

Cross-Cultural Perspectives from the Director



It's Too Soon to Sing, "I'll Fly Away!"

The Receptivity Rating Scale analyzes when people are more open to the gospel due to external changes in their lives. Its basis is God uses joy or sorrow to compel people to reevaluate their lives and make them receptive. Graduation, marriage, birth of a child, separation, divorce, death of a loved one, jail term, a move across country, or a long list of other things may serve to make them aware of their need for God. When two or more of these situations happen at once, receptivity (not to mention stress) escalates.

What does this have to do with missions? I think there is a parallel. Stress and external changes cause us to be more receptive—and vulnerable—to good, and not so good, prospects. These uncomfortable circumstances may cause one to question God's will, be more open to leaving missions, and succumb to the grass-is-obviously-greener-on-the-other-side-of-the-fence syndrome. At times, missionaries step out of missions, only to regret it shortly thereafter.

Points on the Missionary Vulnerability Scale might include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Bouts of sickness.
2. Birth of a baby.
3. Difficulty in educating missionary children.
4. Personality clashes and misunderstandings with others.
5. Failure to feel connected with the work.
6. Culture shock.
7. Moving to a new field.

8. Nationalizing the work.
9. Grown children leaving the nest.
10. Aged parents in nursing homes or requiring health care.
11. Death of a loved one.
12. Discouragement.
13. Birth of a grandchild.
14. Long deputation.
15. Spouse or children not happy with missionary work.



When sensitive to these caution signs in others, the Lord can use us to affirm, encourage, pray for, and listen. Yes, we are our brother's keepers!

We need to be careful during seasons of troubles and trials. One wise old pastor used to say, "This too will pass!" Be anchored to your call! Do not allow stress and vulnerability to cause you to sidestep the great things God has prepared for you and your field.

It may give a little comfort to know that others have passed through such trying times, are still pressing on, and that you can too! And remember, I'm here with a listening ear if you ever need to talk about what you are going through. It's too early to sing, "I'll Fly Away!" Try "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" and the General Director.