Dear Friends,

The one constant in life, someone has said, is change. I don’t know about you, but that certainly seems to be true in my life. Just when things get comfortable, some change comes along that requires me to adjust. After ten years of writing the “Inside” column, now I’m writing the front page letter in *Global Connections*. Of course, that isn’t a big change but it does make me pause and think in a way that I haven’t before. What can I write in 300 words that might bring comfort or encouragement or hope to a missionary, reading this several weeks or months from now, who is in the midst of change?

The ability to be flexible and adaptable is something we talk about a lot at mission institute. Due to the upcoming General Conference Session, year end constituency meetings, planned permanent return, or unplanned moves, some of you will soon have opportunity to practice your adaptability! But even the most adaptable among us can long for stability when major change occurs. In a changing world full of changing circumstances, how do we find stability?

David, the shepherd boy who became king, also experienced the disruption and uncertainty of change. Many Psalms reflect his struggle to see beyond his current difficulties. “Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger…” (Ps. 39:12). Yet David found the only true Source of stability in the midst of turmoil and change. “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand” (Ps. 40:1, 2). When we, too, find that Rock of stability in change, we will know the truth of David’s words, “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God…Blessed are those who make the Lord their trust” (vss. 3, 4). May you have that kind of stability in whatever change you face.
The Institute of World Mission has a new director. Dr. Cheryl Doss was appointed director of IWM at its Board Meeting convened at Andrews University on March 02, 2010. An experienced associate director of IWM and long-term career missionary, Cheryl is well qualified for the job.

As a teenager, Cheryl accompanied her parents when they went to Africa to serve as missionaries. This experience has prepared her to understand the struggles and challenges many Third Culture Kids and Missionary Kids go through as they transition from place to place. She studied at Helderberg College High School in South Africa where she met a fellow missionary kid, Gordon Doss, and later married him. Cheryl graduated with a BS degree in Nursing from Andrews University. A few years later, she found herself back in Africa, this time in Malawi serving as a missionary with her husband. Malawi, a country that was familiar to Gordon since his parents had also served there, was their home for sixteen years. With distinction, patience, and endurance Cheryl raised their two children. Her missionary experience as a nurse, spouse, mother, and church worker reflects these many years spent as a missionary in Malawi.

After coming back to Andrews University, where her husband became a faculty of the Seminary’s Mission Department, Cheryl continued to study receiving a Master’s degree in Education from Andrews. In 2000 she was hired by IWM to lead the children and teen programs while pursuing her doctoral studies. In 2006 she earned a PhD in Education with an emphasis in Mission from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago.

Cheryl is passionate about the mission of the church and its missionaries who serve cross culturally. During her time at IWM Cheryl developed teens’ and children’s curriculums, helped to totally re-design the adult curriculum, contributed articles, and also edited the third edition (2009) of *Passport to Mission*, the IWM textbook.

Apart from her duties at IWM she has taught classes in the seminary, served on several committees, and held re-entry seminars once a year for student missionaries at Andrews University and other universities. Having experienced life as a MK/TCK she is the driving force behind the ‘Hello America’ Teen Re-entry program for teens and young adults who are transitioning from mission life into academy or college in the US. Cheryl enjoys reading and dialoguing about the best ways mission can be accomplished. She often engages in thinking aloud about what more can be done in mission and how it can best be accomplished. She is a continuous defender and protector of missionary families and MKs. Her long-term missionary life and career has given her an experience that fits with what she is and with what is required of a mentor and facilitator of missionary education.

Apart from her duties for IWM, Cheryl serves as a deacon in her local church when she’s in town. She is a proud grandmother of three—all missionary kids of parents who are currently serving as missionaries in Africa. In her “spare time” while flying to and from institutes and other IWM related trips she enjoys reading, crocheting, and knitting. Cheryl has a gift of hospitality and enjoys entertaining guests.

Thus a director is born! And so, it is my pleasure to welcome Dr. Cheryl Doss, the fifth director to lead the Institute of World Mission.

Coming to the GC Session this June? Here are some things to look forward to:

- MK Teen Pizza Party on Monday, June 28 during supper time
- Missionary Get-Together on Tuesday, June 29 during supper time
- Register & share stories at the Adventist Mission booth

E-mail us at iwm@andrews.edu and let us know if you are planning to come.
Life is full of changes. Some changes are exciting and some are scary. Some changes are painful while some are anticipated with great expectation. Change is inevitable. It is part of life. We tend to welcome change if we know that the outcome will be positive and in our best interest. It is through change that we have new experiences but it does not come without mixed feelings or emotional confusion especially if the change is unexpected.

One of those unexpected changes occurred during our recent Mission Institute in Nairobi. Two weeks into Institute we were advised by the General Conference to leave Nairobi as soon as possible for security reasons. Within just a few minutes that night, everything changed and within less than a couple of hours we found ourselves saying good bye to our new friends much sooner than we anticipated -- quite out of character with what we teach about how to say good bye. This was painful and abrupt!

In spite of the inner turmoil and emotional confusion each one might have been experiencing at the time there was tremendous courage and a gracious spirit among the group. Those who attended Mission Institute in the past know that within just a short time a very special bond of friendship develops among missionaries. This small diverse group of missionaries was no exception. In fact, this experience drew everyone even closer together.

And so in the days that followed each one of us waited and watched our inbox with much anxiety. Then finally we heard from the last one. What a relief to know that everyone had reached their destination safely.

So, in spite of this sudden, unexpected change and turn of events we have much to be thankful for – God’s protection and yet another reminder of His unchanging love and faithfulness.

Enid Harris

Nairobi Institute—January 2010

Nairobi Institute Participants

Romain & Bintou Kenfack
Democratic Republic of Congo

Stephen & Narisa Currow
England

Scott & Mindi Guptill
Niger

Jemuel & Leila Toledano
Pakistan

Lynn Boyd
Mozambique

Eriks Galenieks & Anna Galaniece
Kenya

Elisa Brown
Malawi
Online Resources for Missionaries

**Online links to member (missionary) care resources**

- **Member Care Radio** utilizes “media to encourage and enhance cross-cultural Christian workers, to better enable them to fulfill the Great Commission.” [www.membercareradio.com](http://www.membercareradio.com)

- **MisLinks** “is a web-based directory focused on offering helpful links to Web-based resources for missionaries, mission pastors, teachers, and researchers, students of mission and mission agencies.” [www.mislinks.org/practical/membcare.htm](http://www.mislinks.org/practical/membcare.htm)

- **Global Member Care Network** “exists to resource, equip and connect internationally all Christian practitioners of member care at any level.” [www.globalmembercare.org](http://www.globalmembercare.org)

- **Missionary Care** offers resources such as books, brochures, and a database that can be viewed or downloaded for free on member care. [www.missionarycare.com](http://www.missionarycare.com)

**Online missiological research resources**

- **Dictionary of African Christian Biography** is a ministry of the Overseas Ministries Study Center that houses about two thousand entries in their index. [www.dacb.org](http://www.dacb.org)

- **Asia Harvest** has people profiles from twenty-one Asian countries. [www.asiaharvest.org](http://www.asiaharvest.org)

- **Global Connections** has an extensive collection of books and articles on missional issues and perspectives. [www.globalconnections.co.uk/resources](http://www.globalconnections.co.uk/resources)


- **International Association for Mission Studies** lists missiological societies, journals, databases, libraries and more. [www.missionstudies.org](http://www.missionstudies.org)

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**MK Corner**

**The Three Hebrews**

Change is a part of life. What is important is how we react to the changes that comes our way. The lives of Daniel & his friends changed drastically when they were captured and taken to Babylon. Even with the challenges they faced in Babylon, Daniel and his friends continued to rely on God & stay true to Him.

Read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3 to see why they would not bow down and worship an image that the king set up. This made the King very angry and he told them that if they did not worship the image they would be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Read Daniel 3:17,18 (NIV) and fill in the spaces below to see how they answered.

"If we are thrown into the _______ __________, the God we serve is _______ ______ us from it, and he will _________ us from your hand, O king. But ______ if he ______ ______, we want you to know, O king, that we _______ _______ _______ ______ your gods or ______ the _______ of ______ you have set up."

Fill in the spaces below with the letters that are circled above to see what these three Hebrews had lots of.

This made the king very angry and he had them thrown alive into the blazing furnace. Read Daniel 3:19-30 to see how God helped them.

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**You Know You’re an MK When. . .**

*Your life story uses the phrases ‘Then we went to. . . ’ five times.*

From “You Know You’re an MK When” by Andy & Deborah Kerr, 1997.

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**Published by**
Institute of World Mission

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“Boy, I wish I could be a part of that,” I thought as we walked past several women chatting at the pump waiting to get their headpans filled with water. I’m sure if those women knew what I was wishing, they’d I was crazy. Why would you want to wait around at the pump for an hour, then put your 60-pound headpan full of water up on your head and walk home with the water supply for your family for the day when you can turn a spigot and all the water you want comes rushing out. Honestly, I was jealous of the camaraderie and fellowship they were sharing.

I’d been living in Togo for about six months and was feeling very lonely. I’d have given just about anything to be “one of the girls” hanging out at the water pump. Able to understand everything everyone was saying, able to contribute to the conversation. But here I was, surely envied by these ladies, secretly envying them.

Loneliness and depression are major issues for women on the mission field. I know how much I’ve struggled with these issues. Just go online to any bookstore, Christian or secular, and notice the vast array of material written about women and relationships. We’re inter-actors; we need people in our lives. And we need them to have us in their lives. How many times over the past ten years have I cried out to the Lord, “I can’t do this anymore!” You made me a people person; give me some people I can be with!” I’ve had good friends among team members and Togolese women, but distance and cultural differences make communication exhausting!

One of the causes of depression on the mission field, at least at the beginning, is change. Before I came to Togo, I spent a few months taking some courses at a Lutheran college in Minnesota. While there I was asked to fill out a personality profile, and one of the sections was on how well you deal with change. In the months before moving to Minnesota, I had moved three times (for all the different training I was receiving), quit my job and started on a new “career path.” My Stress Level profile was off the chart. All they said was, “You need to find some good ways of dealing with stress.” Too much change can lead to problems as people grope for ways to deal with the instability in their lives.

Change can be a healthy and productive force in our lives, but when you first arrive on the mission field, it seems as if there’s nothing in your life that isn’t changing. Suddenly you’re faced with preparing meals where not one ingredient in your old, faithful cookbook is available. When you eat somewhere besides home, it’s completely different from anything you’ve ever imagined yourself eating, and you’re not always sure you want to. I’m a pretty game person; I’ll try just about anything, but our first few months here I found myself shying away from new experiences because I was just having too many of them at once.

In addition to new foods, your body has to adapt to a new climate. Other adaptations include language and culture. Suddenly you find you can’t talk to anyone. Simple things, like buying a stamp, become heart-pounding experiences. Just leaving the house is stressful because you may have to talk with someone and what they’re trying to tell you something really important.

The flip side of change is loss. When you move to something new, you inevitably leave something behind. You’ve lost the easy contact with your family and friends. Nowadays, with e-mail, it’s possible to keep in close touch, but you’re still a long way away, often with an ocean in between you. You soon realize that you won’t be getting a hug for long time. You’ve also lost your routine. Maybe you like to sleep in until 7 a.m., but now it’s too hot to stay in bed past 5:30. Maybe you really enjoy the late night hours, but you’re chased into bed under the protection of your mosquito net at 8:30 p.m. You find you have no energy to cook in the evening, so you starting making your big meal at noon. All of these little disruptions can add up to a big problem if you find yourself unable to find some foundation that doesn’t change.

I found that the main thing I had lost was my identity and personality. It wasn’t like moving in the States where you know the language and know you’ll eventually find friends. Suddenly you worry about every little hand gesture or body movement. “Am I offending anyone?” you ask yourself over and over. “Will everyone hate me if I forget and use my left hand to give them something?” When you’re learning to communicate in a new language, you realize just how fluent you are in your own

Living Water
By S.S., Togo
language. Now you’ve got to think about every little phrase before you force it out of your mouth. It’s hard to express your personality when all you can say is, “Please, I want to buy that!” as you point out what you want.

With all of these changes come many challenges and sometimes these challenges can overwhelm and lead to depression. Interacting with people from another culture, especially if you have a househelper, makes you wonder what this person thinks of every little thing you do. That’s stressful! Another challenge is communicating with family, friends, and supporters back home. You feel like you can’t write, “I hate it here, and I want to go home!” to people who have been praying for you and encouraging you for so long in your quest to get overseas. I think this is especially hard for women who normally would relieve some of the stress of a situation by talking about it with friends.

So, where do we go from here? We’re lonely, perhaps depressed, dealing with all kinds of changes. Surely the Lord doesn’t expect us to carry out His work in this state. No, He doesn’t! The best thing you can do is to cling to Him. I can vividly remember looking up at the moon one night and realizing, “Hey, that’s the same moon I see at home.” It really struck me that if the same moon could shine down on Togo, then of course God is here with me too.

We need to cling to the Lord’s promises too. Remember what He tells us through the prophet Jeremiah that He has a plan for each of us, and it’s a plan for good and not for evil. God also promises in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that He’ll never give us more than we can handle. So many times throughout the past ten years, I’ve said to myself, “Well, God said He wouldn’t give me more than I can handle, so I must be able to handle this.” He’s always right there with us, carrying us through the things we could never hope to make it through alone.

In order to remember to cling to God and His promises, it’s so important for us to stay in His Word. Everyday, it’s imperative that we come for our daily refreshment and strengthening from this wellspring of life. I find the Psalms particularly comforting. David is a man who knew about loneliness and depression! And we must simply keep going. Since we know that the Lord is with us every step of the way, it’s important to keep “pressing on toward the goal” as Paul says. You may be only taking baby steps, but a whole year of baby steps can take you a long way.

When I first arrived in Togo, I couldn’t tell whether people were speaking French or the local language. Now I’m at least functionally fluent in French and can make my way around the market in Moba. I’m amazed at how far the Lord has brought me. You can also feel a strong sense of accomplishment when you rise to the occasion that these challenges present. “Wow, I can’t believe I actually made it to the market all by myself and came home with almost everything I wanted.”

The most important blessing I have received as a result of coming to the mission field is learning to lean on God entirely and seeing Him work in incredibly concrete and wonderful ways in my life. Living in Togo has definitely shown me that I’m not the one in control. As I’ve said many time, “I wouldn’t have asked to live through some of the things we’ve been through here, but I’d never, ever give up what I’ve learned through those experiences.” God has shown Himself so faithful, patient, and kind to me, and I don’t think I would have seen that so clearly had He not help me jump in.

During our time in West Africa, I have often felt lonely and depressed. I’ve cried over my apparent inability to build truly deep friendships with the Moba women I live amongst. Through all of this, God has been with me. He’s providing me with everything I need. Nowadays, I’m overwhelmed with friends and God has given me a good Moba friend. This friendship has taken longer to form, but God answered this prayer too. The Lord does grant us the desires of our heart, but He first wants to make sure He is our greatest desire.