

Preparing Internationals to Return Home as Effective Servants of Christ

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RETURNING HOME AS EFFECTIVE SERVANTS OF CHRIST

1. What is our vision?

God's love extended globally in partnership with spiritual vibrant international students.

Not every student is called to return home but the majority will return. Therefore...



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2. We must begin with the end in mind!

What is the end?

- Disciplemakers who will be able to continue to thrive, grow, and reproduce within their own cultural context without a Westernized version of Christianity.

How do we do this?

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A. Understand the difference between function and form (see handout).



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B. Early in the process of helping a student to follow Jesus, use forms that will best match the forms in the home culture.



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Discuss how the following forms/areas could be modified to best prepare a study to return home successfully:

- Language
- Church structure
- Discipleship materials
- Discipleship topics
- Music and worship forms
- Style of communication
- Decision making
- Bible study methods
- Other:

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C. Help students identify with and understand what God has already been doing within their own culture.

- Biographies of men and women of faith within their own culture.
- The history of the church in their culture.
- Current situation of the church in their culture.

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D. Help students to understand the Biblical
view of persecution.



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E. Help students to start a house church.



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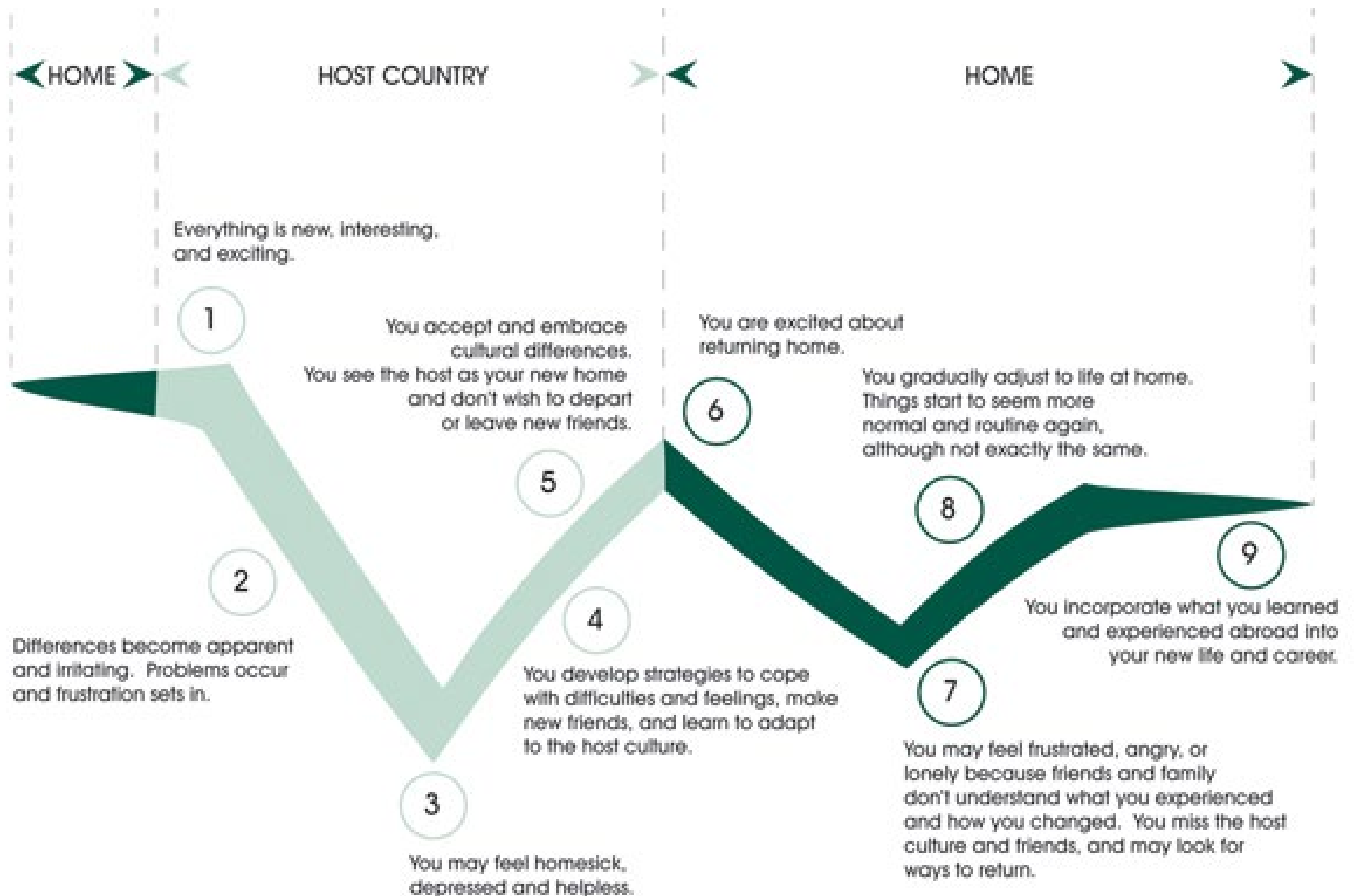
3. Help students prepare to face “reverse culture shock.”



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REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK



REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

1. Low context VS. High context
2. Simple situation VS. Complex situation
3. Christianity as majority VS. Christianity as minority
4. Democracy VS. Totalitarianism
5. Freedom of speech VS. ideological control
6. Internet freedom VS. internet blockade
7. Political participation VS. political repression
8. Working environment: the quality of returnees are lower, not that compatible; long working hours
9. The local culture's exclusive reaction to the returnees
10. Family pressure, social environment, transportation etc.

RETURNING HOME AS EFFECTIVE SERVANTS OF CHRIST

Some solutions:

- Read and study together reentry materials. (See resource guide at website)
- Take a trip home together.
- Introduce to returnee fellowship groups.



THE CHALLENGES FACED BY CHINESE BELIEVERS

1. Churches are being forced to close
2. Believers are asked to sign statements to renounce their faith
3. People under 18 can not go to church
4. All the teachers from primary schools to universities and people who work in the government have to report their faith situation

RESOURCES AND REFERRAL NETWORK

<https://columbus.ifipartners.org/returnee/>



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RETURNEE ENGLISH HANDBOOK



THRIVE RETREAT

2019 年北美振兴退修会 为归国基督徒而装备

Thrive Retreat – Equipping for True Success

A retreat designed for Chinese Christians who plan or expect to be returning to China soon.

Are you working with Chinese believers who have come to faith here in the US? Are any among them returning to China? You are probably concerned about the challenges they will face as young believers. Ideally, we want them to thrive and be devoted witnesses for Christ through their coming transition. The Thrive retreat brings together a small group of (10-15) believing Chinese who are returning to China sometime in the next year or so to help them to begin to prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead. The sad reality is that many who return as believers never make meaningful connection with the body of Christ or go on walking with and growing in the Lord. The Thrive retreat focuses on equipping Chinese believers for true success as they return to China.

Experience a safe space where international students/scholars and young professionals from China can explore more about themselves, and about Jesus, while preparing together for their return to China.

Join with Chinese and American believers who want you to experience true success.

Share with others who are also moving on from the US.

Hear from former international students from China, sharing the struggles they have faced in their lives as well as the joys in their journey of knowing God.

The Thrive Retreat is held in Mandarin. You will be challenged, leaving with some personal plans for how you can prepare for the changes ahead in your life.

Program Topics:

- Spiritual formation and renewal*
- Being a Christian in the family*
- Being a Christian in the workplace*
- Engaging with the church*
- Being a Christian in the world*

Location and Dates:

CLRC Lake Gaston Retreat Center
 191 Lost Forest Rd., Bracey, Virginia 23919
 October 24,2019. (6:30pm) - October 27, 2019. (1:30pm)
 \$50 registration before September 30th, \$75 after.
 Children’s program available, inquire for details.

Participant quotes:

- “very good training, preparation and resourcing for those of us returning and entering into church life back home.”*
- “helped to eliminate the fear of moving on and raised aware-ness of the spiritual needs back home.”*
- “very practical, and helped us a great deal. So many people need to be there.”*
- “location was also very beautiful and the scenery lovely.”*

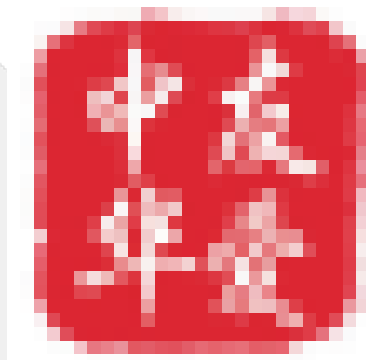
Contact and Registration: thrive.retreat@psmail.net Ben: 317-660-1758

Sponsoring Organizations:



Overseas Campus Ministries

11 ISM ORGANIZATIONS PARTNERING TOGETHER



CHINA
OUTREACH
MINISTRIES



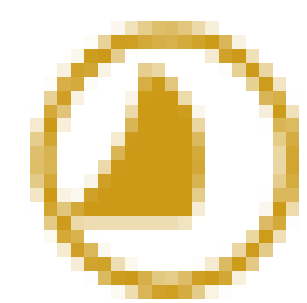
International
FRIENDSHIPS



ENTRY



IntroMinistry



navigators
International Students



International
Student
Ministries
Canada



HONG KONG RETURNEE SUMMIT

OCT. 2018



Form and Function

Function — Universal principles and practices from the Bible that transcend any one culture—functions need to be preserved and cannot change.

Form — Cultural expressions of following Jesus that are relevant through language, symbols, and behavioral practices and convey relevance and meaning to that specific people group. Forms can change according to the culture.

1. Is the gathering of believers on Sunday for teaching and fellowship an issue of form or function?
2. After conversion, is telling your family and friends that you have become a Christian an issue of form or function?
3. Are bread and juice part of the function or form of communion?
4. Is the celebration of Easter a matter of form or function?
5. Is personal reading of the Bible regularly an issue of form or function?
6. Is abstaining from food sacrificed to idols, from meat from animals that have been strangled, and from sexual immorality, an issue of form or function?
7. Is the celebration of the birth of Jesus an issue of form or function?
8. Is the church meeting in homes an issue of form or function?
9. Is singing songs of praise during the corporate gathering of a church an issue of form or function?
10. Is it OK for a follower of Christ from a Muslim background to continue to kneel and pray five a day? Is it an issue of form or function?
11. Can a believer honor saints or martyrs that have lived sacrificial lives in the past by praying in front of pictures of them? Is praying like this an issue of form or function?
12. At birth, if a child is given the name of a Hindu god as a part of being dedicated to that god, should he/she change his/her name after becoming a Jesus follower? Is changing the name a matter of form or function?
13. Is wearing a head covering for women a matter of form or function?
14. Is it OK to visit the graves of ancestors to present food, burn incense, pray, and bow down? Will this violate a Biblical function or it is simply a form?
15. When followers of Jesus from a Hindu background visit a Hindu house or temple and are offered food that has been offered to idols are they allowed to eat it? Is eating food offered to idols a matter of function or form?
16. When a follower of Jesus from a Muslim background is offered lamb meat that has been slaughtered in the Muslim festival of the EID should he/she receive it? Is eating food that is a part of Muslim religious ceremonies that celebrates God's rescue of "Ismael" a violation of function? Or is eating it a matter of form?

How many did you identify as forms? Functions?



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Workshop Topic and Track: Preparing Internationals to Return Home as Effective Servants of Christ

Date: Saturday, September 28

Resources: <https://columbus.ifipartners.org/returnee/>

Speaker: Richard Mendola/rmendola@ifiusa.org

1. Begin with the end in mind!

This means: _____

• The difference between form and function is: _____

• Examples of forms that would be helpful to prepare internationals to return home:

• One way to help students relate their faith to their culture is: _____

• The Bible's view of persecution: _____

• Help students start a house church!

2. Help students prepare to face "reverse culture shock."

• Reverse culture shock is _____

• Examples:

• 2 ways to help students prepare for reverse culture shock are:

3. The key place to go for resources and to help link a student to believers in their country is <https://columbus.ifipartners.org/returnee/>.

4. What did you learn that will be helpful in your ministry to internationals as it relates to preparing them to return home as effective servants of Jesus?