

TRANSITION IS THE DEFINITION OF MISSIONARY



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TRANSITION IS A part of the very definition of being sent as a missionary to another culture. Knowing and accepting that God is in control of our lives makes it possible for us to continue through all the transitions of missionary life. It is vitally important for us to actually find joy in God's will for us. Psalm 37:4 has encouraged me most throughout a career of transition: "Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart" (NKJV). Angie and I have continually experienced the reality of delight in the Lord, and of God giving us the desires of our hearts.

In our experience, the most difficult has been the repeated transition between homeland ministry assignment and Honduras. The first time we traveled to Honduras, we were full of excitement and anticipation of all the new things we would experience. As new first-term missionaries, we had permitted ourselves to become focused on the glamour of working full time in the ministry that we felt God had called us to do. Once we arrived in Honduras, we were face to face with the reality of living in another culture: speaking another language, eating different foods, and not being able to communicate daily with our family and friends back home. During our first years in Honduras, we did not have telephones, it was before the Internet existed, and postal "Aerograms" took two weeks to arrive. Our grocery shopping was done in a tiny store that carried few of the conveniences we were used to from home. Our first missionary assignment

of five years was a long time to be away from family and friends. Now that our children have grown up and we have grandchildren, we realize how difficult it must have been for our parents to see us make that first move to Honduras.

Part of the missionary life is the continual change from one job to another. One of the popular missionary mottoes is to "Continually work yourself out of a job." The challenge for the missionary is to mentor people to prepare them to take over for us. Oftentimes we come into a situation to fill a gap and it is our responsibility to prepare others to take over. One of the greatest joys that a missionary can hear is how people we have helped prepare for ministry are now serving the Lord.

In 35 years of missionary service with World Gospel Mission to Honduras, Angie and I have transitioned through dozens of jobs and eight different transitions back to the States. We are grateful that through all the transitions in our lives we can still say that "the joy of the Lord is my strength." We may even have a couple of transitions left in us yet.



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Has God called your family members to serve as missionaries? Make plans to visit them during their term on the field. Your relationship will be stronger after you have experienced together this new phase of life in which God has placed them.

