

Cross-Cultural Mission Training



Stage 5: Return

by Miles Jarvis and Karen Todd

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Excerpts from “Cross-Cultural Mission Training - Stages 1-5:
Explore | Prepare | Go | Thrive | Return” by Miles Jarvis and Karen Todd

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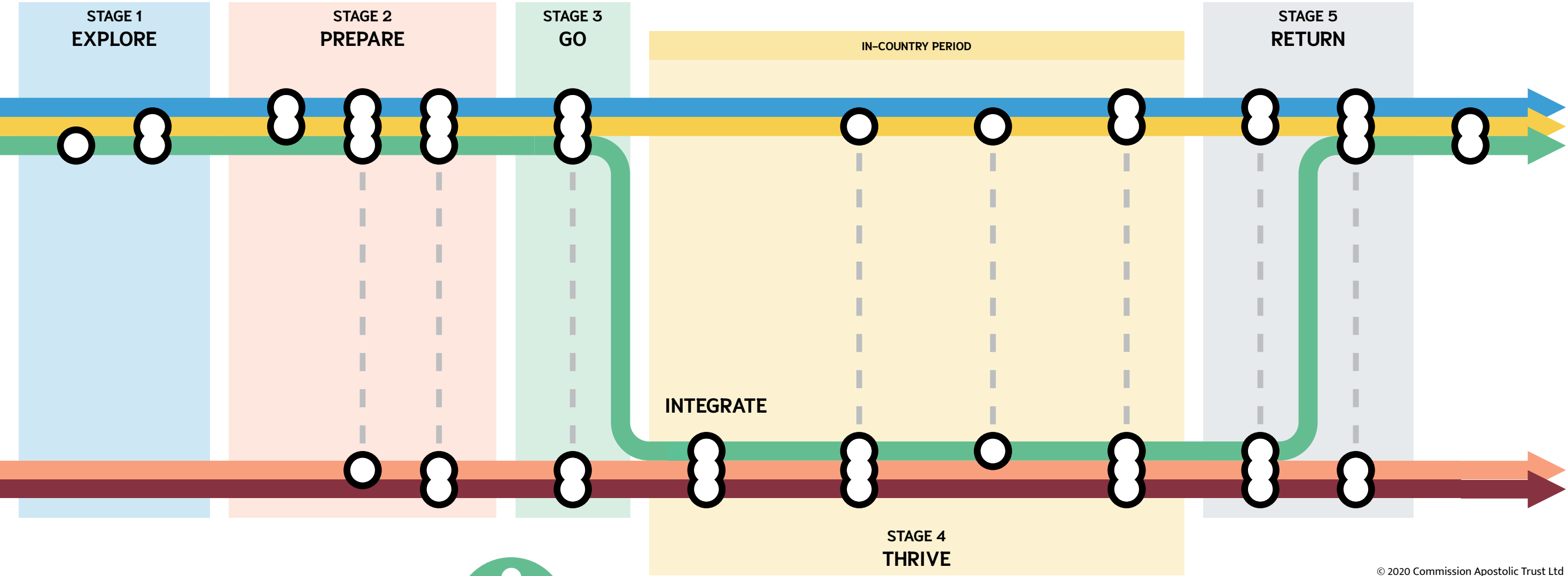
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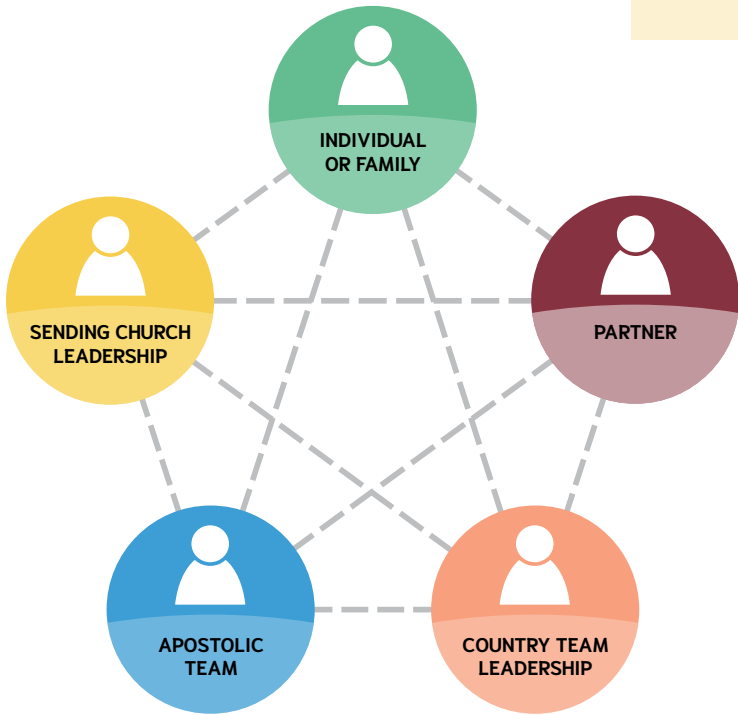
Your Journey



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Interaction
e.g. Visit, Meeting, Skype, Email, etc.

Points of Contact



Based on a City Transit Map design, this diagram illustrates the stages of the journey in sending and supporting overseas workers, from the perspective of all key groups of people involved.

Significant points of contact are shown to ensure clear communication and clarify expectations. It is not representative of the frequency of points of contact or the duration of each stage, as this will vary for each situation.



Stage 5: RETURN



Stage 5 Contents

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Trust in the Lord with all your heart and
lean not on your own understanding; in
all your ways submit to Him, and He will
make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 (NIV)

Move forward!

This stage has been created to be used as the basis for a debrief for those returning back to a local church in their sending country.

Returning well

Coming home can be very hard, even if you have only been away for a few weeks. Things can somehow seem very different. Depending on how long you have been away, things may have changed dramatically at home.

This material will help prepare you for a debrief with your church leader or someone else who is able to lead you through an honest reflection of your experiences.

While a single session of debriefing may be all that's required, often more sessions are needed, particularly if you have been away for more than a year. You may also need to be referred to someone else with specific skills and experience in this area.

What is a debrief

Debriefing is an opportunity to talk about your experiences while you were away and since you have come back. It allows you to reflect on experiences and to be open and honest.

It can be an opportunity to acknowledge what you have achieved, recognise the difficulties you may have faced, and share emotions and reactions in a safe environment.

When should a debrief happen?

A debrief should take place very soon after you return – ideally within the first week and sooner if something unexpected happened while you were away. As soon as you have a return date in mind, make sure you book a date for a debrief.

Who needs a debrief?

Ask yourself these three questions:

- ▶ Are you returning home after travelling cross-culturally for the first time?
- ▶ Did something unexpected or extraordinary happen? This could be severe illness, violence, encountering extreme poverty and so on.
- ▶ Are you returning home for good?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, you will definitely benefit from a debrief.

This material is meant to be an introduction only; it may alert both the person being debriefed and those doing the debrief that they need more specialist help.

Debrief

1. What was your purpose for going?

2. Overall, how did it go?

3. What went well?

What were the highlights?

4. What was surprising, difficult or bad?

5. What troubling or stressful situations did you have, if any?

7. What might you do differently in these situations, or if you went again?

8. How do you feel about it now?

9. Were there any administrative problems relating to home while you were away?

For example, unmet expectations, poor communication, failed communication, support from home, etc.

10. What could have been done better?

11. How did the team work together?

12. How have you been since you got home?

13. What has God been doing / showing you?

14. Who are you connecting with in your sending church?

15. Are there any financial issues you need to discuss, now you are home?

16. Have you experienced any of these? (please tick all applicable)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> tiredness | <input type="checkbox"/> flashbacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> continually thinking about what happened |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nightmares | <input type="checkbox"/> sense of guilt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> appetite changes | <input type="checkbox"/> anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nausea | <input type="checkbox"/> unable to relax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty coping with everyday life | <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty making decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> tearful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> poor concentration | <input type="checkbox"/> unable to cry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> poor memory | |

⚠ If you've ticked more than three of these boxes, you are showing signs of stress and it may be necessary to seek further follow-up.

17. Have you had 'reverse culture shock'?

This is experienced when you return to what you expect to be home but it feels 'different' or you view things differently.

You may also feel the following:

- Boredom
- No one wants to listen
- You can't explain
- Reverse homesickness
- Relationships have changed
- People misunderstand you
- Feelings of alienation
- Inability to apply new knowledge and skills
- Loss/compartmentalisation of experience

18. How has it been with friends and family?

Anything surprising or difficult?

19. What are you doing to reduce stress levels (relaxing, exercise, spending time with friends/family)?

20. Thinking about the future ... do you have any new goals / objectives for the next period in your life?

21. What do you need to achieve this?

22. Do you have any other questions?

Debriefing helps us learn as a sending community. It enriches us and helps those that will 'pick up the baton'. It will be helpful to Commission if you can feedback to us so we can learn for the future. If you would be happy to participate in any future training or events, please contact the Commission office.

Resource Section

There are many resources available to help people prepare for returning from overseas. Here are just a couple of recommended examples:

Reading

- ▶ **‘Reaching the Nations’** by Mike Frisby (2005).
- ▶ **‘Debriefing Aid Workers and Missionaries’** - A comprehensive manual by Dr Lovell-Hawker, available from www.peopleinaid.org. The website also has information on workshops to train debriefers.

My next steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

For more information or questions, please email:

office@commission.global

This interactive workbook will take you through five key stages in your journey in cross-cultural mission:

- ▶ **Stage 1: Explore** - Understand more whether God is calling you to cross cultural mission.
- ▶ **Stage 2: Prepare** - Go deeper with challenging questions examining character, faith and relationships.
- ▶ **Stage 3: Go** - Think through some of the practical questions as you prepare to leave the UK.
- ▶ **Stage 4: Thrive** - Assess how things are going and focus on positive steps to move forward.
- ▶ **Stage 5: Return** - A structured reflection on your experiences as you return to the UK.



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