



## Resiliency Exercise: *Reasons for Leaving*

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We have all seen people come and go from our fields of service for various reasons. Some are considered preventable, while others are not. God can and often changes our direction through circumstances beyond our control. From personal experience and research, we have compiled a list of possible reasons cross-cultural workers do not continue on the field.

Look over the following list of reasons for leaving and underline examples that you have personally observed. Then write (select if you are using this electronically) the letter “P” next to the reasons that you think are preventable and a “C” for circumstances that seem beyond our control. Select “B” if both “P” and “C” are true (try to use “B” sparingly). We have left a space at the end of the list for you to add other reasons that you are aware of.

Discuss the questions at the end of the document.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Project is completed:** There are times when a ministry project is completed and the role of the cross-cultural worker is no longer needed. Knowing when to leave, not staying too long, is also following God’s call.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Poor leadership/followership:** Some may choose to leave the field when they lack a sense of purpose and direction due to poor leadership. At the same time, poor followership can make any leader’s role difficult. George Verwer (Mobilizer’s Forum, Jan. 22, 2003) wrote: “Godly, gifted leaders are still sinners saved by grace and will fail at times. We must be ready to forgive and grow together in repentance and brokenness. Leaders have to make hard decisions and there is always someone who is not happy.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Unrealistic expectations:** What a worker expects prior to coming to the field and the reality they discover when they arrive can be very different. Some call this “the gap”. Often the goal of pre-field training is to shorten “the gap” by helping workers get a more realistic view of cross-cultural ministry. Even when the best training takes place, expectations are often not known until they are not met. Some may leave the field when the disillusionment is too great.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Moral Failure:** There are many reasons that some fall into moral failure while in ministry. Pornography or unhealthy relationships may develop during periods of vulnerability especially when the person has experimented in these areas before coming to the field. Loneliness, lack of fruit, insecurities and spiritual warfare can make us vulnerable. Families will return from the field when restoration resources are lacking or the moral failure leads to termination.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Conflicts over Doctrinal issues or ministry strategies:** Some workers choose to leave when doctrine or ministry strategies are so conflicted that compromise is not possible. These differences may be exposed before they become divisive when discussed before composing teams. There are times though, when these differences do not come to the surface until the actual ministry begins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Insufficient language acquisition or poor cultural adaptation:** Some people may become discouraged when there is difficulty in learning a new language especially when it continues after years of hard work. Cultural adaptation can be harder than expected making bonding difficult with new living situations and relationships. Some workers find it hard to “unpack their bags”, and be willing to accept cultural differences, which inevitably hinders effective ministry. This may lead some to want to give up and go back to their sending country.



\_\_\_\_\_ **Poor mutual support:** When workers are alone, without support from others they can lose perspective and become discouraged. On the other hand, when there is criticism and distrust on a team or in a community, it can be just as wearing. When there is a lack of healthy, supportive community some workers choose to return to their sending countries. While at times we are called to suffer for the sake of Christ and live through periods of loneliness or be asked to foster change on unhealthy teams, this should not be the norm.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Evacuations/trauma:** Sometimes emergency evacuations due to political unrest or a trauma will lead workers home prematurely. While they had no control over the situation it still may be accompanied by feelings of failure, guilt, sadness or anger. A supportive community will foster healing in the days ahead.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Responsibilities back home:** Aging parents, struggling children, church splits or extended family conflicts/concerns impact workers on the field. Some to the point of finding it necessary to return to their home country.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Shortage of funds:** Some workers are forced to return to their sending countries when the lack of funds reach a critical point. If the needed funds do not come in after a certain time, some do not return to the field.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Health issues:** Some workers must return to their sending countries when medical care either for physical or mental health concerns is not sufficient on the field. If the health issue is not resolved or the risk is too great to return, some workers remain.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Concerns for children:** Sometimes educational needs for children are not adequate on the field or the options do not seem viable to the parents. They may choose to return to their sending countries for better solutions. Some families choose to return when launching their children into college or into the work force.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Spiritual warfare:** The enemy opposes the gospel so there shouldn't be any surprise when adversity comes. Yet when there is a lack of spiritual preparedness, fear, doubt and discouragement can lead some to return.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Others:**



### ***Questions for Reflection and Discussion***

1. Which one of the above reasons has either led you to change fields/mission agencies or tempted you to do so at a certain time in your life?
2. Looking over the list, which reasons do you think could be prevented “P”? Which reasons would be outside of someone’s control “C”?
3. As you look over the preventable reasons, what additional suggestions would you add that might help contribute to resiliency?
4. When you think of the reasons that would be outside of someone’s control, what foundational truths based on the Gospel would help someone in those situations? (Give Biblical references if possible.)
5. Think about your present situation. Which of the preventable suggestions or foundational truths would help you the most right now? Which might help someone else on your field?

*Thank you for working through the Resiliency Exercise, **Reasons for Leaving**, addressing **Supportive Self-Care** for healthy resiliency. We hope that this has been beneficial to you. For more resiliency resources including other Resiliency Exercises write to [resiliencyprojectteam@worldteam.org](mailto:resiliencyprojectteam@worldteam.org).*

*We value your feedback. Please fill out the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WTresiliency>. Your feedback will help us make this, and other Resiliency Exercises, more effective.*

*Thank you!*

*World Team Resiliency Project Team*

