

Christchurch, Hitchin

23rd August 2020 • 10.45 livestream

Team

Leading: Katherine Harris & Emma in Cairo
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CCL 7011



Theme

Transitioning Well: Coronavirus, Culture Shock and You (Living as *Third Culture People*)
Isaiah 43:18-21, Romans 8:28-32, Romans 12:2

Welcome

Katherine introduces the team and the theme.
In times of change, it is important to know what to hold onto, what to focus on. So our first hymn reminds us to keep centred on Christ.



Be Thou my vision (Singing the Faith 545)

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
 - 2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
 - 3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my
power.
 - 4 Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
 - 5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.
-

Irish, 8th century, translated by Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880-1931)

Setting the Scene

Adapting to a different culture (Ben and Emma - 4:25 video)
<https://youtu.be/PbfD9i3Vdaw>

Ben and Emma have been living in Cairo for the past six years and have learned to adapt. They share some of the ways their life is different now from life in the UK.

Transitioning Well - part 1

Cultural Adaptation

expect the unexpected

Different cultures do things in different ways - that's obvious enough.

e.g., Even though I spoke the same language - more or less - when I moved from the USA to the UK, I had to adapt to life 'across the pond.' I did expect some things to be different, but others caught me completely off guard.

Cultures may appear similar on the surface but have broad differences in deeper values.

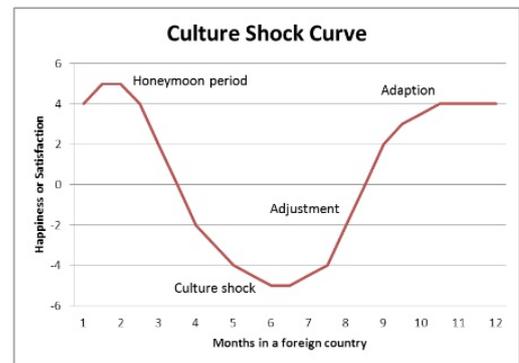
But cultural adaptation applies beyond moving from one country to another - it includes work cultures, communities, even families (to which many married couples can testify).

U-curve of adaptation

Stages:

1. honeymoon period - enthusiastic, exciting, optimistic tourist
2. culture shock (crisis) - confusion, disorientation, lack of control - all social norms are different, everything has to be negotiated
3. adjustment (recovery) - become familiar with unwritten rules and codes of behaviour
4. adaptation - accept the new environment, adopt new ways of thinking and doing things so that they feel like they belong to the new culture

The U Curve of Cultural Adaptation



There is no shortcut across! It is a process, and every step is important. Through it, not only do you adapt to your new environment but you grow as a person. It helps to form your identity.

culture shock, culture stress, reverse culture shock

Culture shock - implies sudden and short-lived - an alarm stage

Culture stress - ongoing stress that occurs when changing to a different way of living. The greater the differences in values between 'what was' in the home culture and 'what is' in the new culture, the greater the stress. Uninterrupted stress is exhausting - mentally, physically, emotionally, even spiritually.

Reverse culture shock - adapting to a new culture involves personal growth and even changes in your personality and values. This becomes obvious when stepping back into the former culture. 'A fish only knows it's wet when taken out of the water onto dry land.' 'You can't go home again' without going through the whole process of adaptation (U-curve) once again.

We'll be looking a bit more in depth at cultural adaptation, because we are all living through a time of great transition. It is important to remember through it all that we can rely on God to be with us, for us, beside us. God is good, trustworthy, and loves us beyond our imagining.

Romans 8:28-32 (Amira - 0:57 video)

<https://youtu.be/Vyyddr7W3L4>

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

Transitioning Well - part 2

Coronavirus (a collective culture shock)

coronavirus is a collective culture shock (Jitske Kramer - 2:21 video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSt0u7iv9AM>

A prominent Dutch cultural and corporate anthropologist explains how the entire world is experiencing culture shock through the coronavirus pandemic.

collective culture shock

The coronavirus pandemic has magnified the pre-existing problems, challenges and inequalities of our society: health care and pressures on the NHS, inadequacies of social care for the vulnerable members of our society, education systems, technology gaps, gig economy, transportation — not to mention the environment and climate change

we are living in crisis

the world is closed - simultaneously and temporarily

for us it is an inconvenience, but for others it is a fight for life

all experiencing culture shock - we're just in different stages of the U-curve - as individuals and as nations

the 'new normal' is not the 'old normal'

the world is closed - simultaneously and temporarily - but when it reopens, we can't go back to the way things always were. The coronavirus is not going away anytime soon, and it is foolish to think that it will. It seems as if we are waging war against an invisible enemy. What an opportunity to come together.

the way ahead is not a return to the past 'good old days' - it never is.

we have the opportunity to do new things in new ways. We've had a chance to stop, take stock, and imagine new ways forward.

transitions are not easy

Cultural stress is exhausting - mentally, physically, emotionally, even spiritually.

We have to find new rhythms and patterns of behaviour, adjust our values and beliefs about what is 'normal' - what is a 'good' life.

We experience a future sadness (what is not going to happen, or it is not what we hoped for) and past homesickness (longing for what used to be),

e.g., during the exodus, after Israelites were freed from slavery, they still longed to go back to Egypt rather than continuing through the desert, trusting God day by day, as they journeyed to the new, unknown life that awaited them (Numbers 11:4-6)

God's people have continually need reminding of God's good intentions, mercy and provision.

Especially in times of great upheaval and change, we need to look to what God can make of the brokenness we are experiencing and to know that we are not alone. We are in God's hands.

Our next reading and hymn remind us of these truths.

Isaiah 43:18-21 (Asher - 0:54 video)

<https://youtu.be/VXtqR6Pu3-4>

“Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.

The wild animals honour me,
the jackals and the owls,
because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,
to give drink to my people, my chosen,
the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise.”



When I fear my faith will fail (He will hold me fast)

When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.

He will hold me fast,
He will hold me fast;
For my Saviour loves me so,
He will hold me fast.

Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me
fast;
Precious in his holy sight, He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last;
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

For my life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast;
Justice has been satisfied; He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast
'Till our faith is turned to sight, When He comes at last!

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Transitioning Well - part 3

Life in Transition (becoming 'third culture' people)

self care in a time of transition (Emma - 8:35 video)

<https://youtu.be/OZT1NRJuEu8>

Emma shares some practical ways to live well in a time of transition.

life in crisis or transformation?

Are we living through time of crisis or a time of transformation? Your answer determines the choices you make from here.

This our opportunity is to allow God to *transform* us rather than to just *sustain* us

We can take time to look at the pre-existing problems which the pandemic has highlighted, culturally and personally.

Margaret Mead said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Afterall, Christianity started with 12 apostles and now there are over 2.2 billion.

this is a moment for real change

living as third culture people

but we can't embrace transformation without letting go of the past or of our expectations of the future. we need to find our identity in different ways.

third culture - different from either those living in their native culture or their new culture

individuals have more in common with each other than with either of these cultures

good analogy of our life as Christians, as we

Romans 12:2 (Miriam - 0:26 video)

https://youtu.be/BZ_Xl11h9mw

straight reading

<https://youtu.be/M-Db8Rfk8LE>

reading plus a tag ending

Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

As Miriam reminds us, we are not to stay put. We are meant to move on, to move forward, and to partner with God in transforming the world - to make the world a bit more beautiful than when we arrived.

Prayers

Prayers for this time of transition

- honeymoon - for those excited at new beginnings and opportunities
- culture shock and crisis - for those experiencing loss of any kind and are grieving, experiencing health or financial concerns, struggling to find a way through, decision makers
- adjustment - for family life, new ways/places to work, re-ordering society
- adaptation - for those embracing new ideas and ways of living
- transformation - to recognise and welcome God's work among us
- prayer from St Brendan (also known as St Brendan the Voyager)

"Help me to journey beyond the familiar
and into the unknown.

Give me the faith to leave old ways
and break fresh ground with You.

Christ of the mysteries, I trust You
to be stronger than each storm within me.

I will trust in the darkness and know
that my times, even now, are in Your hand.

Tune my spirit to the music of heaven,
and somehow, make my obedience count for You."

Amen.

Lords Prayer (Amira, Asher, and Miriam - 0:33 video)

<https://youtu.be/QsF4Bojv8ck>

Blessing

God with you.



Before the throne of God above (*Songs of Fellowship 1187*)

Before the throne of God above,
I have a strong and perfect plea,
a great High Priest whose name is Love,
who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on his hands,
my name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heav'n He stands,
no tongue can bid me thence depart,
no tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see Him there,
Who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died,
my sinful soul is counted free;
for God the Just is satisfied
to look on Him and pardon me,
to look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there! the risen Lamb,
my perfect, spotless righteousness,
the great unchangeable I AM,
the King of glory and of grace!
One with Himself I cannot die.
My soul is purchased with His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ, my Saviour and my God,
with Christ, my Saviour and my God.

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