

Chad: In Turkey, I was used to that, too. If you come to someone's house and everyone's sitting around, everyone stands up and shakes your hand and you greet each other. Coming over here it's just different. There's still the feeling of respect but I guess they don't show it more outwardly. I remember one time playing video games with my friends. We were all lying on the ground and one of their parents came in and I just kind of instinctively jumped up on my feet and said hi or whatever, and I looked around and everyone else was still immersed and I was like, "Wow, I'm not in Turkey anymore!"

What can churches do to be supportive of missionary families when they're coming back?

Cherissa: I think one of the big things is listen to your story. Everyone needs a place to talk somewhere, and if you're coming back and you feel like nobody understands and nobody cares, that's really important. When somebody's coming back, the very first friends that you're making, that's all you've got. There were times when I would go to youth group and I had a few casual friends, and I would wish I could tell them: "You guys are like my closest friends and I hardly know you!" I think people just don't get that—what it means to start over completely. But just showing you care and you want to listen is a really big thing.

Bethany: It's hard for young people to be a friend. But it means a lot if you feel welcome and wanted there when you come back.

Chad: Be open-minded toward us. When people take a genuine interest in you—that always means a lot.

What would you tell parents or families with children who are going into missions?

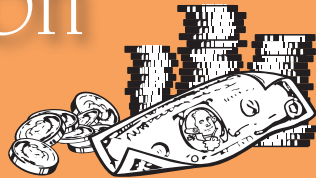
Cherissa: I would say the majority of missionary kids love it. There's a few that [think] "How could you do that to me and deprive me?" But especially if you're younger, the kids thrive on it and they don't regret that experience. And I would say that's generally probably the experience of missionaries, too. But realize that it's a challenge. And also, one of the things that I've heard said is, "You think it's hard to go, but it's going to be a lot harder to come back."

Because you're supposed to belong and you used to belong and now, you don't feel like you do. When [you are] overseas, you realize that in a sense you become a part of that culture but you are different, whereas here, you're different because of your past, but you're supposed to be the same. And that's a really big thing.

Bethany: Don't be afraid to let your kids be immersed in the culture. Just totally involve them. As much as you can, give them a ministry, also. That will help them and your church—kids attract kids. **B B**

For a student's perspective on what our MK's had to say at an RBC Coffee Shop Forum, visit www.rosedale.edu and check out Philip Troyer's article, "Stories That Challenge."

Uncommon Sense



Stewardship of Time

I'm grateful to my father-in-law, even though, at the time, he didn't know he was doing me a favor. He did it on a summer evening when my wife, Phyllis, was only ten years old.

That Saturday their family had worked hard getting ready for Sunday. They had mowed the church and parsonage lawns, cleaned the church, made food for Sunday lunch guests, and swept gravel from the concrete parking lot.

Phyllis remembers standing with her father in the moonlight, between the church and the parsonage, surveying the work. "This makes me feel good," Phyllis remembers her father saying. "It reminds me of some verses in Haggai. The Lord was upset that his people



Steve Swartz

were tending to their own house but neglecting the house of the Lord. Today we worked for the house of the Lord."

It was a pivotal moment that formed some of my wife's convictions about ministry today. It prepared her to give priority to kingdom needs and resulted in my having a partner in ministry. Phyllis works with me, not against me. She gives her time freely, not grudgingly.

In a day when personal boundaries are all the rage, it is a good idea to consider these excerpts from verses Haggai 1: 2-10, (NIV) and to be generous in offerings of time for kingdom needs.

"These people say, 'The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built'..... Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai, 'Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin? Give careful thought to your ways..... What you brought home, I blew away. Why?....Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.'"

Boundaries with time make sense, of course, but sometimes God requires uncommon sense.