



CROSSING CULTURES

Reflections & Resources for Those Who Send — and Those Who Go

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A resource from the Thomas C. Pennell Christian Counseling Center

OPENING REFLECTION

The Loss of the Ordinary

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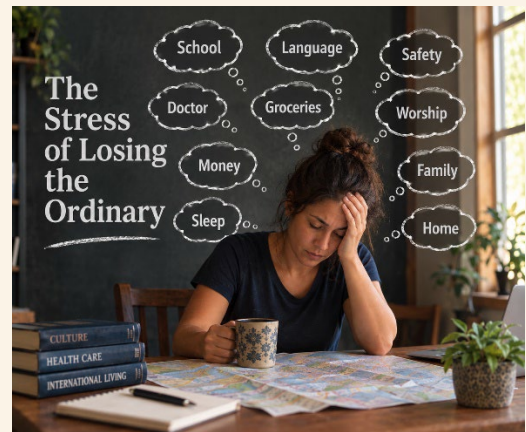
Most of us move through life supported by invisible assumptions. We expect the water to run, the signs to make sense, and a simple question to be understood. Because these supports are ordinary, we rarely notice them.

Cross-cultural workers may notice their absence every day. Groceries become a problem to solve. A medical visit requires courage. An ordinary conversation can leave a capable adult feeling uncertain or exposed. The strain is often quiet: the slow loss of ease, competence, safety, and belonging.

Language learning, unfamiliar systems, concern for children, distance from family, and the pressure to appear spiritually steady can accumulate. A worker may be grateful for the calling and still be worn thin by the life around it.

Those who send can notice these burdens, ask questions that make room for honest answers, and remain present long after departure.

Read the full reflection at crossingcultures.care



When nothing feels automatic, the ordinary can become exhausting.

LOOK BENEATH THE POSTCARD

The public update may show progress and beauty. The unseen story may include fatigue, grief, fear, and the daily work of adapting.

FOR REFLECTION

How might you pray for — and genuinely lighten the load of — the people living this reality today?

FROM THE CROSSING CULTURES BOOKSHELF

Crossings: Lament and New Mercies in Cross-Cultural Calling

If this issue's reflection names something you have lived, *Crossings* walks that road at book length — written for the cross-cultural servant on the field, on home assignment, or home for good. It moves through grief, listening, and abiding: lament that tells the truth, and the new mercies that meet it. Not a workbook — a companion for the crossing.

Available now on Amazon (Paperback and Kindle)

FOR THOSE WHO SEND — SIX WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED

Prayer and financial support are essential. Cross-cultural workers also need relationships that remember them as people, not only as workers who send reports.

1 Ask about ordinary life

Ask about school, transportation, language learning, health care, sleep, and the places where daily strain lives.

2 Remember family dates

Birthdays, graduations, and holidays matter across an ocean. A brief message says, “You remain part of our family.”

3 Make contact without requiring a report

Send a text, photo, or voice message that does not ask the worker to produce an update.

4 Ask twice — and leave room

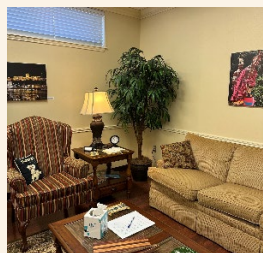
After “We are doing well,” ask, “What has been hardest lately?” Listen without hurrying to fix or spiritualize.

5 Care for the children too

Learn their names and interests. Remember that returning “home” may not feel like home to them.

6 Continue after they return

Offer meals, practical help, and time to rediscover where they belong.



“Cross-cultural workers are not only sent workers. They are our brothers and sisters — and family stays connected.”

Philippians 1:3–5

CARING FOR THOSE SERVING CROSS-CULTURALLY

This work is often referred to as **Member Care**: whole-person support for cross-cultural workers and their families before, during, and after service — preparation, counseling, debriefing, crisis care, and reentry. It is not a program; it is a relationship, and every sending church has a part in it.

A LISTENING POSTURE

- What has brought you life lately?
- What has been harder than expected?
- What losses have been difficult to name?
- Where have you noticed God’s mercy?
- What would make you feel remembered?
- What kind of support would help right now?

About Crossing Cultures

Russell Semon, PhD, is a licensed counselor with the Thomas C. Pennell Christian Counseling Center who provides care resources, counseling, and debriefing for cross-cultural workers and the churches and organizations who send them.

Crossing Cultures is the brand under which he has gathered and developed resources for caring for those serving cross-culturally — books, debriefing methods, articles, and practical tools.



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