expression to capture one's spiritual journey. (C8)
9. To practice rest and renewal during a personal spiritual retreat. (C2, C9)

Required Books (Read & Discussed over four-year term):

1. Branson, Mark Lau and Juan F. Martínez. *Churches, Cultures & Leadership*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.
2. Dougherty, Rose Mary. *Discernment: a path to spiritual awakening*. Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 2009.
3. Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1992.
4. Jethani, Skye. *With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011.
5. Liebert, Elizabeth. *The Way of Discernment: Spiritual Practices of Decision Making*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.
6. Loritts, Bryan. *Right Color Wrong Culture*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.
7. Mathews, Alice. *Gender Roles and the People of God: Rethinking What We Were Taught about Men and Women in the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.
8. Palmer, Parker. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004.

9. Thurman, Howard. *Meditations of the Heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1953.
10. Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002.

Recommended Books:

1. D'Arcy, Paula. *Gift of the Red Bird*. New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1996.
2. Gangel, Kenneth O. Team Leadership in Christian Ministry. Chicago, IL: Moody Press,
3. L'Engle, Madeleine. *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*. Colorado Springs, CO: Water Brook Press, 1980.
4. Lee, Hak Joon and Ken Fong. *Intersecting Realities: Race, Identity and Culture in the Spiritual-Moral Life of Young Asian Americans*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019.
5. Mitchell, Joshua L. *Black Millennials & the Church: Meet Me Where I Am*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2018.
6. Nouwen, Henri. *Discernment*. New York, NY: Harper One, 2013.
7. Ryan, Thomas. *The Sacred Art of Fasting*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005.
8. Wade-Gayles, Gloria. *Pushed Back to Strength: A Black Woman's Journey Home*. New York, NY: Avon Books, 1993.

Learning Activities:

1. Read or watch video . . .
2. Review one's Rule of Life and make any needed revisions.
3. Practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and discernment.
4. Month Six: Creativity Project with art, music, photography or poetry
5. Schedule and Participate in a half day or all day personal retreat.

Assignments Due:

1. Participate in Discussion Forums 4.1 to 4.12
2. Participate in Zoom Discussions.
3. Write a monthly journal.

Module V

Illumination: Third & Fourth Terms

Session Topic: Global servants explore the meaning and contextualization of their ministry.

Session Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module global servants should be able:

1. To define and understand different styles of leadership. (C1)
2. Discuss how one's leadership style is an extension of one's identity. (C2, C10)
3. To write a definition of leadership that fits one's specific ministry context. (C2, C5)
4. To explore one's understanding of ministry and ministry context after 10+ years on the field. (C2, C6, C9)
5. To consider the dynamics of international partnerships after 10+ years on the field. (C2, C6, C9)
6. To practice the spiritual disciplines of confession, hospitality, and worship. (C3)

7. To integrate the wayfinding principle of spiritually aligned communities. (C4)
8. To use artistic expression to capture one's spiritual journey. (C8)
9. To practice rest and renewal during a personal spiritual retreat. (C2, C9)

Required Books (Read & Discussed over four-year term):

1. Beaumont, Susan. *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
2. Foster, Richard. *Streams of Living Water*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1998.
3. Freidman, Edwin H. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. New York: Church Publishing, 1999.
4. Heifetz, Ronald and Marty Linsky. "Becoming an Adaptive Leader." *Lifelong Faith Journal* 5.1 (Spring 2011): 29. https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/becoming_an_adaptive_leader.pdf.
5. Joannes, David. *The Mind of a Missionary*. Prescott, AZ: Within Reach Global, Inc., 2018.
6. Loss, Myron. *Culture Shock: Dealing with Stress in Cross-Cultural Living*. Middleburg, PA: M. Loss, 1983.
7. May, Gerald. *The Dark Night of the Soul*. New York: Harper Collins, 2004.
8. Pohl, Christine D. *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.
9. Thompson, Curt. *Anatomy of the Soul*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2010.
10. Van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma.* New York: Penguin Books, 2014.
11. Woodley, Randy. *Shalom and the Community of Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.

Recommended Books (Read & Discussed over four-year term):

1. Dougherty, Rose Mary. *Group Spiritual Direction*. New York: Paulist Press, 1995.
2. Fujimura, Makoto. *Culture Care: Reconnecting with Beauty for our Common* Life. New York, NY: Fujimura Institute and International Arts Movement, 2014.
3. Gangel, Kenneth. *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1997.
4. Gonzales, Laurence. *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2017.
5. Gonzales, Laurence. *Surviving Survival: The Art and Science of Resilience*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012.
6. Halifax, Joan. *Standing at the Edge: Finding Freedom Where Fear and Courage Meet*. New York: Flatiron Books, 2018.
7. LaRowe, Karl. *Tranform Compassion Fatigue: How to Use Movement & Breath to Change Your Life*. Eau Claire, WI: PESI, 2005.
8. Pick, Marcelle. *Are You Tired and Wired?* New York: Hay House, 2011.

Learning Activities:

1. Read or watch video
2. Review one's Rule of Life and make any needed revisions.
3. Month Six: Creativity Project with art, music, photography or poetry
4. Schedule and Participate in a half day or all day personal retreat.

Assignments Due:

1. Participate in Discussion Forums 5.1 to 5.12
2. Write a personal definition of leadership that fits the parameters of one's ministry context.
3. Participate in Zoom Discussions.
4. Write a monthly journal.

Module VI

Union: Fifth Term and Beyond

Session Topic: These terms are focused on legacy.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of this module global servants should be able:

1. To identify the second half of life rhythms. (C1, C2)
2. To discern what it means to be a wisdom bearer. (C1, C2, C5, C10)
3. To intentionally and purposely mentor persons younger than oneself. (C9)
4. To equip emerging spiritual wayfinders in missions. (C4, C9)
5. Practice the spiritual disciplines of surrender, simplicity and mentoring. (C3)
6. To integrate the wayfinding principle of sphere intelligence. (C4)
7. To use artistic expression to capture one's spiritual journey. (C8)
8. To practice rest and renewal during a personal spiritual retreat. (C2, C9)

Required Books (Read & Discussed over four-year term):

1. Almalraj, John, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor, eds. *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018.
2. Laird, Martin. *A Sunlit Absence: Silence, Awareness, and Contemplation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.
3. Leech, Kenneth. Soul Friend. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2001.
4. Morse, Mary Kate. *Lifelong Leadership*. Colorado Springs, CO: NAV Press, 2020.
5. Rohr, Richard. *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
6. Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*. New York, NY: Image, 1998.
7. Singh, Kathleen Dowling. *The Grace in Dying: A Message of Hope, Comfort, and Spiritual Transformation.* New York, NY: Harper One, 1998.
8. Taylor, Barbara Brown. *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. New York, NY: Harper One, 2014.
9. Walker, Maureen and Wendy Rosen, eds. *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2004.
10. Wilder, James E., Edward M. Khouri, Chris M. Coursey, and Shelia D. Sutton. *JOY Starts Here: the transformation zone*. East Peoria, IL: Shepherd's House Inc., 2013.

Recommended Books:

1. Fujimura, Makoto. *Silence and Beauty*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016.

2. Griffin, Emilie. *Wonderful and Dark is This Road: Discovering the Mystic Path*. Brewster, MA: The Paraclete Press, 2004.
3. May, Gerald. *The Wisdom of the Wilderness*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 2006.
4. McNiff, Shaun. *Imagination in Action: Secrets for Unleashing Creative Expression*. Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2015.
5. O'Donohue, John. Beauty: *Rediscovering the True Sources of Compassion, Serenity and Hope*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2004.
6. Peterson, Andrew. *Adorning the Dark: Thoughts on Community, Calling, and the Mystery of Making.* Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2019.
7. Robinson, David. *Ancient Paths: Discover Christiam Formation the Benedictine Way*. Brewster, MA: The Paraclete Press, 2010.
8. Wiederkehr, Macrina. *The Song of the Seed: A Monastic Way of Tending the Soul*. New York, NY: Harper One, 1995.

Learning Activities:

1. Read or watch . . .
2. Review one's Rule of Life and make any needed revisions.
3. Practice the spiritual disciplines of surrender, simplicity, and mentoring.
4. Month Six: Creativity Project with art, music, photography or poetry.
5. Schedule and Participate in a half day or all day personal retreat.

Assignments Due:

1. Participate in Discussion Forum 6.1 through 6.12
2. Participate in Zoom discussions.
3. Write monthly journal

COVENANT OF ENGAGEMENT

Confidentiality

Unless specific permission is given, the personal information shared during on-line discussions and during zoom gatherings is presumed confidential.

Confidentiality is a critical issue today. When confidences are broken, relational, emotional, vocational and even spiritual damage can occur. What's said at a group meeting stays at the meeting unless permission is given to share it elsewhere. Confidentiality is one of the most important ground rules because without a culture of safety and trust, honest conversation becomes impossible.

Note: In both law and ethics, confidentiality is considered only a prima facie duty, meaning that it can be overridden by other more compelling duties in certain circumstances —e.g. to protect someone from harm to self or to protect an innocent third party.

Inclusive Language

Learning to communicate with as few barriers as possible is grounded in inclusive language. Kathleen Hughes says that "inclusive language is language that respects and includes every person regardless of gender, race, age, physical ability, nationality, family, race, or status."[1] Global servants are asked to use inclusive language when referring to human beings. By "inclusive" we mean the use of generic terms when referencing both men and women. For example, humanity, humankind, human beings, humans, persons, people, all, and everyone can replace the masculine language of man and mankind. As global servants we seek to be not only culturally appropriate, but also Biblically sound. Therefore, how we act and speak in the world needs to be considered responsibly and ethically. Theologian Charles Sherlock states, "Traditionally, the English language has used male terminology generically. It was commonly understood until recently that male terminology included the female. For many today masculine language has become exclusive, because the accepted conventions have changed and are changing. Continuing to use male terminology in an exclusive sense can therefore appear to exclude women from participating, and from being recognized and addressed, in church and life. Since in Christ 'there is no longer male and female' (Gal. 3:28), these exclusions are to be rejected by Christians."[2]

For further information, see Charles Sherlock's *Doctrine of Humanity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996), 239-246.

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[1] Kathleen Hughes, "Inclusive Language: An Issue Come of Age," *Liturgy* 90 (May-June 1983): 9.

[2] Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996), 239-240.

Plagiarism

> Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise.[3]

Three or more words taken from another source, spoken, printed, or electronic are a direct quote and must be enclosed in quotation marks and footnoted. Kate Turabian cautions: "Never paraphrase a source so closely that a reader can match the phrase and sense of your words with those in the source."[4] Ideas and their expression are, by law, the intellectual property of the original author or speaker. One needs to acknowledge in footnotes all sources of distinct ideas, facts, paraphrases or opinions. Even free and publicly available material from the Web must be cited. Turabian offers this guideline: "If the author of the source you borrowed from were to read your paper, would she recognize any of it as hers, including paraphrases and summaries, or even general ideas or methods from her original work? If so, you must cite those borrowings."[5]

Zoom Guidelines of Engagement

The foundation of this community is love. We are called to express our love for God, and our love for each other. In Mark 12:30-31 Jesus tell us this: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

This community practices confidentiality. What is shared stays confidential among the people in attendance. This means that when I leave this gathering, I will not share any stories, remarks, or questions shared by another person unless I have that person's permission. Authentic relationships require trust. Proverbs 10:19 cautions us, "The more talk, the less truth. The wise measure their words."

This community is committed to not spreading gossip. This means we will not listen to gossip, add to gossip, or spread gossip in any way. Proverbs 11:13 says "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret." Proverbs 16:28 says, "A gossip separates close friends." And Proverbs 26:20 says, "Without gossip a quarrel dies down."

This community will respect what each person has to say, even when viewpoints differ. We will choose to celebrate our oneness in Christ Jesus. If a person's remark causes me dis-ease or to feel defensive, I will choose not to speak. In my silence, I will pray for grace and understanding. After the study, I can approach this person one-on-one and gently ask more questions about her belief system. I will follow the advice given in James 1:19, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry." And Ephesians 4:2 invites me to "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

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[3] Gary Pavela, "Applying the Power of Association on Campus: A Model Code of Academic Integrity," *Journal of College and University Law* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 11.

[4] Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 45.

[5] Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 83.

We are an ecumenical Christian fellowship. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, he died on the cross to forgive our sins, and he restores our brokenness to God. However, due to our ecumenical diversity, we may not agree on other tenets of the Christian faith including such topics as baptism, communion, divorce, human sexuality, and so on. Again, we choose to respect each other's faith traditions and will not let them be cause for contention during our group discussions. Romans 14:9 reminds us, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

This community practices forgiveness. Sometimes we will fail to adhere to the above guidelines. When we do, we will remember these words from Colossians 3:13-14: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." The Christian journey is not about perfection, but about growth. We will all make mistakes. Some days we will respond out of our wounded-ness instead of our wholeness. When this happens, we promise to practice reconciliation and grace to the best of our ability, asking for help from another person in the group if needed.

Finally, we are a community that models grace. Inside and outside our community, we desire to have a reputation of grace, and not un-grace. What does this mean? It means that we strive not to judge each other. We validate each other's journey with God and do not try and impose our journey on someone else. We choose to build each other up, and not to tear each other down. It is our hope that as we model grace, people are drawn closer to God's grace. II Corinthians 9:8 promises us this, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

APPENDIX B:

ARTIFACT

WAYFINDING

Spiritual Resilience

for Global Servants

Image by K.C.Longly

by Joyce Reed

module one:

Preparing for the Journey

Leadership and Spiritual Formation

Responding to a call from God, global servants choose to live internationally to minister with people of a different culture. Far from family, exposed to potential health hazards, and working in an environment where values often clash with their own, global servants acknowledge that whatever they suffer, whatever losses they endure, is nothing compared to the gains of investing in another's life so this person improves in body, mind, and/or spirit. Global servants believe that following Jesus not only transforms individuals, but also has the potential to transform an entire community. Jesus exemplified this leadership style in the Bible. Many consider it a paradoxical way to lead.

Leadership and organizational communications expert Peter Northouse, in his book *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* identifies this as servant leadership. Northouse says, "Servant leaders make a conscious choice to serve first—to place the good of followers over the leaders' self-interests. They build strong relationships with others, are empathic and ethical, and lead in ways that serve the greater good."[1] Their desire is for followers to grow as persons, to become autonomous, and to be servant leaders as well.[2] The ministry of global servants also aligns with adaptive leadership. Northouse draws on

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[1] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 248.

[2] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed., 220-233.

Ronald Heifetz's work for his definition: "Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive."[3] It allows "for the use of a variety of abilities depending on the demands of the culture and situation,"[4] and "requires a change in values, beliefs, or behavior."[5]

Heifetz defines adaptive leadership by three types. Type I requires a technical solution and can be fixed. Type II identifies the problem but "no clear-cut solution is available."[6] Type III is the most difficult because the problem is not obvious and technical fixes don't apply.[7] Missionaries serving in cross-cultural contexts flow in and out of these three types of problem solving. Recognizing when to use technical expertise vs. adaptive strategy is a needed skill. Heifetz says,

> By its nature, adaptive work does not often fall within the purview of established organizational and social structures. Pieces of the puzzle—information about the problem—lie scattered in the hands of stakeholders across divisions, interest groups, organizations, and communities. Not only is the information scattered, but the solution requires adjustments in the attitudes and behaviors of many people across boundaries.[8]

Missionaries must elicit the voices of all their stakeholders—national and international—to be effective.

Today's global servants minister in areas of evangelism, discipleship, health care, education, economic development, immigration and peace and justice. Focus is usually

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[3] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2019), 258.

[4] Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994), 20.

[5] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 22.

[6] Heifetz, *Leaderhsip Without Easy Answers*, 74-75

[7] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 74.

[8] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 118.

with marginalized peoples in the lower economic strata. Theologian Efrain Agosto examined servant leadership through the lens of Jesus and Paul. Like global servants, Jesus and Paul's ministries were grounded in a particular context emphasizing sacrifice, humility, and service to others. They allowed room for their followers to learn through shortcomings and failure. Times of testing were a proving ground to grow one's character. "Leaders have followers, but more than that they guide those who would follow towards new and challenging paths."[9] Global servants desire growth and development for themselves as well as for the people they serve. In fact, sometimes the global servant is the follower and the international partner is the leader.

Global servants rooted in servant and adaptive leadership identify with the people at "the bottom of the ship."[10] It is leadership that speaks truth to power. It cares for the marginalized and has a deep concern for justice. It does not run from suffering, but at the same time does not allow suffering to become a prideful badge of honor. Humility is key. Leaders engage people in the discrepancies between values and beliefs to call them to adaptive change.

> Rather than fulfilling the expectations for answers, one provokes questions; rather than protecting people from outside threat, one lets people feel the threat in order to stimulate adaptation; instead of orienting people to their current roles, one disorients people so that new role relationships develop; rather than quelling conflict, one generates it; instead of maintaining norms, one challenges them.[11]

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[9] Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 6.

[10] This image was shared during a Portland Seminary Leadership & Spiritual Formation Cohort 4 Zoom call on April 2, 2019 by Dr. Mary Kate Morse from a lecture she heard in Queens, NY which said the church has hit an iceberg, and water is gushing in. Leaders are responding from various levels of the ship. MKM asked our cohort: Am I leader on the top deck, or in the bottom hold where people are trapped with minimal resources?

[11] Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 126.

Cross-cultural mission calls for prophetic, compassionate leaders who are versed in asking the counterquestion.

A global servant leader also seeks to mature in Christ. This is a formational process. Global servants are grounded in a spiritual formation whose goal is to become like Jesus. (2 Cor 3:18)[12] Spiritual formation is "our continuing response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world."[13] This type of spiritual formation does not happen through an individual's effort or will. As the gift of the Spirit flows through us, the grace of God is unleashed so that we have the power to love others as Christ loved us. Eugene Peterson said, "Spiritual formation is primarily what the Spirit does, forming the resurrection life of Christ in us."[14]

Remembering that it is the Spirit's work and not human effort that leads a person's heart closer to God is key to global servant ministry. Ministering in another culture is a slow, laborious process. The rhythm is often three steps forward, two steps back. Formation happens at a steady, intentional pace that lasts a lifetime. Listening to God in a foreign land through a foreign language, a global servant learns to practice a new rhythm. One surrenders to the disciplines of prayer and the contemplative reading of

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[12] Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantizis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2010), 25.

[13] Greenman, *Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, 24.

[14] Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 237.

Scripture. "As Jesus' words soak into me, so does the mind of Christ."[15] As a global servant becomes more immersed in the mind of Christ, then the ego is forced to surrender. The false self loosens its hold. Peterson asserts,

> The Christian life is not about us; it is about God. Christian spirituality is not a life-project for becoming a better person, it is not about developing a so-called 'deeper life.' We are in on it, to be sure. But we are not the subject. Nor are we the action. We get included by means of a few prepositions: God *with* us (Matt. 1:23), Christ *in* me (Gal. 2:20), God *for* us (Rom. 8:31).[16]

This setting aside of ego is crucial to cross-cultural ministry. Global servants come to partner with their international hosts. It is an intentional decision to not impose an outside set of cultural values on an existing culture. "We need to live in a way that is congruent with where we are."[17] At the same time, there is the intentionality to invite people to "put on" the values of Christianity. Therefore, Peterson advocates "Spiritual theology is the discipline and art of training us into a full and mature participation in Jesus' story while at the same time preventing us from taking over the story."[18]

A mature participation in Jesus' story does not avoid suffering. Too often the ministry of missionaries is romanticized. Even though a person chooses this life knowing there will be sacrifice, the reality often clashes with ideals. Jesus emphasized to his disciples that his ministry was leading to the cross. Paul identified with Jesus' suffering and told his followers that suffering and persecution was understood in light of the cross. In *Renovation of the Heart*, Willard said, "If we are to be spiritually formed in Christ, we

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[15] Christopher A. Hall, "Reading Christ into the Heart," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantizis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2010), 141.

[16] Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 335.

[17] Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 108.

[18] Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 199.

must have and must implement the appropriate vision, intention, and means. Not just any path we take will do."[19] The cross reminds the global servant that suffering is a valid piece of discipleship. Yet, there is also comfort in the promise that when we place our hope in Jesus, suffering will one day cease.[20] In the meantime, global servants immerse themselves in our suffering world. "A socially disengaged spirituality or Christianity is inconceivable and inexcusable. Just me and Jesus, growing closer all the time, while the world suffers outside of my field of vision, is a way of being Christian that can flow only from cloistered privilege."[21] Global servants do not live in isolation. They are a prophetic voice against prevailing ethnocentric views and quick fix solutions. They decide to intentionally build a home with people in situations of acute suffering.

Questions for Further Reflection:

1. Spend some time pondering how you were shaped as a leader. Explore how your story intersects with adaptive-servant leadership. What are your growing edges?
2. What has been the process of your spiritual formation in Christ? At what age did it begin? Who has nurtured and mentored you in the Christian faith? How do you intend to continue to "conform to the image of Christ" during your life as a global servant?
3. What is your experience with suffering? When you imagine your life as a global servant, is suffering an expectation? Can suffering be an invitation?
4. How is suffering held in balance with joy? What does Jesus' life model for us?

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[19] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 85.

[20] Revelation 21:4.

[21] David P. Gushee, "Spiritual Formation and the Sanctity of Life," in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantizis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2010), 213.

Wayfinding Liminal Space

Stress that stems from living cross-culturally requires continual adaptation to liminal space. Liminal space is the disorienting space between orientation and reorientation. Liminal space invites one to stand on a threshold, to stop, to linger, to discern where you've come from in order to discern where you're going next.[22] An important distinction is that liminal space is about transition and not about change. Change is something that occurs outside of a person. It happens relatively quickly and usually focuses on the future (e.g. graduating from high school). Transition is what happens on the inside.[23] It takes much longer. One must manage endings before committing to a new beginning (e.g. grieving friendships in one's passport country while establishing new friendships in another country). As one sits in the neutral zone somewhere between past and present, there are recognizable emotional states. When the event happens, the person usually presents with some type of denial. The ego cannot wrap itself around the tremendous upheaval taking place. Then there can be resistance. A person knows they can't return to the way it was, but going forward takes too much energy and focus to muster. The desire to want things to remain the same is strong. Over time, denial and resistance shift towards exploration. The person is willing to reframe the question to get a new answer in lieu of asking the same question over and over. Finally, one steps out of the neutral zone and over the threshold, making a commitment to the

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[22] William Bridges, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* (New York: Lifelong Books, 2019), 136-160.

[23] Cynthia Scott and Dennis T. Jaffe, "Survive and Thrive in Times of Change," *Training & Development Journal* 42, no. 4 (1988): 25-27.

new reality.[24] Wayfinding liminal space is a paradigm for global servants to minimize stress and to enhance resiliency.

Wayfinding is a navigational method that does not rely on standard, scientific tools (like a compass, sextant, or a map) for determining direction. Indigenous cultures around the world have implemented various methods of wayfinding that include star mapping, stone markers, storytelling, song-lining, and vision quests to find their way across vast expanses of land and sea. Why choose wayfinding as a spiritual formation paradigm? Cross-cultural ministry invites one to hold multicultural stories simultaneously. It is an invitation to listen closely and authentically to what God is already doing in another part of the world. Global voices allow one to examine how other cultures value relationships versus tasks, the differences in communication styles, approaches to conflict and stress, models for authority and power, and viewpoints for community versus individualism. By studying wayfinding, we are seeking to compare and contrast similar principles that already exist within Christianity, and apply them to how one finds meaning during liminal events.

The Polynesians are credited with being the first wayfinders of the open sea. Anthropologist Wade Davis informs us, "Five centuries before Columbus, the Polynesians had over the course of only eighty generations settled virtually every island group of the Pacific, establishing a single sphere of cultural life encompassing some 25 million square kilometres of the earth's surface."[25] To be a Polynesian was to identify

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[24] Scott and Jaffe, "Survive and Thrive in Times of Change," 25-27.

[25] Wade Davis, *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World* (Toronto, ON: Anansi Press, 2009), 49.

with navigation.[26] Davis met a master navigator from Satawal in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia named Mau Piailug. His father and grandfather were both navigators.[27] Davis shares what he learned of Mau's childhood:

> At the age of one Mau was selected to inherit the ancestral teachings. As part of that training he was placed as an infant in tidal pools for hours at a time that he might feel and absorb the rhythms of the sea . . . . Mau learned not only to sail, but also to understand the secrets of the Big Water, both the physics and metaphysics of waves. It was said he could conjure islands out of the sea just by holding a vision of them in his imagination.[28]

Wayfinder Chellie Spiller says, "Wayfinding is an invitation to plunge into the reality of the journey—its sounds, colors, emotions, smells, sensations; it is whole-hearted, whole-minded and embodied engagement with the world."[29] Quaker reformer John Woolman, in a letter dated in 1772, stated, "Christ our leader is worthy of being followed in his leadings at all times. The enemy gets many on his side. Oh, that we may not be divided between the two, but may be wholly on the side of Christ." Jesus calls us to this whole-hearted living when he says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31) Spiritual wayfinders embrace the journey with focus, perseverance, courage, and love. One's entire being is engaged and committed to the process.

As a seasoned wayfinder, Mau's diligent training and countless years at sea allow him to read and interpret every sign available to him. A cloud's shape, color, character,

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[26] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 51.

[27] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 53.

[28] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 53.

[29] Chellie Spiller, Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr, and John Panoho, *Wayfinding Leadership: Ground-Breaking Wisdom for Developing Leaders* (Wellington, Aotearoa, New Zealand: Hula Publisher, 2015), 68, Kindle.

and place in the sky provide clues. The color of the sky, the way the stars twinkle and dim, the sun, the moon all tell a story. The tone of the sky over an island is vastly different over the open sea. A halo around the moon suggests rain. Wildlife provide other clues: a shark moving lazily, a lone bird separated from the flock, dolphins swimming towards sheltered waters, or the flight of a frigate bird heading out to sea are all significant. Even the salinity, taste, and temperature of the water are important.[30] Davis remarks, "Expert navigators like Mau can sense and distinguish as many as five distinct swells moving through the vessel at any given time."[31] Nainoa, who trained under Mau, adds, "It's one thing to know what to look for, these clues and signs and indications; it's quite another to pull it altogether and confront in the moment the ever-changing power and reality of the sea."[32]

Adaptive leaders observe, interpret, and intervene.[33] Heifetz uses the metaphor of "getting on the balcony" to gain a perspective that gives a complete picture. He says, "When leaders perfect this skill, they are able to simultaneously keep one eye on the events happening immediately around them and the other eye on the larger patterns and dynamics."[34] Spiritual wayfinders need to pay close attention to their context. Every piece of information, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, needs to be considered. And then, holding all the pieces, one is invited to fall from the mind to the heart to seek

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[30] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 55-56.

[31] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 59.

[32] Davis, *The Wayfinders*, 56.

[33] Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, "Becoming an Adaptive Leader," *Lifelong Faith Journal* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 29, https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/becoming_an_adaptive_leader.pdf.

[34] Heifetz, "Becoming an Adaptive Leader," 30.

God's wisdom to discern the next step. Quakers have a beautiful expression for this: way opening. It is a time of expectant waiting where one trusts God is at work even when no direction is yet evident.[35]

Wayfinders equip every person in the boat to be a leader. It is important that seeds of knowledge are planted in everyone. Each person's experience is critical to the voyage. "In extreme circumstances, survival of all depends on everyone being aware of and responding to the conditions, not blindly placing the burden of decisions and singular capability upon the leader."[36] Wayfinder Hotu observes and inquires about what's going on in a proactive manner. He recognizes that when crews are comprised from all around the world, then it is important "to respect people's own histories, ancestral ties, and cultural wisdom."[37] Managing diversity is a crucial element. Wayfinders lead from the back of the boat. They seek to strengthen others so that the boat can continue to operate should something happen to the leader.[38] It is always a language of "we," and not of "I." Leadership consultant Margaret Wheatley observes, "What gives power its charge, positive or negative, is the quality of relationships. Those who relate through coercion, or from a disregard for the other person, create negative energy. Those who are open to others and who see others in their fullness creative positive energy. Love in organizations, then, is the most potent source of power we have available."[39]

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[35] Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000), 38.

[36] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 82.

[37] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 94.

[38] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 112.

[39] Bennett Sims, *Servanthood: Leadership for the Third Millennium* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 113.

Spiritual wayfinders adopt a position of humility and servanthood. While undergirding their own skills, they are also equipping those around them. They model Jesus' words in Matthew 20:26, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." And Paul's words in Ephesians 4:2, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Dallas Willard says a leader is someone with a well-kept heart "who is prepared for and capable of responding to the situations of life in ways that are good and right."[40]

Spiritual wayfinders also foster resilient, learning communities. Everyone's voice and role is valued. The body of Christ has many parts but they form one body. "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (I Cor. 12:26) Seminary professor Christine Pohl stresses why community is so important:

> Communities need more than shared history and tasks to endure. A combination of grace, fidelity, and truth make communities safe enough for people to take the risks that are necessary for growth and transformation. That same combination makes it possible for groups to handle disagreements without being torn apart and to minister to the world in ways that are far greater than the sum of the individuals involved.[41]

Pohl believes that the life-giving power and truth of the Gospel stands or falls with the character and practices of our spiritual communities.[42]

Wayfinders are taught to use their entire body as a perceptive instrument. They learn to attune to "the changing and often seemingly imperceptible signs of nature."[43]

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[40] Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 199.

[41] Christine D. Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmaans Publishing Co., 2012), 4.

[42] Pohl, *Living into Community*, 8.

Wayfinder Mau Piailug would often lie in the hull of the boat so he could feel the frequencies of the various currents and swells. As he felt them pass through his body, he could gauge location.[44] Spiritual formation invites this type of embodied discernment. Paul, in the book of Romans 12:1-2 says,

> Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good and perfect will.

Transformation begins by offering our bodies as a living sacrifice. It is an image of laying on the altar, listening to our bodies, listening to the Spirit move through our bodies, and then discerning God's invitation. Spiritual wayfinders are willing to lay down in the bottom of the boat to listen how God is speaking through the winds and waves around them.

Wayfinding navigation fascinates so many people because it does not rely on modern technology. It is human beings in step with God, creation, and one another. They are people who have built a capacity for uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity.[45] The wayfinder's world is "one of be-coming—which is very different to the usual model, which has us always going somewhere between a static world of fixed things—a be-going."[46] As one wayfinder explained, "Can I see the image of the island in my mind?"[47]

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[43] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 20.

[44] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 23.

[45] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 74.

[46] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 57.

[47] Davis, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 63.

Another added, "The island comes to you."[48] Spiritual wayfinders can be uncomfortable with liminal space, but learn resilient practices to better hold the ambiguity. They recognize that moving through liminality can result in be-coming Christ-like. Can they fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of their faith?[49] God meets us in our imperfections with unmerited grace. Christian psychologist David Benner says, "Christian spirituality involves a transformation of the self that occurs only when God and self are both deeply known. Both, therefore, have an important place in Christian spirituality. There is no deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of self, and no deep knowing of self without a deep knowing of God."[50] This deep knowing is what spiritual wayfinders lean into as they steer their boats into unchartered waters.

Questions for Further Reflection:

1. Name some liminal space moments in your life. What feelings and emotional states did you experience? What was the most difficult piece of liminal space for you to negotiate? How long did they last? What was the pivotal moment when you knew something was shifting to the new thing?
2. What are your initial thoughts of wayfinding as a spiritual formational paradigm? What pieces jumped out at you and made sense? What questions did it raise? Do you perceive becoming a global servant as equivalent to being a spiritual wayfinder?
3. Wayfinding is grounded in community. Everyone relies on each other to reach the desired goal or destination. How does community play a role in global missions? Is forming community a natural ability or a growing edge for you?

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[48] Spiller, *Wayfinding Leadership*, 60.

[49] Hebrews 12:2.

[50] David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2004), 20.

The Limbic Brain & The Labyrinth

As spiritual wayfinders who are adaptive-servant leaders, global servants need to have a firm grasp on love and how it plays out in relationships. Brain science in the last decade has revealed the critical importance of the limbic brain and how human beings form connections. Lewis, Amini, and Lannon in their book *A General Theory of Love* call this limbic love. They present how limbic resonance, limbic regulation, and limbic revision profoundly impact our emotional health. Designed to be social, mammals require one another for stability, especially human beings. "Total self-sufficiency turns out to be a daydream whose bubble is burst by the sharp edge of the limbic brain. Stability means finding people who regulate you well and staying near them."[51]

Wayfinding emphasizes community, and invites global servants to step out of the isolation of cross-cultural stress and build resiliency with those on the journey with them. The components of limbic resonance, limbic regulation, and limbic revision explain what happens when we journey together.

Limbic resonance is when "two mammals become attuned to each other's inner states."[52] Whether face to face between two people, or through the social interplay between many in a group setting, human beings are affected by those around them. Handshakes, hugging, and even negative gestures set limbic resonance in motion. Neural attunement happens as soon as we encounter another person. This instant cohesion or attachment can be healthy or unhealthy depending on the mood of those gathered. Regardless of how it happens, limbic resonance is something we crave. In *A General*

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[51] Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 86.

[52] Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love*, 63.

Theory of Love, the authors state: "So familiar and expected is the neural attunement of limbic resonance that people find its absence disturbing."[53] Sitting with one person, or facilitating an entire group, a global servant can communicate faithful presence by attentive, intentional listening and empathetic body language. The truth is, "a person cannot know himself until another knows him."[54] Transformation is not possible until both God and self are deeply known. Limbic resonance is the entry point to faithful presence between two people.

Limbic regulation relies on human physiology as an open-loop system. As soon as we are in the presence of another person, we begin to regulate each other: hormone levels, sleep rhythms, cardiovascular function, immune system, etc.[55] "Stability means finding people who regulate you well, and staying near them."[56] The implications for mission communities are apparent. If a global servant is managing stress and anxiety well, then their inner resiliency can regulate another's stress, or shift the stress of an entire group toward a center of calm. If a group of global servants all choose to prayerfully center on Jesus, then they can begin to regulate one another as a Christ-centered group. The authors say that when people are hurting and out of balance, they turn to regulating affiliations.[57] Institutional transformation, therefore, is not achieved through policies or best practices, but through limbic-linked relationships. People do not

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[53] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 63.

[54] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 157.

[55] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 85.

[56] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 86.

[57] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 171.

live for the institution. The institution lives through its people. When we choose healthy people to regulate us, we feel whole, centered, and resilient. Limbic regulation is the path to thriving in faithful community.

Limbic revision says that who we spend the most time with shapes who we are. Lewis, Amini, and Lannon assert, "what we do inside relationships matters more than any other aspect of human life."[58] Why? The longer we remain faithfully present with the same people, the more we change each other's minds and hearts. We begin to rewire each other's neural pathways! "Who we are and who we become, depends in part on whom we love."[59] Authentic love has great potential among global servants. When they gather, there is an immediate connection wrapped up in friendship, vocational calling, and God's divine love. The demands of cross-cultural life, with the additional factor of geographical distance from biological families, forges a bond that goes deep. Global servants identify as exiles, as outliers, with one another. Their contexts of struggle and, in some cases, daily survival, bring into sharp focus the precious gift of life. They dive into the deep end of the "community pool" to savor every drop of togetherness. And, because their times together are intense and authentic, limbic revision spontaneously combusts at a faster rate than average.

These components of limbic resonance, regulation, and revision dovetail amazingly well with the classic steps of the labyrinth: awakening, purgation, illumination, and union.[60] Before I dive further into this comparison, however, let me first

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[58] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 192.

[59] Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, *A General Theory of Love,* 144.

[60] Lauren Artress, *The Sacred Path Companion: A Guide to Walking the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), 39-40. Artress identifies the steps of purgation,

explain a bit about the labyrinth for those unfamiliar with how it serves as spiritual practice. The labyrinth as a spiritual practice dates to the fourth century.[61] The labyrinth represents an inward journey of one's soul deepening with God where the divine illumination received at the center propels one back into the world with a deeper understanding of self and of God, and a connection to Christian service.[62] A labyrinth has only one path: the way in is the way out. But the twists and turns of the path can suggest lostness.[63] One is invited to faithfully put one foot in front of the other, trusting the Holy Spirit to lead the way. It is walking in tandem with the Spirit as one listens to the interior life to discover truth for the exterior life. It is a reconnection with how *to be* in order to discern what *to do*. It is a rhythm, a vital behavior, of being faithfully present to yourself, to God, and to others.

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illumination and union as the Threefold Path that dates back to Teresa de Avila in the 16th century. In her book, Artress renames the steps as remembering, releasing, receiving, and resolve. In a November 30, 2020 email exchange with Dr. Carole Spencer, former professor of Christian Spirituality with a focus on the Christian mystics, she says, "This pattern is found well before Teresa. It can be traced back to the early centuries of Christianity, such as Origen of Alexandria in the third century. Teresa built on a well-established classic pattern of the three-fold path of the spiritual journey. Artress is putting her own spin on the steps as many spiritual teachers continue to do." Additional source: Harvey D. Egan, S. J., *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 20.

Christian writer Evelyn Underhill called the faith journey The Mystic Way. She defined the classical steps as awakening, purgation, illumination, dark night of the soul, and union. She said awakening is a shifting from one's self towards the Divine which creates an experience of deep joy. Dana Greene, "Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)," in *Christian Spirituality: The Classics*, ed. Arthur Holden (London, England: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 317-328, ProQuest Ebook Central.

[61] Donna Schaper and Carole Ann Camp, *Labyrinths from the Outside In: Walking to Spiritual Insight A Beginner's Guide* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Press, 2000), Location 103 of 2110. Kindle.

While the labyrinth is usually associated with Western European or Celtic spirituality, its spiral design has been discovered in North Africa, Egypt, India, and the American Southwest as well. For example, the Tohono O'odham people of what is now southern Arizona in the United States are known for the Man in the Maze, a petroglyph engraved on their sacred mountain Baboquivari. The Hopi, another southwestern tribe, also have labyrinth carvings. For further study: David Willis McCullough, *The Unending Mystery: A Journey Through Labyrinths and Mazes* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 10, 17, 148-154.

[62] Artress, *The Sacred Path Companion*, x.

[63] Artress, *The Sacred Path Companion*, 35-36.

Lauren Artress, who has written extensively on the labyrinth, says "labyrinths are a blueprint for transformation."[64] She explains further:

> Because we are bombarded with noise and images coming at us from the outside, we can lose our capacity for reflection within. We can feel parched inside and our imaginations dry up and stop functioning. We are drawn to the labyrinth because it replenishes our imaginations and restores our natural rhythms. The literal path becomes the symbolic path leading us through life. The turns speak to us as we move through the turns of our lives. We can arrive at the labyrinth feeling utterly empty and confused and leave feeling calm with a renewed sense of purpose. Our pain becomes *the* pain we all share as human beings. We sense our connection to the deeper Mystery unfolding around us.[65]

Artress substantiates this connection to self, God, and community. Experientially, one can walk a labyrinth alone, or one can walk a labyrinth with others which amplifies the venture. This experience of walking the labyrinth—alone or with companions—is a beautiful analogy for navigating liminal space. How do we discern the way when we don't know where we're going? We move forward, one step at a time, trusting in the nudges of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes that nudge is from Scripture or through prayer, but other times it is through the wise voices of those who companion with us on the journey. These companions provide a critical component. They remind us that ministry is never done in isolation and that spiritual friendships shed light on areas of our lives to which we are blind. Community is critical to finding our way through liminal spaces especially when most global servants minister in collective cultures vs. individualistic cultures. Simplistically, this refers to being raised to think of oneself as an independent individual focused on personal needs and desires versus being raised to think of oneself as part of a family, tribe, or village with a focus on needs and desires that impact the entire

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[64] Artress, *The Sacred Path Companion*, x.

[65] Artress, *The Sacred Path Companion*, xi.

community.[66] Unless a global servant was raised in a collective culture, he or she experiences a learning curve to reorient towards a community perspective. The Bible is primarily oriented towards *the people of God* and is steeped in this viewpoint, but many from individualistic cultures have lost sight of this fact. Missiologist Rose Dowsett says,

> Too much contemporary Christian literature about spirituality is addressed to individuals in separate self-contained units. But the emphasis of Scripture is on the believing community together being the primary place where faith and character are developed and honed, where the quality of our relationships together is to exemplify kingdom reconciliation, and where children and new disciples, rubbing shoulders with others, are to be brought into ever-growing understanding and concrete lived-out reality of new life in Christ.[67]

Thus, to represent global servants journeying *together* through liminality, I would like to dovetail the experience of walking the labyrinth with the experience of the brain's limbic connections from a collective context. (Refer to Figure 4 for a visual representation of this limbic journey of faithful presence to one another.) My paradigm is to be taken symbolically and not as a literal undertaking of walking an actual labyrinth.

As global servants stand at the threshold of a labyrinth (the invitation to interior and exterior liminal space), awakening is the first step. What is God asking me/us to be aware of, to remember? As global servants remember their holy longings, their vocational callings, their growing edges, they begin to attune to God and to one another's inner states. This is limbic resonance. Empathy is key. In caring, vibrant social networks, empathy emerges and expands.[68] Limbic resonance realigns global servants to like minds

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[66] Sarah A. Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar* (Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing, 2000), 41-42.

[67] Rose Dowsett, "Biblical and Theological Reflections on Christian Spirituality," in *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*, ed. John Amalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 7.

[68] Bruce D. Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love and Healing* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 268.

and like hearts so that Jesus remains the center of the story. As Eugene Peterson asserts, "The Christian life is not about us; it is about God."[69]

The awakening stage connects to pre-assignment. Pre-assignment global servants are preparing for the missional journey at least two years before they leave for the field. They are preparing themselves while learning and equipping with others who are awakening to their call to missions. The awakening stage is also a piece of each new term on the mission field. Each term looks different than the previous one. In addition, awakening speaks to our individual interior journey as we wake up to new aspects of our relationship with God, self, and others. Awakening in our spiritual journey is a cyclical process as we grow and mature in Christ.

Purgation is letting go of what gets in the way. How can this be facilitated? As global servants walk with one another, they tell stories and reconnect to a common vision. Pohl says these discussions "can be an expression of faithfulness and can help maintain focus amid changed circumstances or needs."[70] Through stories, global servants begin to recognize where they are stuck so that stress, anxieties, and unhealthy ways of thinking can be released. They practice limbic regulation. As their bodies experience physical cohesion, their minds and hearts follow. As they regulate each other, their faith binds them together in love.

The purgation stage is a focus on the first and second terms of global servants. These first ten years on the field are about letting go of old constructs and paradigms as the Holy Spirit invites one to deepen in relationship with those of another culture. The

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[69] Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 335.

[70] Pohl, *Living into Community*, 106.

close limbic relationships formed with other global servants keep one grounded and on course. The personal spiritual journey happening simultaneously is also about surrender to the Divine: less of self and more of God.

Illumination comes as global servants rest at the center of the labyrinth. Having let go of their preoccupations, they have created a space where they can co-create with the Spirit. Illumination is the silent space where the pulse, the heartbeat of God, is heard so that an individual and/or a group can align with the Spirit and revise their course of action. Limbic revision is magnified in these quiet spaces. Set patterns are modified by empathy and love. Transformation unfolds. All transformation begins with an awareness of some sort, even small inklings, when what desires to emerge from the unconscious finds a safe, open space in the conscious. Global servants become more aware of what is emerging—the God invitations where shift happens.

The stage of illumination is the journey of the fourth and fifth terms for global servants. One is leaning into God and into community. Having walked for two decades with the same people, global servants begin to authentically live "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) In relationship with global servants, one allows selected colleagues to speak into every aspect of one's life because trust has been cultivated over years. Limbic revision is the beating heart of these friendships. At a personal level, illumination is lingering with God at the center of safe, sacred space. One basks in God's deep abiding love. It is restorative and undergirds holistic ministry. Illumination is where authentic spiritual revision is possible.

Union is the conscious decision to re-engage with the world. Faithful presence is required going out, just as it was needed to enter. But now global servants leave with the

mantle of doxology. They thank God and rejoice in each other, their strength renewed, ready to change the world as servant leaders re-grounded in Christ. Pohl says that making room for gratitude is essential to community: "Taking time to express love and gratitude can also open into powerful encounters with God and God's promises of ongoing relationship and care."[71] Communal thanksgiving becomes liturgical storytelling. As they have been faithfully present with God and one another, they now return to be a faithful presence with the people with whom they serve.

Global servants who minister more than twenty-five years in a cross-cultural setting exemplify this liturgical storytelling when they share about their context. Their deep love and respect for those with whom they serve is evident and apparent. They also model deep friendships with other global servants, often mentoring those newer on the journey. Spiritually, this part of the faith journey is steeped in gratitude and joy.

This comprehension of limbic resonance, limbic regulation, and limbic revision in combination with the labyrinth's steps of awakening, purgation, illumination and union allow a global servant to be intentionally aware of how one's spiritual journey, terms of missionary service, and the cultivation of relationships overlap and interconnect when navigating liminal space.

Questions for Further Reflection:

1. Who regulates you well and how do you stay in touch with them?
2. How does the concept of limbic love reshape your ideas about friendships and community?
3. What does the labyrinth invite you to consider about yourself, your relationship with God, and your relationship with community?

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[71] Pohl, *Living into Community,* 53.

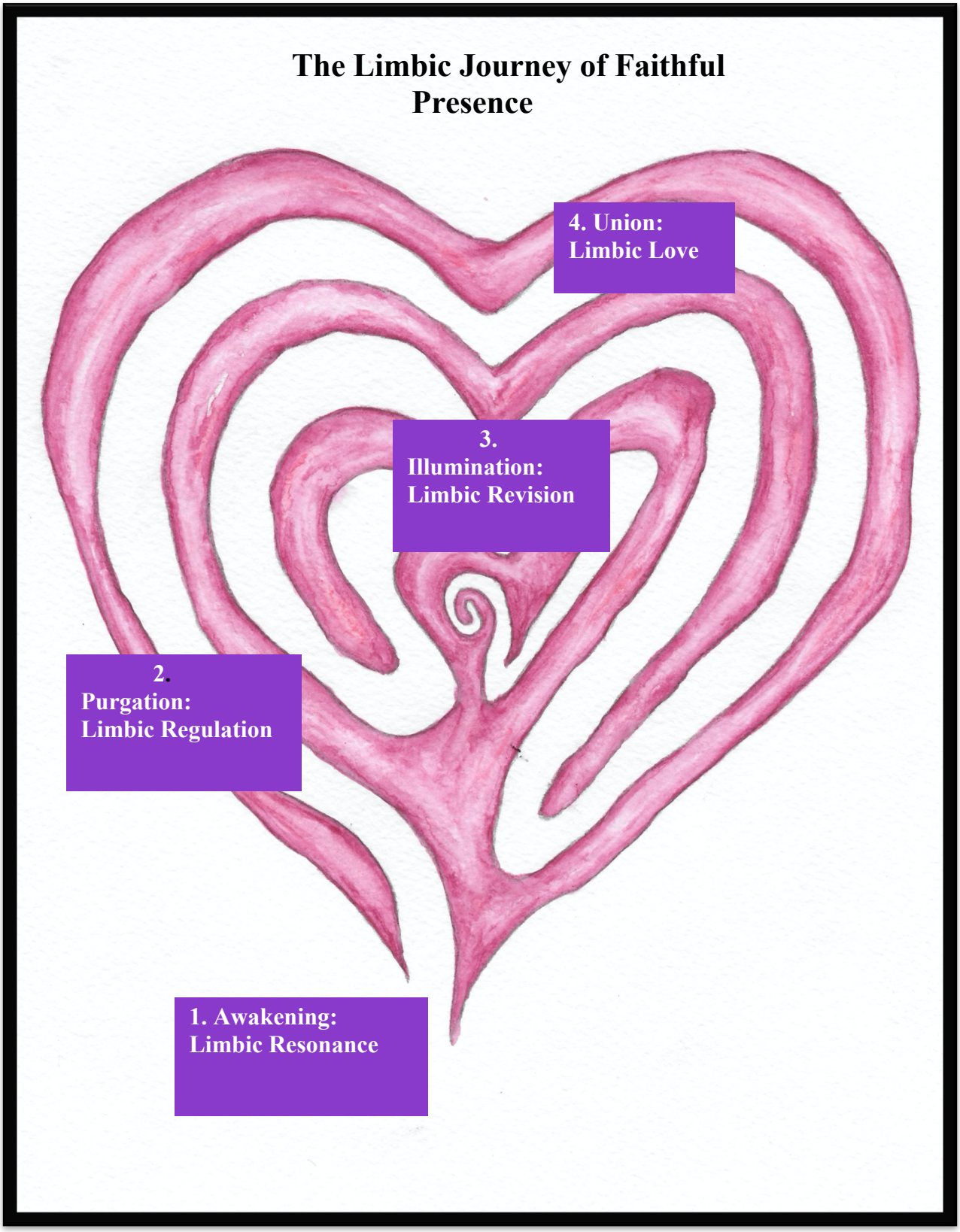

Figure 4—The Limbic Journey of Faithful Presence

Knowing Your Mission's Organizational Culture

Every organization has a culture, even mission agencies. The term "organizational culture" was coined in the 1970s when North American businesses realized Japanese firms had higher productivity and better product quality. The Japanese achieved this through "the cohesive tribal culture of firms that facilitated both innovation and deep commitment in workers."[72] Today organizational culture is described as "the 'character' of an organization, encompassing the beliefs, values and attitudes of its members."[73] Culture is "the regular, unique, and unwritten behaviors of each organization."[74] Another way of expressing culture is to say an organization becomes "the stories we tell ourselves."[75]

The Founders

When discussing organizational culture, the first mistake often made is zooming in on present day. But culture requires a wide-angle lens that encompasses the entire history of the organization. To understand today, one must go back to the original founder. Paul Bendor-Samuel, Executive Director of Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, agrees: "Not only does the current vision, mission, and leadership impact an organization,

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[72] Paul Bendor-Samuel, "Organizational Spirituality," in *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*, ed. John Almalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 202.

[73] Maria Ershova and Jan Hermelink, "Spirituality, Administration, and Normativity in Current Church Organizations," *De Gruyter* (2012): 223.

[74] Barefoot Writer's Collective, *The Barefoot Guide to Working with Organizations and Social Change* (Warwickshire, UK: Practical Action Publishing Ltd., 2016), 17.

[75] Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Ross, and Bryan J. Smith, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 89.

but also the vision, mission, and leadership of the original founders.[76] Makoto Fujimura adds, "Cultures are not created overnight. We are affected by layers of experience, personalities, and works of previous generations. Cultural histories affect us far beyond what we are able to recognize—or sometimes admit."[77]

Understanding this reality can uncover the discrepancies and tensions that many global servants hold regarding their missiology. International Ministries (IM), for example, traces its origins to the ministry of Ann and Adoniram Judson who were commissioned in 1812.[78] The Judsons ministered for a decade before seeing any converts to Christianity. An outbreak of war caused Adoniram to be imprisoned and tortured for seventeen months. Nursing a baby, Ann was left on her own as the only white woman in the country. Adoniram did not return to the U.S. for thirty-three years. By then, Ann and his first two children had died. His second wife Sarah, with whom he had eight children, died on the voyage home. While in the states, he raised support, remarried a third time, and headed back to Burma where he died five years later. With this glimpse of historical legacy, one can surmise how a global servant with International Ministries might embody behaviors and adopt a theology that is not always sustainable. No one in the agency says, "Be like Ann and Adoniram," but their legacy is part of the missiology that unconsciously permeates the mental and emotional neural pathways of International Ministries.

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[76] Paul Bendor-Samuel, "Organizational Spirituality," in *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*, ed. John Almalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 199-209.

[77] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care: Reconnecting with Beauty for our Common* Life (New York: Fujimura Institute and International Arts Movement, 2014), 6.

[78] "A Past, Present and Future as Bright as the Promises of God," International Ministries, accessed January 30, 2019, https://www.internationalministries.org/history/.

The Glue that Holds the Organization Together

After careful perusal of the founders' influence on the organization, one must next take into consideration the present-day culture of the mission agency. Does it match the historical picture? Or, is there dissonance? Vanderbloemen in his book *Culture Wins* says, "Culture trumps your business idea. Culture trumps your strategic plan. Culture even trumps the competency of your team."[79] He continues, "It's the glue that holds your company together as everything else changes, and those changes are going to keep coming faster and faster."[80] Developing a healthy and vital culture, therefore, is key to shaping the soul of a mission agency. What drivers nurture this type of environment? Fujimura eloquently states:

> Culture Care ultimately results in a generative cultural environment: open to questions of meaning, reaching beyond mere survival, inspiring people to meaningful action, and leading toward wholeness and harmony. It produces thriving cross-generational community.[81]

It is a context for growth, accountability, and grace.

Best Christian Workplaces Institute (BCWI) has surveyed nearly 200,000 employees, working in more than 900 faith-based organizations, in forty-six states and fifteen countries over the last decade to view culture and engagement from many angles.[82] They advocate that a flourishing culture needs the following eight drivers:

1. **Fantastic Teams**: cohesive teams that exemplify partnership and collaboration.

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[79] William Vanderbloemen, *Culture Wins: The Roadmap to an Irresistible Workplace* (Brentwood, TN: Post Hill Press, 2018), 50, Kindle.

[80] Vanderbloemen, *Culture Wins*, 492, Kindle.

[81] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care: Reconnecting with Beauty for our Common* Life (New York: Fujimura Institute and International Arts Movement, 2014), 9.

[82] Al Lopus and Matt Magill, *The 8 Drivers of a Flourishing Workplace Culture* (Mercer Island, WA: BCWI White Paper, 2019), 2.

2. **Life-Giving Work**: work has a significance, purpose and meaning. The skills and spiritual gifts of the worker are leveraged in a way that gives energy.
3. **Outstanding Talent**: highly qualified people with the necessary calling, character, competence, chemistry and contribution to achieve the organizational mission.
4. **Uplifting Growth**: learning new things increases an employee's engagement and allows the organization to maintain and improve its effectiveness.
5. **Rewarding Compensation**: the extent to which employees feel 'taken care of' by their organization can have a profound impact on their feeling of dedication towards the organization.
6. **Inspirational Leadership**: leadership that authentically lives out Christian values (humility, compassion, integrity), exhibits the fruit of the Spirit, earns trust, and connects with others gives employees security.
7. **Sustainable Strategy**: strategy is sustainable if the organization is able to meet the needs of those they have set out to serve in a high-quality manner and over time.
8. **Healthy Communication**: communication is effective when leaders involve employees and explain reasons behind decisions to create an environment of open dialogue.[83]

Of these eight drivers, life-giving work and inspirational leadership are the two most critical.[84]

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) is another wide-spread and well-approved method of organizational culture assessment used by the corporate and non-profit sector.[85] Culture is viewed through one of these four lenses: The Clan, The Adhocracy, The Market, and The Hierarchy.[86] Adapting and contextualizing

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[83] Lopus, *8 Drivers*, 3.

[84] Lopus, *8 Drivers*, 7.

[85] Maria Ershova and Jan Hermelink, "Spirituality, Administration, and Normativity in Current Church Organizations" *De Gruyter* (2012): 225-226.

[86] Ershova and Hermelink, "Spirituality, Administration, and Normativity in Current Church Organizations," 226. The Clan culture has a shared attitude of being a family and a perceived sense of community. The Hierarchy Culture represents a formal, structured place of work that focuses on stability and efficiency. The Adhocracy Culture is entrepreneurial, creative and innovative. And the Market Culture is the achievement of planned objectives within a fixed time with the politics and financial stability of the organization as primary.

the OCAI model, churches and mission organizations score high with The Clan which emphasizes a sense of family and/or tribe.[87]

This desire for a mission agency to be a family often clashes with the value of "winning souls for Christ" to expand the Kingdom of God. The tension between care of people and spreading the Gospel reveals how people within a mission organization can hold pieces of the cultural story with different weight. And, when under stress, which pieces of the story are emphasized? Clinical psychologist Frances White encourages this question: "What in this system's way of functioning has created or contributed to the stress?"[88] Awareness of these types of nuances can lead to healthier organizational response and care.

The Layer of Biblical Values

Mission agencies grapple with yet another layer of organizational culture: "Does our organization reflect biblical principles? What is our organizational spirituality?" Some people accuse mission organizations of adopting secular organizational worldviews. They say too much emphasis is given to "strategies, statistics and visible measures of success."[89] This is valid pushback. Management theories do need to be applied with discernment and faithful intention. Otherwise they can undermine the agency's desire to live out God's mission. However, beneath the surface, one discovers a

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[87] My field research conducted a survey with members of thirteen evangelical mission agencies. Results affirmed the clan model.

[88] Frances White, "The Dynamics of Healthy Missions," in *Missionary Care: Counting the Cost for World Evangelism*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 236.

[89] Paul Bendor-Samuel, "Organizational Spirituality," in *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*, ed. John Almalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 200.

longing for "authentic community and collaboration."[90] At the heart of the tension and pushback is the hope that Christians can live out organizational culture in a way that looks different from the corporate sector.

The Bible talks about family and the "body of Christ." Authentic relationships are encouraged by Jesus in the Gospels, and by the Apostle Paul through his letters to the early churches. In Christianity, the character of shared life has the power to pull others in or to keep them away from God's kingdom.[91] A question for mission communities is "How can we struggle together and still stay together?" Christine Pohl, professor emeritus at Asbury Theological Seminary, says, "Communities need more than shared history and tasks to endure. A combination of grace, fidelity, and truth makes communities safe enough for people to take risks that are necessary for growth and transformation."[92]

The Components of Culture Care

If inspired leadership and life-giving work are the two drivers that heavily influence Christian organizations, then it stands to reason that the spiritual formation of a mission agency should be centered around values that highlight health for these two drivers. Mission agencies not only have leaders within the home office, but each global servant is considered a leader in his/her context. Friedman asserts that leaders make a critical difference when "self-definition, self-regulation, non-reactivity, and the capacity

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[90] Bendor-Samuel, *Organizational Spirituality*, 200.

[91] Christine D. Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 2.

[92] Pohl, *Living into Community*, 4.

to remain connected" are in play.[93] Life-giving work is wrapped around spiritual gifts and personal attributes. It is "having a sense that one is created or called to do the work one is doing and that the work is important, worthwhile, and fulfilling."[94] What kind of model can blend these factors together? Psychologist Kelly O'Donnell designed a holistic model of care for mission agencies that has been widely adopted.[95] Inspired by his model, this section will focus on three components—soul care, self-care, and community care—to illustrate how to cultivate a culture of care within an organization. Each layer of care is a concentric circle with soul care at the center.

Soul Care

Soul care is at the core of Christian service. It is rooted in forming and growing identity in Christ with the desire to not only change one's self but also to change the world. It is focused on a commitment to an active inner life with God. Otherwise, one serves solely from personal strength, wisdom, and constructs which can lead to burnout, moral failure, and/or broken relationships. Eriksson states, "The mission worker's growing and dynamic relationship to Christ is ultimately the foundation of their care and well-being."[96] Transformation of the mind, heart, and character towards the likeness of Christ requires a willingness to surrender oneself on a daily basis. Margaret Benefiel

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[93] Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 1999), 134.

[94] Lopus and Magill, *8 Drivers*, 2.

[95] Kelly O'Donnell, ed., *Doing Member Care Well: Perspectives and Practices from Around the World* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2002), 16. (Kelly's model encompasses 1. Master Care, 2. Self-Care, 3. Sender Care, 4. Specialist Care, and 5. Network Care.)

[96] Cynthia B. Eriksson, "Practical Integration in Cross-Cultural Member Care." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 40, no. 2 (2012): 114.

states that spiritually grounded leadership comes from internal strength and integrity undergirded by prayer.[97]

Self-Care

Self-care is when individuals take responsibility for their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Missionaries face information overload, the impact of globalization, and postmodernism. Learning to manage these complexities requires self-awareness and self-regulation. It is often an unspoken expectation that a "good servant" (good employee/good missionary) is always available for others and does not take time for their own well-being. While Christians are to "consider others as more important than ourselves" (Phil. 2:3) and be ready to love as Christ loved us (Eph. 5:2), God does not intend for people to deny their own care and needs by becoming unloving and unhospitable to themselves. The challenge is not to become overextended. People cannot extend healthy ministry to others if they are making unhealthy choices for themselves. It is an individual's responsibility to pursue one's own preventative and restorative care.

Of course, an individual's self-care is easier to implement if the organization is cultivating an environment that makes it possible. Psychologist Cynthia Eriksson points out that individuals can pursue self-care only to have it undermined by the very agency that hired them:

> Organizations also tend to see burnout as a "lack" in the individual missionary: the person does not have good boundaries for ministry tasks, is not able to delegate, or is not able to say "no." While all of these may be true, it is the very real responsibility of the organization to set appropriate work load expectations, to create sustainable team relationships, to communicate expectations and decisions

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[97] Margaret Benefiel, *Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations* (New York: Church Publishing, 2005), 49.

> effectively, and to promote an organizational culture where rest is as important as work.[98]

The value of self-care must happen at an individual and a corporate level. Leadership that views self-care as "mission critical," begins to set the bar for a cultural norm within the organization.[99]

Community Care

Community care acknowledges that human beings were not meant to live and work in isolation. Isolation and loneliness are common struggles, especially for global servants. Community care is an area mission agencies must take seriously so that each person knows where to find safe and supportive relationships when needed. O'Donnell emphasizes: "Quality relationships are necessary for health and productivity. Colleagues who love and are loved form a key part of the 'continuum of care' needed for longevity."[100] Mutual community care means growing together in Christ. This commitment to community is necessary to sustain health and long term service in God's kingdom.

The Apostle Paul mentions being the recipient of community care while in Ephesus during his final missionary journey.[101] He says that the arrival of his friends "refreshed his spirit." They renewed him in body, mind, and spirit so that he could thrive in his service to God.

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[98] Cynthia B. Eriksson, "Practical Integration in Cross-Cultural Member Care," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 40, no. 2 (2012): 113-114.

[99] Beth Kanter and Aliza Sherman, *The Happy, Healthy Nonprofit* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), 108.

[100] Kelly O'Donnell, ed., *Doing Member Care Well: Perspectives and Practices from Around the World* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2002), 17.

[101] I Corinthians 16:15-18.

Co-creating a Shared Vision

In theory, leadership and global servants all agree that soul care, self-care, and community care are necessary components to building a healthy culture. In reality, members of a mission agency find it difficult to live out these three components with integrity. Implementation requires intentionality and accountability. Peter Senge, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT's Sloan School of Management, says, "At the heart of building shared vision is the task of designing and evolving ongoing processes in which people at every level of the organization, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and be heard—by senior management and each other."[102] The high value of life-giving work means that most people are less concerned with what they're getting from the organization, and more concerned with how they can contribute to its vision. People want to feel personally invested. Shaping a shared vision, therefore, begins by first looking at each individual's personal vision. Corporations who take this seriously create a space where each person develops a personal vision, and then compares it to the vision of the organization. Do the two align? The greater the alignment, the healthier the culture. This process is reminiscent of the spiritual exercise of creating a Rule of Life. An individual designs a Rule of Life to establish core, vital behaviors to maintain a healthy rhythm for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. If a global servant's Rule of Life, for example, aligns with his/her mission agency's vision and mission, then one can see the energy and initiative that could result.

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[102] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, 299.

Leadership can be resistant to this high level of collaboration. They are fearful it will lead to anarchy or disarray. They assume that employees are out for personal gain, and see no benefit in having a common purpose. However, research says that "engaged employees are passionate, feeling profound connections to their company, driving it forward. Disengaged employees are checked out of their workday and can undermine their coworkers accomplishments."[103] Senge cautions one way leadership circumvents engagement is through sampling. Sampling is when leaders believe it's too hard and expensive to talk to everybody, so they get a representative sample.[104] This can be seen in mission agencies where personnel are scattered around the globe. Instead of allowing everyone to have a voice at the table, a select few are chosen to represent the entire group. Sengel states, "This strategy might be effective in consulting but in co-creating it undermines whatever opportunities people feel to take on personal leadership."[105] It undermines the autonomy and buy-in an organization desires from every individual.

Creating alignment requires time and patience; it belongs in System 2 thinking.[106] The goal is for everyone to embody the values of an organization. Mission agencies talk about incarnational ministry and embodying the love of Christ which staff and global servants usually model well to those in their ministry contexts. Where they often fail, however, is in their relationships with one another. Assuming everyone is on the same page, decisions are made, policies are implemented, and then leadership is either

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[103] Beth Kanter and Aliza Sherman, *The Happy Healthy Nonprofit* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 112.

[104] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 325.

[105] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 325.

[106] System 1 thinking relies on easy, fast-track solutions. System 2 dives into relational, process-oriented conversations. Daniel Kahneman, *Summary: Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Epic Books, 2019), 8-9.

surprised or cynically resigned when there is pushback and/or resentment. But when alignment is achieved, the organization flourishes:

> Alignment means 'functioning as a whole.' Building alignment (you never 'get there') is about enhancing a team's capacity to think and act in new synergistic ways, with full coordination and a sense of unity, because team members know each other's hearts and minds. As alignment develops, people don't have to overlook or hide their disagreements; indeed, they develop the capacity to use their disagreements to make their collective understanding richer.[107]

While pursuing cultural alignment through a shared vision is time consuming, the outcome benefits everyone.

Conclusion

As mission agencies strive to cultivate a culture of health, leadership must be aware that it's more than designing and implementing another program. Member care needs to align with the core values of the organization or it will never achieve its intended goal. Core values go beyond what is stated in an organization's vision and mission. They are undergirded by the mission agency's culture. Culture is the glue that holds the organization together. It starts with the founders, and continues to evolve and morph to present day.

The soul of a Christian mission organization is shaped by its theology and missiology. Beliefs must align with the day-to-day cultural stories to provide a flourishing environment. Mission agencies are healthy when members embody and sustain a life with Christ through the practices of soul care, self-care, and community care. Co-creating a shared vision for a holistic, healthy mission agency requires the intentionality of everyone working together.

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[107] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 352.

Mission agencies are both organism and organization. Finzel declares, "We must strike a strategic balance in giving ourselves to the Spirit's work and attending to the practical human dimension of organizational life. We are both organism (part of the body of Christ) and organization (a human enterprise), and must work within the realities of both dimensions."[108] This captures the tension between being a mission family and existing as a mission agency. Cultivating a culture of care has to acknowledge both.

Questions for Further Reflection:

1. What stories have you heard about International Ministries (IM)?
2. How would you define IM's mission culture?
3. From the list of eight drivers for flourishing culture, which appeal to you the most and why?
4. This section presented a holistic care model of soul care, self-care, and community care. What are your strengths and growing edges in these three areas?
5. What did you learn about organizational culture that will shape your relationship with IM, your international partner, and even your relationship with your donor churches?
6. Do your core values align with IM's core values? If there are differences, then what discernment needs to unfold next?

[108] Hans Finzel, "Nine Essentials for Organizational Development," in *Missionary Care: Counting the Cost for World Evangelism*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 222.

Spiritual Resilience for the Long Haul

Mission agencies are learning that member care goes beyond careful screening, pre-assignment training, and the occasional check-ins once someone is on the field. Organizational resilience required a community effort. Without an intentional framework to maintain a culture of health, all members of the mission agency—staff and global servants—are in danger of self-sabotage and floundering. The answer to how one does adequate self-care during times of exhaustion, pain, despair and dis-ease is rooted in the topic of resilience.

Resiliency: What is it?

Resiliency is a concept that first surfaced in 1963 when Henry Maas, a professor of Social Work at the University of British Columbia, used the term to refer to children separated from their parents during WWII.[109] Werner and Garmazey continued studies with families and children and became known as the grandmother and grandfather of resilience.[110] Twenty years later, Werner stated: "competence, confidence, and caring can flourish, even under adverse circumstances . . . . from odds successfully overcome, springs hope."[111]

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[109] Thomas Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison, *The Resilient Practitioner* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 124.

[110] Skovholt, *The Resilient Practitioner*, 124.

[111] Emmy Werner, "The Children of Kauai: Resiliency and Recovery in Adolescence and Adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 13, no. 4 (1992): 262-268, http://www.doi.org/10.1016/1054-139X(92)90157-7.

Resilience is now discussed in a wide range of disciplines.[112] From the Latin *resilire*, it literally means "to leap back."[113] This is where the definition of "to bounce back" originated. Ann Masten, Professor at the Institute for Child Development at the University of Minnesota, and known for her research in adversity and resilience said, "The concept of resilience continues to refer generally to positive adaption in the context of risk or adversity."[114] Dennis Mileti, Professor Emeritus at the University of Colorado, has studied resiliency in light of the phenomenon of stress in national disasters and emergencies: "Local resiliency means that a locale is able to withstand an extreme natural event without suffering devastating losses, damage, diminished productivity, or quality of life without a large amount of assistance from outside the community."[115] From a social system perspective, Paton and Johnson say, "Resilience is a measure of how well people and societies can adapt to a changed reality and capitalize on the new possibilities offered."[116]

Through countless studies common characteristics of resiliency have been observed. Southwick and Charney noted that resilient people exhibit optimism, face their fears, regulate their emotions, train mentally, demonstrate flexibility, have an established moral compass, practice religion and spirituality, find meaning and purpose in the event

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[112] Jaimie Hicks Masterson, Walter Gillis Peacock, Shannon S. Van Zandt, Himanshu Grover, Lori Feild Schwarz, and John T. Cooper, *Planning for Community Resilience: A Handbook for Reducing Vulnerability to Disasters* (WA: Island Press, 2014), 25.

[113] Masterson, *Planning for Community Resilience*, 25.

[114] A. S. Matsen, *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development* (New York: Wiley, 2014), 9.

[115] Jaimie Hicks Masterson, Walter Gillis Peacock, Shannon S. Van Zandt, Himanshu Grover, Lori Feild Schwarz, and John T. Cooper, *Planning for Community Resilience: A Handbook for Reducing Vulnerability to Disasters* (WA: Island Press, 2014), 28.

[116] Masterson, et. al., *Planning for Community Resilience*, 28.

unfolding, attract and give social support, imitate resilient role models, and have patterns of regular exercise.[117] These attributes reveal that resilience is both an innate quality and a learned skill, and requires internal and external adaptation. Also, personal resiliency can ebb and flow over the course of one's lifetime depending on the nature of the event and available resources through family, friends, and one's larger community network.

Spiritual Resiliency

Spiritual resilience is rooted in self-care, soul care, and community care practices. It is important to distinguish that holistic care of self is not the same as self-help. Self-help resources are designed for a quick turn around with low engagement, but high outcome.[118] An example would be "Spiritual Transformation in 30 Days." Self-help tends to oversimplify and short-cut spirituality. And, what happens when the guaranteed results don't happen? Holistic care, on the other hand, tackles comprehensive and complicated issues. It is about increasing self-awareness. It focuses on the interior journey, and is a response to hope.

The Development of Character

Cross-cultural Christian mission adds another dimension to resiliency: character development. Character is the mental and moral qualities distinctive to a person. Eva Burkholder who oversees member care for Christar, an evangelical Christian mission organization based in Richardson, TX, points out: "Missionaries are exposed to high

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[117] Steven M. Southwick and Dennis S. Charney, *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2012) in Richard and Louisa Evans "Building Resilience in Missions," (Lecture), *All Nations*, April/May 2016.

[118] Jerome and Carl Lubbe, "The Science and Spirituality of Self-Care," *Thrive Neuro Theology* (podcast), September 3, 2019, https://thriveneurotheology.podbean.com/e/the-science-and-spirituality-of-self-care/.

levels of stress, multiple cultures, expectations of various groups, loss and more loss, conflict, compassion fatigue, financial pressures, little rest (because of work-aholism) and spiritual warfare."[119] A person's response to these stressors reveals one's strength of character. A stable character enhances resiliency even in the harshest of circumstances.[120] It is imperative, therefore, that a global servant has a core understanding of his or her identity in Christ. Resilient ministry flows out of calling and character. Theologian Dallas Willard captured it like this:

> The people to whom we minister and speak will not recall 99 percent of what we say to them. But they will never forget the kind of persons we are…The quality of our souls will indelibly touch others for good or for ill. So we must never forget that the most important thing happening at any moment, in the midst of all our ministerial duties, is the kind of persons we are becoming.[121]

One global servant, after finishing his first term on the field, reflected, "If I'd gone to the mission field to 'do something' for God, I would have ended up burning out. I had to keep reminding myself that who I was becoming was more important than what I was doing."[122] Being transformed into the likeness of Christ is a touchstone during suffering and loss. When a person asks, "Why is this happening to me?" or "Why am I having such a difficult time?" one answer is that life has challenges that enable growth.[123] Franciscan Richard Rohr moves the conversation even deeper as he seeks to shift one from dualistic thinking:

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[119] Dan and Sue Wicher, "Enhancing Character Development through Soul Care," *Missio Nexus* July 1, 2017, https://missionexus.org/enhancing-character-development-through-soul-care/.

[120] Wicher, "Enhancing Character Development through Soul Care."

[121] Dallas Willard, "Personal Soul Care," *The Pastors Guide to Effective Ministry*, 2002, http://www.dwillard.org/articles/individual/personal-soul-care.

[122] Author, Confidential Interview with Global Servant, April 7, 2020.

[123] Rick Warren, *Una vida con propósito* (Miami, FL: Editorial Vida, 2003), 173.

> Seek to rest in the good, the true, and the beautiful. It is the only resting place that also allows us to bear the darkness. Hard and soft, difficult and easy, pain and ecstasy do not eliminate one another, but actually allow each other. They bow back and forth like dancers, although it is harder to bow to pain and to failure. If you look deeply inside every success, there are already seeds and signs of limits; if you look inside every failure, there are also seeds and signs of opportunity.[124]

Cultivating resiliency is an intentional piece of spiritual formation. It is shaped by both internal and external circumstances. A global servant who served for seventeen years encourages others to look for the treasure: "Sometimes the defeat is a strange container for a treasure that we need in order to transformatively pursue God's vision for us. Going into the depth of what happened and listening deeply can sometimes open us up to where that treasure is."[125] His insight shows how resiliency connects to spiritual transformation.

Equipped for the Long-Haul

Global servants who have served multiple terms on the field, some for 20-30 years, exhibit a spiritual resilience that those new to the field long to emulate. What gives these men and women the courage and the grit to keep serving for the long-haul? Drs. Charles and Frauke Schaefer report that "spiritual resiliency is determined by the probability that one's connection with God will be restored and even strengthened after an impact."[126] They attribute certain characteristics as spiritual resilience enhancers: a Biblical theology of suffering, a practiced ability to forgive, familiarity with accepting and expressing strong feelings in relationship to God and others, and security and

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[124] Richard Rohr, 2020, "Reality Initiating Us: Part Two," *Center for Action and Contemplation*, (Daily Meditation, Week Fourteen), April 6, 2020, https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/.

[125] Author, Field Research: *Global Servants and Resiliency*, Confidential Questionnaire, March 2020.

[126] Frauke and Charlie Schaefer, "Spiritual Resources in Dealing with Trauma," in *Trauma & Resilience: Effectively Supporting Those Who Serve God*, ed. Frauke C. Schaefer, M.D. and Charles A. Schaefer, Ph.D. (n.p.: Condeo Press, 2012), 136.

openness with a few trusted individuals—especially other believers.[127] A clear sense of one's vocational calling and how to adapt that call over time also appears to be significant. My field research which surveyed long-term missionaries aligns with the Schaefer's observations. Here are several responses global servants shared about bouncing back from present or past challenges:

> I am getting much better at not caring what people think about me and caring only what God thinks. Curiously, this causes me to love people deeper without allowing them to control my response.
>
> I had to combat negative thoughts like "I'm done; What was I thinking? I can't stand this place," with Scripture verses like "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil.1:6)
>
> The most significant change was I stopped doing lots of solo work. Instead I thought up a training to teach people to do what I do.[128]

These global servants reveal how faith in God, a knowledge of Scripture, and surrendering the "lone ranger" mentality of ministry enhanced their ability to cope. A review of studies by Brown, Gardner, Rowe, and Schaeffer revealed that the connection between spirituality and resilience achieves the following:

- Provides a framework that guides individuals through painful and joyful events.
- Contributes to life quality and meaning.
- Is a powerful coping mechanism, providing ability to adapt to changing individual needs.
- Provides people with a source of hope and comfort.[129]

Building community was the one factor that all four of them agreed to as critical to spiritual resilience. Overcoming adversity in isolation does not usually result in a

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[127] Schaefer, "Spiritual Resources in Dealing with Trauma," 136.

[128] Author, Field Research: *Global Servants and Resiliency*, Confidential Questionnaire, March 2020.

[129] Richard and Louisa Evans, "Building Resilience in Mission" (lecture, All Nations Christian College, Ware, England, May 2016).

favorable outcome. A person who can rely on others to surround, support, and encourage him or her through tough times has greater odds of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual survival.

Biblical Ecosystems

For people of the Christian faith, spiritual resiliency is grounded in a Biblical ecosystem. Ecosystem is a term that is used to describe the interconnectedness of a large community of living organisms. Scientists who study ecosystems have learned that everything within the boundaries of a certain geographic region is interconnected and has a direct impact on the life balance of that system, humans included. All living organisms within the ecosystem impact its resiliency. The Bible addresses spiritual resiliency in a comprehensive ecosystem, too. The resiliency of Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Zipporah, Naomi and Ruth, Queen Esther, King David, Mary and Joseph, Jesus and his disciples, Paul and Timothy, and a host of many other Biblical persons are all grounded in community. The actions of the individual are always held and considered within the container of their ministry environment. Ministry was never done in isolation. And, while Biblical leaders exemplified a variety of character traits and emotional responses to unfolding circumstances, they all acknowledged that God was the sustainer and shelter in the middle of the storm. Their spiritual resilience was intertwined with surrender and humility. There was the dynamic of servant leadership.

It's important to note that these Biblical ecosystems also included creation. Dr. Randy Woodley, in his book *Shalom and the Community of Creation*, said that most people in the western world are estranged from creation. Jesus, however, "was

comfortable in a constant conversation with natural creation."[130] He spoke to storms, used birds and lilies as illustrations, shared parables based on farming and cultivation, and even retrieved a coin from a fish's mouth. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Colosse, reminded early Christians that Jesus' intent was to redeem the whole earth, not just humanity.[131] As expressed in Colossians 1:15-20, Jesus created all things and in him all things hold together. He reconciles all things in heaven and on earth through his blood shed on the cross. If Christians are to embody Christ in the world, then eco-theology cannot be overlooked. Humanity's resiliency is tied to the earth. If an ecosystem is to thrive, then everything living within its boundaries must exhibit a degree of health.

Resiliency in the Psalms

Theologian Walter Brueggemann says the Psalms move us from the romantic notion that a life of faith is always good, joy-filled, and positive. "As children of the Enlightenment, we have censored and selected around the voice of darkness and disorientation, seeking to go from strength to strength, from victory to victory. But such a way not only ignores the Psalms; it is a lie in terms of our experience."[132] The hope of the Psalms is that despite loss and darkness, God is present. Brueggeman says that one cannot accept the gift of new life until one embraces the untamed darkness. He also points out that dominant culture does not promote this type of spiritual resiliency:

> The dominant culture wants to deny and cover over the darkness we are called to enter. Personally we shun negativity. Publicly we deny the failure of our attempts

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[130] Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 48.

[131] Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation*, 58-59.

[132] Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984), 11.

> to exercise control . . . through its propaganda and the ideology of consumerism, our society goes its way in pretense. Against all of this the Psalms issue a mighty protest and invite us into a more honest facing of the darkness. The reason the darkness may be faced and lived in is that even in the darkness, there is One to address . . . Because this One has promised to be in the darkness with us, we find the darkness strangely transformed, not by the power of easy light, but by the power of relentless solidarity.[133]

Brueggemann's framework of spiritual formation through the Psalms is orientation—everything makes sense (Psalms 1, 8, 33), disorientation—a profound shift occurs that throws one into liminal space (Psalms 13, 35, 74) and then new orientation—experience a new gift or new coherence from God precisely when one thought all was lost (Psalms 30, 40, 65).[134] He demonstrates how the Psalms provide a Biblical ecosystem for resiliency between God, humanity, and creation.

Resistance to Resiliency

Resiliency by its very nature invites one to change, to adapt, to transform. Therefore, resistance is inevitable. Even in nature the desire to remain the same, to be comfortable, to be static is a common tendency. However, those tendencies usually result in death, and maybe even extinction. Human nature is resistant to change, too. "Regardless of the benefits and despite God's instructions for us to mature, by human nature, we resist growth (see Rom.12:2; Eph. 4:15-16; 2 Peter 1:4-11; Rom. 7:14-20)."[135] An unfolding traumatic event can also push a person or organization into a state of paralysis. There is the desire to hunker down and play it safe. Spending money or

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[133] Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, 12.

[134] Walter Brueggemann, *Mensaje de los Salmos* (Ciudad de Mexico: Augsburg, 1998), 25-26.

[135] Dan and Sue Wicher, "Enhancing Character Development through Soul Care," *Missio Nexus,* July 1, 2017, https://missionexus.org/enhancing-character-development-through-soul-care/.

investing in training during chaos can seem counter-intuitive.[136] Some disruptions can result in deeper feelings of isolation and social disconnectivity. Disengagement becomes the norm, and productivity drops off dramatically. For persons of faith, messages of "just try harder" or "God will not give you more than you can handle" can result in a behavior that is the exact opposite of what was intended. Instead of feeling encouraged or motivated to be resilient, the person feels the shame of being "not enough." One's theology of suffering is a key component in how one responds to devastating or unfathomable events.[137] Another form of resistance is the inability to realize help is needed. Whether due to pride, unrealistic expectations, unhealthy boundaries, or past unresolved trauma, human beings fall victim to their egos.

Strengthening one's resiliency also takes time. Bouncing back from one event enhances resiliency, but is only one step of many as life progresses. It is the cumulative responses to multiple events that result in adaptive growth. Heifetz and Linsky, experts on the topic of adaptive leadership, discuss the needed component of patience: "Biological adaptations that enhance a species' capacity to thrive unfold over thousands, even millions of years. In organizations, it takes time to consolidate adaptations into new sets of norms and processes."[138] Cultivating persistent leaders who won't give up while

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[136] Ronna Detrick, "This Is Why Training Is More Necessary Than Ever Right Now," *Fierce* (blog), accessed April 9, 2020, https://fierceinc.com/blog/this-is-why-training-is-more-necessary-than-ever-right-now.

[137] David D. Ruiz, "The Realty of Suffering in Mission," in *Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey*, eds. John Almalraj, Geoffrey W. Hahn, and William D. Taylor (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018), 309-315.

[138] Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linksy, "Becoming an Adaptive Leader," *Lifelong Faith* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 27, https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/becoming_an_adaptive_leader.pdf.

simultaneously taking the heat for problems that increase during chaos is a formidable challenge for most organizations.

The Critical Factor of Community Care

Research in both religious and secular fields state that human beings need to be known and to belong.[139] Human beings long for community. A place where someone knows your name, and it is safe to share pieces of your inner journey. Christine Pohl, professor of Christian social ethics at Asbury Theological Seminary, says, "The character of our shared life—as congregations, communities, and families—has the power to draw people to the kingdom or to push them away. How we live together is the most persuasive sermon we'll ever get to preach."[140] The "one another" exhortations in the New Testament describe how to relate to other people. The Greek derivative is *allelon* and means "one another, each other, mutually, reciprocally."[141] These phrases form the basis of Christian community in the Gospels and Pauline letters of the Bible. Love one another, be devoted to one another, build up one another, care for one another, bear one another's burdens, and forgive one another are some of the most well-known. This interconnectivity of relationships is the underlying common denominator at the heart of resiliency.

In the wake of a natural, environmental, or man-made disaster, communities will rise together or fall together in their response. The benefits of coming together are

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[139] Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 13-14 and 113-118.

[140] Christine Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 2.

[141] Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 148.

immense: increased public awareness and understanding of vulnerabilities, building partnerships with diverse stakeholders, increased opportunities to leverage data and resources, expanding understanding of potential risk reduction measures, unifying and coordinating with other community plans, and prioritization and implementation of mitigation.[142] After interviewing countless survivors of traumatic or near-death experiences, author Laurence Gonzales learned: "Staying socially connected is one of the most important and effective adaptations. This means staying close to family and friends and making a decision to be with people who have the right attitudes. Abundant research shows that people who are socially connected are healthier and live longer."[143] What is even more amazing is that one's deep connectivity with certain persons is a powerful sustainable resource even when they are miles away or even deceased. Gonzales discovered: "Friends and family can help even when they aren't really there, because we have mapped them permanently in our brains."[144]

The implications for mission agencies is evident. Human beings are created for and called to community (spiritual ecosystems). Christ followers are invited to consistently and lovingly relate to the people they encounter. Healthy, vibrant communities attract others. These intentional, authentic communities glorify God and attract people to God's mission. They covenant to journey together no matter what happens. Resilient staff and global servants undergird the resiliency of the organization.

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[142] Jaimie Hicks Masterson, Walter Gillis Peacock, Shannon S. Van Zandt, Himanshu Grover, Lori Feild Schwarz, and John T. Cooper, *Planning for Community Resilience: A Handbook for Reducing Vulnerability to Disasters* (WA: Island Press, 2014), 34.

[143] Laurence Gonzales, *Surviving Survival: The Art and Science of Resilience* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012), 216.

[144] Gonzales, *Surviving Survival*, 216.

Therefore, the way a mission organization nurtures an environment where personnel are cared for and thrive has a direct correlation to the way the Gospel is communicated and received.

Conclusion

Cross-cultural stress and adversity reveals personal limitations that are often insufficient. Global servants need the support of a wider community to sustain them during difficult times. Family, friendships, church networks, and the mission agency can all provide this web of care. This emphasis on community is pivotal to comprehending resiliency because individuals do not live and work in isolation; they are part of a greater ecosystem.

Resilient organizations stress adaptability, openness, learning, and experimentation. Not only is the individual shifting to a new identity as he or she pushes through to the other side of the adverse situation, but the systemic network that surrounds and sustains the individual is experiencing identity shift, too. If neither side shifts, or only one does, then long-term resiliency is hard to sustain. This can result in higher attrition for the mission agency. Ecosystems in the natural world thrive when they are open, dynamic, self-organizing systems.[145] Daniel Lerch, Publications Director of Post Carbon Institute's educational efforts on community resilience and energy resources, emphasizes that "Resilience is about the stake-holders of a system sharing their mental models about how their system works."[146] He continues, "There is no way to approach community

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[145] Daniel Lerch, *The Community Resilience Reader: Essential Resources for an Era of Upheaval* (WA: Island Press, 2017), 182.

[146] Lerch, *The Community Resilience Reader*, 167.

resilience without encountering the whole gamut of human possibility and finding ways to collaborate in the space and time we share."[147]

A mission agency usually views itself as a body of believers with a common vision, and as a family. Both are Biblical images for community. The Apostle Paul said that there is one body, but many parts. Every individual impacts the whole: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it."[148] The Bible also speaks of the family of God. "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God!"[149] Christian community is systemic and inter-relational. The challenge for mission agencies is to be intentionally invested in consistent, authentic, and relevant care of all its stakeholders. For organizational resiliency to be achieved, collaboration and innovation will be needed from everyone.

Questions for further Reflection:

1. What is your definition of resiliency?
2. How has God shaped your character during struggle?
3. When you think about lasting for the long-haul in cross-cultural ministry, what do you anticipate needing in your toolkit? What's already there, ready to access?
4. What is your response to being part of a Biblical eco-system, especially as a global servant in a cross-cultural setting?
5. How might Bruggemann's framework of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation assist you as a global servant?
6. How do you resist change and transition? What can resistance teach us?
7. How does community care impact resiliency?
8. Why is your personal resilience critical to the overall resiliency of IM?

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[147] Lerch, *The Community Resilience Reader*, 184.

[148] 1 Corinthians 12:26.

[149] I John 3:1a.

THE LION GOD

THEOLOGICAL SHIFTS

"We have not searched for him. He has searched for us. He has searched *us* out and found us. All the time we think we are the lion. In the end, the lion is God." (Masai Elder)

There is a seductive whisper that lurks in the shadow of every missionary's journey. The voice that wishes you to believe "Without you, that man, woman, or child will never experience transformation through Jesus Christ." And so, one heads to the mission field all bright and shiny like a new penny, ready to count the cost, only to discover that a Gospel undergirded by guilt, martyrdom, and misdirected ego draws no one closer to God, especially the missionary. While call can be authentic it does not necessarily correlate with a depth of spirituality.

As Vincent Donovan shared through his experiences in *Christianity Rediscovered*, and I would collaborate from my own experiences, the theology that a missionary carries to the field is not the theology that he/she leaves with. The reality of being immersed in a culture that is not your own, day after day, year after year, creates a dissonance that never entirely goes away. While one can become more comfortable, even fluid in a second culture, I would argue that there are pieces of oneself that continue to feel slightly out of sync. Not unlike the unexpected minor chord that shocks, and then lingers, at the end of a musical composition. However, I believe that this lingering dissonance is essential. It reminds the missionary that he/she is a stranger in a strange land. One never "arrives." Your theology and your perspective of God is not "the answer" for the rest of the world.

God is already ahead of you, present and vibrant, ready to welcome you with open arms into a facet of relationship your heart was longing for, but didn't realize was even

there until you stepped foot into another country. Sometimes it is only through a journey to the "far country" that pieces of your soul wake up. Of course, once you wake up, ministry tends to shift, too.

MISSIOLOGICAL SHIFTS

Until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. (Zimbabwean proverb)

Many agencies are now using the term global servant or servant leader in lieu of the title "missionary." By emphasizing servant leadership, mission agencies are seeking to model ministry around the person of Jesus and not just the words of Jesus. Northouse says servant leaders do not need specific traits or a specific style of leadership to address various situations. They are focused on putting others first so that community and societal change result. Their desire is for followers to grow as persons, to become autonomous, and to be servant leaders as well.[150] The term servant leader moves one past stereotypes associated with the traditional word missionary, and allows a missionary's identity and ministry to be seen through a different lens. The servant model is based on Jesus' life and ministry. Relationships and spiritual formation are emphasized in lieu of baptisms and evangelism. Servant leadership is grounded in integrity and authenticity that builds over time. The global servant is allowing the Holy Spirit to set the pace and direct the content of discipleship. This approach to missions lowers stress and anxiety. It allows God to remain at the center of the story.

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[150] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed., 220-233.

LIMBIC SHIFTS

"My soul is among lions." Psalm 57:4

When one is living in exile, isolation and loneliness can distort cultural perceptions.[151] Your soul can feel like it is being devoured by lions, when—actually—the Lion-God is in pursuit desiring to embrace you through a new and radical understanding of limbic love.[152] Without this limbic shift, faithful presence ceases to be authentic. Am I willing to pause in my story so I can listen to and be shaped by another's story?[153]

Near the end of his book, Donovan stated that a missionary must divest himself/herself of his/her very culture, so that he/she can be a naked instrument of the gospel to the cultures of the world.[154] While I understand the intent behind these words, I disagree with the missiology proposed by the word "divest." It would have you believe that everything about you—your personality, your talents, your time, the very essence of the culture that has shaped you—must be sacrificed on the altar for Jesus to be glorified. Psychologist David Benner proposes that there is no deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of self, and no deep knowing of self without a deep knowing of God.[155] This suggests embracing and expanding, not divesting. Can anyone truly be divested of his/her culture? Culture is embedded in our very DNA. It is the stories we tell ourselves. However, I can mute my culture so that it is not the dominant story. I can let it run in the

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[151] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 280.

[152] Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love* (New York, NY:Vintage Books, 2000), 24-26, 40-43,76-78.

[153] Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* (New York: Orbis Books. 1978), 135.

[154] Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 144.

[155] David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2004), 20.

background so someone else's culture is what I see on the screen. I can open myself to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit so that my biases, prejudices, and ethnocentricity can be overwritten with a new code. This is when true self comes out of hiding. This is when transformation begins to shimmer. This is when multi-cultural limbic community is possible. It also requires time for rest and reflection. Mark Sayers suggests "withdrawal-return" so that a leader gets "critical distance from the myths and illusions" of one's culture in order to "break their spell."[156]

As a Christian shaped by Western theology, I find myself gravitating to the spiritual practice of silence because it is so elusive in my culture. This is not necessarily a predominant need in other cultures, especially ones that my culture has historically silenced. Giving voice to exuberant joy and the practice of celebratory worship might be their "evocative counterpoint."[157] Global servant leaders who, like Donovan, have integrated these types of theological and missiological insights invite us to deepen relationship with the Lion-God.

Questions for Further Reflection:

1. Share your thoughts about: "The theology that a missionary carries to the field is not the theology that he/she leaves with."
2. Are you willing to let another people and another culture expand your understanding of God?
3. Historically, the story of missions has also been about ideological invasion and global expansion. How has history shaped your views of global mission? What is God's invitation today?
4. The themes of servant leadership and limbic love were revisited. How do you lead? How do you love?
5. What do you discover when you practice silence?

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[156] Mark Sayers, *Facing Leviathan: Leadership, Influence, and Creating in a Cultural Storm* (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 126.

[157] Barbara A. Holmes, *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*, 2nd ed. (Fortress Press, 2017), 20-22.

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