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Re-entry and Belonging:

Policy and procedure enhancement for re-entry based on evaluating experiences
from students in a Mennonite German-speaking short-term mission program

by

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ABSTRACT

Developing a sense of belonging plays a significant role in successful re-entry. The sense of belonging is nurtured through accountable relationships, good communication, awareness and understanding of re-entry stress, and the ability to manage change. Research findings confirm statements in relevant literature about the impact of a meaningful cooperation of returnees, programs, families, friends and home churches. Investing discipleship resources in returning short-term mission participants enable returnees to re-structure their lives, to re-adjust and to implement what they learned from their international experience, and to more effectively contribute to their church's witness in a post-Christendom environment.

A survey of a Mennonite German-speaking short-term mission program was created to acquire data from the various stake-holder groups in order to enhance the program's policies and procedures, and to see if and what Mennonite core beliefs and practices can contribute to a successful re-entry of participants into church and community life. The survey was conducted as an Appreciative Inquiry to identify the program's positive aspects and successful practices. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to interpret data and to develop a theory. Action research with students and their contact persons created room to share, to evaluate the program's procedures and to define helpful tools for re-integration. This research also fostered awareness of problems or obstacles encountered by each of the participating agents. Complex Adaptive Systems Theory was used to help define possible roles of returnees, programs, churches,

families and friends for re-integration. The study generated an important insight: Mennonite-Anabaptist core beliefs and practices can be a key factor in both teaching and action related to successful re-entry.

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Abbreviations

AEM   **Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelikaler Missionen, Deutschland**

German Evangelical Fellowship, a network of mission organizations and theological seminaries located in Germany that support missionaries worldwide. www.aem.de

AEM   **Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Missionen, Schweiz**

Swiss German Protestant Fellowship, a network of mission organizations and theological seminaries located in Switzerland that support missionaries worldwide. www.aem.ch

GDTA   **Global Disciple Training Alliance**

The "Get it!" program is a member program of the Global Disciple Training Alliance, a worldwide network of more than 96 discipleship-mission training programs from more than 25 nations. Independent and locally managed, Alliance members share similar core values and goals, even though they represent a variety of Christian denominations. Each is connected to a local cluster of churches in its region. GDTA members identify eight essential components for effective discipleship and mission training programs (communion with God, Holy Spirit empowerment, Christ-like relationships, biblical truth, dying to self and living for Christ, the body of Christ, evangelism and compassion, and world mission). http://globaldisciples.net/English/Pages/ Tracks/GDT%20Alliance.html. See also Appendix 22.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This study aims to enhance policies and procedures for re-entry of mission participants into normal family and church life. It is related to the experience of students in a Mennonite,[1] German-speaking short-term mission program. The "Get it!" program is part of the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg (Theological Seminary),[2] located in Liestal, Switzerland. Most students, ages 20-34, who participated in the program between 1998 and 2010 belong to a Mennonite church. Therefore the study aims to highlight how Mennonite faith and identity can connect with re-entry experiences of students in a discipleship and mission program. The following sections introduce the reader to the context of the "Get it!" program, the researcher's role in the institution and describe the research problem.

1.1. The Institutional Context of the Researcher's Ministry

The Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg offers education for ministerial formation as well as Christian education, seminars for lay people and discipleship training, so that Mennonite identity is reflected upon and strengthened in church members. The institution understands theological education as critical for the church's identity, mission and reality; its overall task is to support and renew the church in its mission. The Ausbildungs- und

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[1] With J Roth (2005, 15) the researcher uses the interchangeable "term Anabaptist-Mennonite as a way of emphasizing the radical theological conviction that gave rise to the Mennonites."

[2] The original name "Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg" is used in the thesis. The translation in English is "Theological Seminary Bienenberg".

Tagungszentrum Bienenberg is rooted in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition,[3] which can trace its roots back to the European Reformation. That tradition is part of the historic Peace Church movement, which has a distinctive commitment to social responsibility and engagement in issues of peace and reconciliation. The Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg was founded in 1950 as the European Mennonite Bible School in Basel by the Mennonite churches of France, Germany and Switzerland, and is supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).[4] The institution has always offered programs in French and German, and continues to have two distinct language departments. Its theological profile is described in Appendix 1.

1.2. The Researcher's Roles in the Institution

Since 1998, the researcher has been part of the professor team for the three-year Bible College program (which leads to the Bachelor of Theology degree). She is also part of the executive staff of Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg, served as Academic Dean of the program from 2002 to 2007, and directed a one-year Bible School program that was offered

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[3] Mennonites are a Protestant religious-cultural group with origins in 16th-century Anabaptist movements. Their name derives from a former Dutch priest and religious leader, Menno Simons . They believe that true Christian life requires a mature adult commitment to follow the teachings of Jesus, which is symbolized by adult rather than infant baptism. They are religious radicals in the sense that they believe that Jesus's teachings should be applied holistically to all aspects of a believer's life. That includes, among other things, Jesus's admonition that his disciples should not hate or kill their enemies: they should love those who hate them and do good to those who do them harm. Before 1950 , many Mennonites thought it was easier to follow those ideals in relatively separated rather than in open secular communities (Regehr 2004)
    For more information, see Chapter 2.

[4] MCC (2009) "seeks to demonstrate God's love by working among people suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disaster. MCC serves as a channel for interchange by building mutually transformative relationships."

from 2007 to 2009. Her main roles at the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg since 1998 have been director, coordinator and teacher in the "Get it!" program. One of the seminary's roles is to support Mennonite congregations in fulfilling their vision and mission; therefore, the researcher has been part of a strategic planning group for the Swiss Mennonite Mission[5] in 2008, and agreed to serve on the Mission's board of managing directors from September 2009 to October 2010 in order to help implement a new structure. Since September 2010, she works part-time in a team of two, both of which serve as executive directors for the Swiss Mennonite Mission.

1.3. Context of Specified Ministry: Mission and Vision of the "Get it!" Program

One of the researcher's primary tasks is to direct, coordinate and teach in the "Get it!" program, an international school of discipleship providing spiritual formation for young adults, mostly from Anabaptist/Mennonite churches. Young people, ages 18-35, are invited for three months of training followed by six months of in-field learning, either abroad or within the context of a cross-cultural team. The students are given one week of debriefing which completes the course. The six-month outreach assignment[6] helps participants to identify with the host culture and thus deepens the learning impact. Friesen (2004a, 218) in his study of the impact of short-term missions on the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of young adults states that a good pre-trip and post-trip discipleship training is a major factor both for faith development and to process and transfer experiences

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[5] See Definition of Terms 1.6.7.
[6] See Definition of Terms 1.6.6.

The "Get it!" program partners with churches and supports the church in its mission. It assumes that God calls and sends the church to participate in God's mission, the *missio Dei*.[7] The nature of the church is to demonstrate God's reign, to be a contrast society. Participants in the program learn about this vocation of the church, its relationship to the world and how to be responsive to the culture (Shenk 2006). They are encouraged to become more like Jesus by pursuing a committed relationship with the Father: to understand and recognize God's purposes in the world; to grow in a Christ-like character; to foster godly relationships; and to develop a christocentric lifestyle of prayer, Bible study, witness and service. Students are educated in biblical knowledge and they reflect on their set of beliefs to deepen their (mostly) Mennonite identity. Self-awareness is fostered. Spirituality is nurtured that perseveres and is radical in obedience to Jesus, who invites his followers to imitate him and to participate in his life and mission. Augsburger (2006, 13) describes this genuine Anabaptist[8] spirituality: "Tripolar spirituality, by definition, possesses three dimensions: ... The spirituality of personal transformation ... the experience of divine encounter ... and the relation of integrity and solidarity with neighbour...."

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[7] The ecumenical discussion about mission that began in the 1950s engendered the term "missional." In his book *One Body. One Gospel. One World* (1958), Lesslie Newbigin defined the term by three characteristics: Western society is a mission field; Mission is about the missio dei; the nature of the church is to be a contrast society. His influence led to the foundation of the Gospel and Our Culture program in the 1980s. Darrell Guder and Lois Y. Barrett helped to develop the missional understanding of the church in North America in the late 1980s. See Chapter 2.9. for a more detailed description.

[8] "'Anabaptist' is an invented name meaning 're-baptizers.' It was given to Christians who, during the sixteenth-century Reformation, rejected infant baptism, and instead baptized each other as adults upon confession of faith. Anabaptists were the forerunners of the Free Church tradition, which included the Mennonites" (Becker 2008, 2).

In the "Get it!" program training, a place and framework is provided in which Christians can experience this spirituality described by Augsburger. Students learn new perspectives through the program's framework of teachings, performing internships in partnership with churches and serving the society in a holistic, contextually relevant way. During their in-field assignment students live in solidarity with poor and marginalized people, so that the love of God can be reflected. Outreach assignments are carried out in conjunction with local partners (i.e., in Kenya, Canada, Chad, Tanzania, Indonesia, Paraguay) and often open doors to working together on common problems, needs and goals. The "Get it!" program is part of the "Global Disciples Training Alliance" (GDT). See Appendix 22 for more details. Cooperation with global partners not only fosters understanding and respect, it also generates a sense of shared accomplishment. These benefits, mutually experienced, reinforce the value of working side by side. The teaching phase is influenced by this international partnership and cultural sensitivity is fostered.

The "Get it!" participants experience a different framework of mission and are trained to embrace God's activities as sent people. This shift changes their understanding of mission and in turn, usually challenges home churches and their perspectives of mission. Conflicts can easily arise when returnees have changed worldviews, beliefs and attitudes, worship styles or expressions of faith and are no longer loyal to former perspectives. The program enables students as best as possible to integrate their newly acquired knowledge and experiences into service and to serve others in humble boldness within their cultural setting. They reflect

on new insights and values they have gained and on how to integrate them into
their daily lives and lifestyles when they return. Through a period of debriefing
following their outreach assignment, and before returning home, students are
given a first opportunity to reflect on their experiences, to reconcile themselves
with failures and conflicts, to learn about possible re-entry symptoms, to prepare
for change at home, to reflect on how to integrate what they have learned and to
evaluate their participation in the "Get it!" program. Quality training and
debriefing contribute to ongoing spiritual growth (Borthwick 1996, 403-408).

Students are to contribute within the congregations what they have learned
in order to support the vision of a missional[9] church. The church and the returnee
can contextualize the unchanging gospel message in their given culture. The "Get
it!" program encourages congregations to get involved in the program, thereby to
design and influence these transformations together.

1.4. Cultural Factors Shaping the Program

Western culture has shifted from Christendom to post-Christendom, and
from modernity to post-modernity. The "Get-it!" program was developed with the
conviction that Anabaptist-Mennonite core beliefs provide a helpful framework to
equip Christian believers to engage the demands of a post-Christendom culture
with the good news of God's kingdom.

Stuart Murray (2004) defines "post-Christendom" as a culture "in which
central features of the Christian story are unknown and churches are alien

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[9] See chapter 2.9. for a more detailed description.

institutions whose rhythms do not normally impinge on most members of society." He identifies the shift for the church as a movement from the centre to the margins; from a majority to a minority; from settlers to sojourners; from privilege to plurality; from control to witness; from maintenance to mission; and from institution to movement. In post-Christendom Europe, for example, churches once close to power complain about pluralism, individualism, and a decline of ethical values. The Christian story is becoming unknown; church structures and concepts no longer fit as the Christian faith lose its coherence within society as a whole. In the 1990s Bishop Wolfgang Huber (1998, 223), former Chairperson of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, noted broad scepticism toward the church as institution, and a significant decline in church attendance. The "Get it!" participants belong, return and reintegrate into this social reality.

Other aspects of this same social reality can be helpfully identified with the term post-modernity. Post-modernity suggests a movement beyond (or expansion upon) "modernity" and questions Enlightenment-era certainties. Post-modernity "responds to the once perceived observable, measurable and repeatable reality of modernity with fragmentation, polarization, and syncretism" (Keel 2007, 105, 108). In post-modernity, people deconstruct all meta-accounts of reality, including the biblical meta-narrative. The great stories by which our lives have been ruled do not matter any longer. Everybody's story matters and everybody needs to interpret it. Knowledge is generated through the ability to connect different realities and perceptions. In particular, post-moderns have lost

trust in institutions, and especially the church; they define and create spiritual experiences for themselves. Churches are seen as closed systems, unable and unwilling to speak to postmodernists or to accept their opinions (Kurz 2005, 21, 99).

Post-Christendom and post-modern Western society challenges Christians to think creatively and courageously about what it really means to follow Jesus, what discipleship, church and mission must look like in this context. Schnegg (2007, 49-51) describes the spiritual and sociological culture in Switzerland to which "Get it!" students return, and discusses some possible approaches: The church can attract Swiss people of today when it is a movement of passionate believers; when concepts and decisions are initiated and made by lay members; when structures empower believers to act out of faith; when truth can be experienced and processed; when biblical texts, doctrines and beliefs are interpretable; and when community is lived and formed in equality. According to Stuart Murray (2005) churches might be worth staying in rather than leaving when God is at the centre, rather than the program; when authentic friendships are nurtured rather than institutional belonging; when churches are self-critical; when they treat adults as adults and encourage spiritual development; when they foster dialogue and participation rather than performance; when they welcome questions, encourage expressions of doubt, anger and lament as well as joyful certainty; when they engage creatively and sensitively with contemporary culture and social issues; equip members for the world of work and discipleship beyond the congregation, and embrace a holistic understanding of mission. Keel (2007)

also suggests strongly that Christians of the twenty-first century should form a community of faithful Christ-followers who together love God and one another, and then live in the world within that strength.

Historian Alan Kreider (2008) argues convincingly that in a post-Christendom context, the church can gain new insight and strength by rediscovering wisdom from the pre-Christendom church. The early church grew in an inhospitable environment, according to Kreider, not because of evangelism, attractive worship, or a good reputation. Rather, the early church grew because Christians were "interesting" people who posed important questions linked to the addictions of the day. People looked at Christians and their practices (hospitality, simple life-style, loving and forgiving their enemies, etc.) and were intrigued. The churches believed in God's power through prayer, they had a unique sense of identity and their behaviour was distinctive. Christians were addressing central questions of daily life and demonstrated a kingdom lifestyle, and awakened faith, hope and love.

The "Get-it!" program was designed by its constituency churches to contribute to the formation of Christians for this context. It assumes that the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, which rejected Christendom almost five centuries ago, also offers significant practices and approaches (learned on the edges of Christendom) that may also witness effectively in a post-Christendom context. Stuart Murray Williams (2010) writes:

> For nearly 500 years, [the Anabaptist tradition] has represented an
> alternative way of discipleship, church and mission. Having rejected the
> Christendom shift, Anabaptists have explored different perspectives on all
> kinds of issues and have experimented with different practices. Though far

from perfect, it does offer fresh insights that are far more suitable for post-Christendom than the mainstream traditions we have inherited from Christendom.

Mennonite core beliefs or practices focus on discipleship (following Jesus), involving all people in discerning God's will and decision-making (hermeneutic community).[10] They understand "the priesthood of all believers" to mean that only when all gifts and talents work together, can the body of Christ demonstrate God's love. This requires the presence and gifts of those otherwise seen as poor or needy. They seek to live in solidarity with the poor and they reject violence. In choosing to live simple and hospitable lifestyles, they have traditionally sought to model the "upside-down" Kingdom of God to the kingdoms of the world.

The following table attempts to correlate the broader elements of post-Christendom Western society, the core practices of the Christian community in an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective, and key, formational emphases in the training and re-entry phases of the "Get-it! Program. In the following chapters, these aspects (core Anabaptist practices and the elements of successful re-integration of returnees) will be unfolded in greater detail.

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[10] On Mennonite core convictions, see Section 2.5.below. See also Lapp and Snyder 2006.

Table 1.4.1. Correlation: Post-Christendom, Core Mennonite Beliefs, Re-
Integration

Elements to Successfully Re-integrate Short-termers	Mennonite Core Practices	Expectations of Post-Christendom Society
Accountability	Discipleship, following Jesus	Passion, authenticity
Being involved again	Community	Participation
Change management	Priesthood of believers	Empowering structures
Relationships	Kingdom mentality (alternative community)	Experiencing truth
Knowing and processing re-entry stress	A culture of peace	Dialogue
Church offers identity building	Hermeneutic community	Respect for multiple voices/ perspectives
Belonging	Hospitality	Community (in context of fragmentation)

The table above suggests that Mennonites can offer a significant history of experience to the broader, ecumenical church in post-Christendom Europe. Their core convictions provide a fresh framework to equip believers to operate as missionaries in the post-religious, and increasingly multi-religious, European context. Specifically, the "Get-it!" program is designed so that participants return from their short-term cross-cultural assignments with a fresh conviction that Christians are to be "salt and light," an alternative society, and as such a demonstration of where God is taking the whole creation. Participants have deepened their understanding about the nature of the church as the locus of God's presence in Jesus Christ for the sake of the world. The researcher's data will suggest that belonging is the key integrating factor for the table above. Constituent Anabaptist-Mennonite churches and returnees are well-positioned to be mutually strengthened in their common witness to God's kingdom in a post-

Christendom context. The research below seeks to make a contribution to this kind of successful "re-integration."

Missiologist Wilbert Shenk (2005) challenges Western churches to reflect on "the contemporary missiological significance of [their] faith tradition. If a faith tradition is unable to engage the present situation in such a way that awakens in our contemporaries faith, hope and love, it has become irrelevant." European Christians and especially Mennonites today need to ask themselves: How can churches live faith that presents the gospel effectively and attractively to post-Christendom people? Attending church and being a church member is no longer considered an important part of European life. How can Christians live and demonstrate that God's Spirit indeed can renew lives and heal brokenness? How can Christians identify with the local culture, and yet give each of its expressions a distinctive, Christian emphasis? What does a non-conformist lifestyle in today's society look like? How can Christians voice their opinion in an inviting way? What should the church emphasize on? The Missional Church Movement (Bosch 1991, Guder 1998), the Spiritual Formation movement (Foster 1998, Willard 1988) and the Emerging Church movement (Kimball 2005, Vogt 2006, McLaren 2003) try to come with ideas.

An argument of this thesis, and an assumption of the "Get-it!" program, is that Mennonite core practices can contribute to a successful re-integration of returnees in a way which strengthens the church's mission in a post-Christendom culture.

1.5. Description of the Problem

1.5.1. Research Goals

Short-term missions[11] in general have experienced incredible growth since the early 1980s. Participation in short-term missions in the United States grew from 25,000 people in 1980 to 1.6 million in 2006 (Harms 2009). The number of German short-termers serving in foreign countries has raised from 575 in 2009 up to 742 in 2010 (AEM 2011). Christians become more personally engaged in mission. A cross-cultural missionary assignment that ranges from one week to two years offers a wide variety of experiences for those doing "short-term mission." These experiences sharpens the lens of how Christians see and do missions. Thus, a shift is taking place within short-term missionaries and mission programs. Mission is done with a holistic understanding of cultural and socioeconomic differences, in partnership with local churches. These partners learn from each other intentionally. Dialogue is vital in the international context. Those who embrace the perspectives and strategies of the local partners as God's activity normally change in attitudes and values. They then represent a different framework of mission. This shift usually challenges home churches and their perspectives of mission. Returnees do not prepare for or expect to come back to an environment that does not understand or accept that shift. Returnees and churches alike need to respond to that dynamic process within their

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[11] See Definition of Terms 1.6.7.

denominational identity as community of faith where people are discerning and participating in God's mission together.

Part of this doctoral project is to highlight how Mennonite community of faith can connect with re-entry experiences of students in a discipleship and mission program. The "Get it!" program is owned by Mennonite and Anabaptist churches and most of the participating students belong to these churches. With reference to the specific situation of Swiss and German Mennonite congregations, the project desires to show how certain Mennonite beliefs can assist reintegration. By motivating and involving them on a more strategic level, congregations may come to realize how much they can contribute to returnees' lives, strengthening the Mennonite identity and contributing together to become culturally effective in the world.

Mission programs and organizations need to cooperate with churches to promote the paradigm shift entailed in being missional.[12] God calls the church to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to teach a Jesus-centered discipleship that values gifts and proclaims kingdom-values in word and deed (Yoder 2001, 31-32). Re-entry would be a great deal easier if a person returned completely unchanged, or if he/she could quickly reverted to his/her old familiar self or if the community quickly changed to the returnees perspective Family, friends and home churches hold certain values and thus often expect returnees to be unchanged and to remain loyal to these values.

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[12] See Chapter 2.9. for a more detailed description.

In order to better shape a debriefing model and to help churches, families
and friends understand what experiences the students of a discipleship program
with short-term-mission assignments have undergone, it is important to
understand the phases of re-culture shock[13] and re-entry (also Pirolo 2000). The
problems and challenges of re-entry stress are described in a variety of studies.
Oberg first used the phrase "re-entry" in 1960 in regard to people who stay in a
foreign culture[14] for longer than a few weeks. Foyle (1995, 141) describes re-
entry shock as a reaction experienced when a person changes from a foreign
culture to a well-known home environment. According to M. Roth (1995, 79) re-
entry stress is the culture shock that occurs because of loss and disappointment in
the home culture.

Not all returnees struggle with re-integration. Re-entry stress depends on a
variety of factors[15] as is described by Pirolo (2000). Those who already have
international experience or strong relationships re-integrate easily (Neufeld 1999,
14-15). This study, however, focuses on those who do experience problems with
re-integration and therefore may not reflect all returnees' experiences.

Developing a sense of belonging plays a significant role in successful re-
entry. The sense of belonging is nurtured through accountable relationships, good
communication, awareness and understanding of re-entry stress, and the ability to
manage change. Literature confirms that many (mostly young) people have

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[13] See Definition of Terms 1.6.3.

[14] See Definition of Terms 1.6.1.

[15] See Chapter 3.5.for areas of concern that complicate the process for a
successful completion of re-entry.

difficulty working through their experiences and re-adapting. They long to belong to their network of friends and to the church family again, but do not know how to bridge the gap created by their experiences. Such returnees are often preoccupied with their new ideas, which may cause some people in their home congregation to feel provoked. The students expect to come home and find things unchanged, but are helpless to deal with the emotions and stress of re-entry. As a result, misunderstandings can prevent a fruitful transformation for both sides.

The expectations of returnees and home congregations often collide and weaken cultural encounters in which both parties could, in fact, benefit from one another (Austin 1986, Jordan (992, Foyle 1995, Storti 2003, Oberg 1960, Pirolo 2000, Weaver 1987 and LaBrack 2000b). These researchers also agree that good communications and strong relationships are important for a successful return, as are qualities like social support, age, flexibility and awareness. The re-entry process should prepare students for what may happen to them as they begin to share what they have learned and how they can transfer these experiences into different social realities, such as their home cultures, home churches, families and friends. The "Get it!" program includes a focus on the reintegration of students returning to various social realities. The six-month outreach assignment transforms students and changes their theological perspectives, as well as how they understand and practice their faith. In a debriefing time, during which the students are introduced to the phases of re-entry, they learn how they can deal with the changes they have experienced, and what tools to use in order to best cope with the challenges awaiting them.

The dynamics described above require a distinctive understanding of the self, the church, and culture, as will be argued in Chapter Two. The "Get it!" program curriculum reflects the Mennonite understanding of the body of Christ. This understanding provides returnees with a very helpful framework how to process their experiences. The framework for understanding is Trinitarian: God the Father sends his Son, Jesus Christ to reconcile the world through suffering love by dying on the cross. In Christ, God creates a new community of believers gifted with God's Holy Spirit, entrusted with spiritual gifts, skills, talents and competencies to reach out to the world, and to proclaim the gospel and practice a culture of peace. Mennonite theology emphasizes certain practices, such as: fostering discipleship and accountable relationships to support a Christ-like, hospitable life-style; the priesthood of believers; a hermeneutic community, making decisions together; and responding to the needs of people through economic sharing. By equipping believers to demonstrate a kingdom mentality (i.e., as an alternative to the kingdoms of the world) to follow Jesus in all areas of life, and to seek to creatively embody what the world will ultimately be in Christ, this ecclesiology offers a safe and supportive place to process re-entry shock, and to find ways to transfer knowledge gained.

In order to benefit from the experiences gained abroad or in another cultural context, students/missionaries and churches need to have a better, more complex understanding of the intercultural knowledge gained. Often, returning students/missionaries do not adequately combine their experiences with their personal lives at home in genuine, creative ways, because their lack of

understanding about re-entry. This observation is crucial to prevent

students/missionaries from simply compartmentalizing their time spent abroad or

in another culture. It is also very important not only to teach the returnees, but

also to involve their families, friends, mission societies and churches in a learning

process, as well. Friesen (2004a, 15, cf. Pirolo 2000,14) states in his research,

"Virtually no resources are going into following up with these participants and

their home churches to ensure that the positive changes that participants are

reporting translate into ongoing change." Family, friends and home churches have

other priorities and are not expected to hold returnees' hands and relieve them of

re-entry symptoms. But when congregations can name their hopes and

expectations as related to their members who participate in discipleship programs

or mission experiences, a better understanding can grow, program inputs and

learning goals can be adapted, and necessary steps can be taken by all parties

involved. When churches and returnees work together on their understanding of

church, then what students/missionaries learn about relevant cultural questions

can benefit both sides.

This research project aims to enhance the "Get it!" program's model of re-

entry and seeks to build awareness in churches, families and friends as to what

they can contribute to a successful re-integration. Re-integration is defined as

successful when returnees have been able to re-integrate into their social realities

as thoroughly as possible.

A survey was devised to better understand how "Get it!" alumni have

experienced re-entry, what was helpful for a good reintegration and how students

can be better prepared and supported so that the return home is a successful process. The researcher asked "Get it!" alumni, their contact persons,[16] and some of their home congregations to complete a questionnaire on the dynamics of the re-entry process. Follow-up interviews with alumni from each program year from 1998 to 2010 helped to identify necessary changes. The survey was conducted as an Appreciative Inquiry to identify the program's positive aspects and successful practices. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to interpret data and to develop a theory. Action research with students and their contact persons created room to share, to evaluate the program's procedures and curriculum and to define helpful tools for re-integration.

1.6. Definitions of Terms

1.6.1. Contact Person

Each "Get it!" student must find a contact person who will support, mentor and encourage him/her during his/her "Get it!" experience. That person should be a Christian from the student's home church who can bridge the gap between congregation, student and program. The contact person plays an important role, providing and organizing prayer support, instigating a commissioning service and making sure that the home church is informed about the student's experiences and the program itself. He/she helps the student bridge the gap between the familiar situation at home and the new situation in the outreach assignment, as well as upon return home. Insights gained through

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[16] Each "Get it!" student chooses a contact person to support, mentor and encourage him/her during his/her "Get it!"term. See Definition of Terms 1.6.1.

ministry, in which the "Get it!" student has been involved, can benefit the home church when realized and integrated. Successful reintegration can provide a global perspective, a bond with the partner church and a wider horizon for all parties involved. The contact person, here, serves as an important communication resource. Through him/her, the home church is then aware of transformations that might take place in the life of the student; thus, the contact person can help prepare for a better reintegration experience when the student returns home. Former contact persons were asked to complete questionnaires about their views and experiences, as well as for their recommendations for enhancing the relationships between future contact persons and "Get it!" students. They contributed important insights to the action research process described in sections 4.6., 5.6. and 5.7.

1.6.2. Culture

Culture has been defined as a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, norms and artifacts that shapes and influences perception and behaviour, and also as customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. This study relates to culture as a social form that is defined by values, norms and artifacts. Culture is a design for living, a mental roadmap. During short-term mission assignments this roadmap can be changed

1.6.3. Culture Shock

Culture shock was first described by Oberg (1954) as a malady that occurs when a person lives abroad and that is "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg 1954, 1). Oberg identifies the following as symptoms of culture shock: a feeling of helplessness, fits of anger, frustrations, that terrible longing to be back home and to talk to people who really make sense. Individuals differ greatly in the degree in which culture shock affects them (1954, 2).

Safety Abroad (2010) defines culture shock as "...the reaction one faces when confronted with a new cultural environment; the effect of going from one culture into another. By the time you begin orienting yourself, you could be experiencing the first signs of culture shock."

Lysgaard (1955) describes the process of culture shock with a U-curve,[17] illustrating how persons who enter a new culture experience a "honeymoon" at first, but then must deal successfully with crisis before they can feel comfortable in the new culture. Oberg (1954) describes the same process as a follow up of excitement – crisis – recovering. Peter Adler (1975) used the U-curve to identify five phases of culture shock: (Honeymoon-Phase, Phase of Disintegration, Phase of Reintegration; Autonomy; and Interdependency) and holds that culture shock is valuable as a positive means toward maturity. Gullahorn (1963) maintained that re-entry into the home culture initiates a new culture shock and described it with a

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[17] See Appendix 25.

W-Curve[18] (Safety Abroad 2010). Smalley (1963) observed that culture shock is initiated by the inability to communicate. Guthrie (1975) named it "culture tiredness."

1.6.4. Discipleship-based Short-term Mission Programs

These are programs providing a practice-oriented introduction to discipleship for young adults. Young people are invited for pre-training, followed by a period of in-field learning, either abroad or within the context of a cross-cultural team. A learning process is created while experiencing community living and serving those in need. Students are given one week of debriefing to complete the course. The kind of spirituality that is nurtured is one of perseverance and is radical in its obedience to Jesus, who invites his followers to imitate him and participate in his life and mission. Participants are encouraged to become more like Jesus. Spiritual growth is often an outcome of service experience. Programs within the Global Disciple Training Alliance give one third of their overall program length to discipleship instruction in pre- and post-field settings. Their code of best practices (Burkholder 2010, 6f.) defines several essential components of discipleship training: to deepen knowledge of God, to learn to see the world as Jesus did, to do the will of God, to be in Christ daily and to bear fruit that will last. A Circle of Praxis (Burkholder 2010, 5) is recommend to tie together teaching, application and reflection times. The components aim at intimacy with God, empowerment through the Holy Spirit, building healthy relationships, the

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[18] See Appendix 25.

centrality of Christ, the dying of the self and living for Christ, fellowship and accountability in the body of Christ, evangelism and compassion service, and world missions.

1.6.5. Outreach Assignment/In-Field-Learning

The researcher uses the term "outreach assignment" or "in-field learning" to describe a form of a missional outreach that embodies the following ideas: Christians share God's passionate love for his creation and creatures and should thus endeavour to represent God in all areas of life and in all contexts, and give witness to God's kingdom in deed and words. They reach out to others so that more people may experience God's love in Jesus Christ. Mission should be performed in a holistic way. The "Get it!" program cooperates and partners with (mostly) Mennonite congregations and supports their vision. Students are sent into contextually relevant missional work situations where they learn from and listen to people, interact and reflect on Scripture together, and apply their gifts and knowledge in humility. They serve in a holistic way, and therefore support local churches in their mission to care for people's physical and spiritual needs. The teaching phase is influenced through international partnerships and cultural sensitivity is fostered.

1.6.6. Short-term Missions

Short-term mission trips provide opportunities to grow as a disciple. It is a form of ministry that emphasizes evangelism and discipleship, serves those in need through word and action over a limited time (from one week to three years)

and is often conducted in a cross-cultural setting. Short-term missionaries often

have life-changing experiences and have the chance to live out biblical truths and

gain a better understanding of God's heart (Tuttle 2000, 137). Short-term mission

also helps people to mature spiritually, to become globally aware, to deepen their

compassion, to pray and give more willingly and to imitate servanthood

(Borthwick 1996, 405f.; Tuttle 2000, 124, 136). Tuttle (2000, 123) defines short-

term mission projects as "service related to special skills ... others may employ

physical labour ... some center on music, drama ... spiritual warfare, evangelism,

church planting... ." According to Tuttle (2000, 127), those students who

received high-quality training and debriefing reported significantly greater

spiritual impact from their short-term mission experiences. Tuttle (2000, 132)

consequently reasons that "quality training and debriefing are keys to effective

spiritual learning related to the short-term mission experience."

Barnes (1992, 376) describes the short-term mission movement as the

"perhaps most powerful force mobilizing new missionaries today." He is

convinced that short-term mission can motivate believers for a missionary career

on longer terms. Mission organizations and mission programs have become aware

that teams need to be trained and prepared properly, so that they can make an

impact on the local churches (Borthwick 1996; Tuttle 2000). Home churches

should commit to building disciples and should understand themselves as

important components of mission—through prayer and giving, as well as by

supporting teams logistically and morally, both in the field and upon returning

home. Borthwick (1996, 402) understands short-term mission teams as vital to the

"church's commitment to cross-cultural ministry." Barnes (1992, 380) stresses the priesthood of all believers to emphasize the role of the church as an agent to reinforce short-term mission experiences through a regular program of ministry at home (2000, 14): "Ongoing ministry is the antidote to the flash-in-the-pan experience... The tough lessons learned can't be allowed to lie fallow. Only by seeking out and ministering to the needy in the immediate community can one guard against slipping into familiar, old, and selfish behavior patterns."

Long-term benefits can be gained when all parties understand their importance. Then a real sense of partnership can be nurtured and a new vitality can take place in the home church.

1.6.7. The Swiss Mennonite Mission

From 1847 on, the Dutch Anabaptists (Doopsgezinde) participated in a mission committee, and their first missionary was sent to Java in 1851(Schweizerische Mennonitische Mission 2000). This was the beginning of a constant flow of missionaries. A Swiss couple was sent to do mission work in 1934. The Swiss Mennonite Conference also paid the costs of several missionaries toward the end of the nineteenth century. From 1941 to 1949, the Swiss Mennonites operated an informal mission committee. In the summer of 1950, the European Mennonites met in a mission conference in the Netherlands and decided to perform mission work together. The Dutch, German, French and Swiss Mennonites were asked to form national mission organizations and then establish a European Mission Committee for Evangelization (EMEK) in order to

coordinate mission work together. The Swiss Mennonite Mission (SMM)[19] was

thus founded in 1950 as the Swiss Mennonite Committee for Evangelization

(SMEK) (Schweizerische Mennonitische Mission 2000, 13-15). Thus, European

Mennonites coordinated mission work together for decades and also lived out a

model for reconciliation of former adversaries (from World War II). They worked

closely with churches and communities, and with international partners like the

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). When Switzerland was able to use its

overproduction in milk and butter to help developing countries, SMEK applied

for access to such products, together with development aid, so that they could

help Mennonites in Congo, Ethiopia and other countries where they were

engaged. The Swiss government, however, wished to deliver aid via a Swiss relief

organization, not a mission organization, and therefore SMEK created the Swiss

Mennonite Organization (SMO) in 1967. Mission and relief work was and is

understood as a complementing unity; Mennonites share God's love in Christ and

compassion for all by responding to basic human needs and working for peace

and justice (Mt 25:35). In this spirit, SMEK and SMO were merged to form the

Swiss Mennonite Mission (SMM) in January 1998.

1.7. Summary

Helping returnees in short-term mission programs to re-integrate

successfully in different social realities and to combine their international

experiences with their personal lives at home in genuine, creative ways requires

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[19] See Definition of Terms 1.6.8.

that program leaders develop new strategies for cooperation with families, friends and home churches. The study also aims to show how collaboration between discipleship programs and churches can help returning students deepen their transformations by applying the benefits of a congregational identity. The study is premised upon a certain theoretical understanding, among which a strong relationship with Mennonite congregations within Western Europe. The Mennonite understanding of the body of Christ thus shapes the understanding of the researcher, but this identity also offers attractive approaches in empowering returnees to live as authentic Christians in a post-Christendom society.

Chapter 2   Theological Rationale

The researcher's institution offers theological education, so that

Mennonite identity is reflected upon and strengthened in church members. With J.

Roth (2005:15) the researcher uses the interchangeable "term Anabaptist-

Mennonite as a way of emphasizing the radical theological conviction that gave

rise to the Mennonites." Mennonite beliefs can assist the re-entry process and re-

integration for short- and long-term missionaries. The cooperation of churches

and programs is crucial. This chapter will provide the reader with the theological

framework to which this thesis and its findings relates. This study relates to the

Shared Convictions, adopted by General Council of the Mennonite World

Conference in 2006. It also refers to the Mennonite Confession of Faith worked

out by two Mennonite groups in North America, the Mennonite Church (MC) and

the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). The confession "follows some

traditional patterns, but also introduces new elements in line with the Anabaptist

heritage" (The Mennonite Confession of Faith 2010). It has been translated into

German and is accepted by the constituency churches of the "Get it"" program.

2.1. Anabaptists: A Historical Summary

In this chapter some Mennonite/Anabaptist characteristics and core beliefs

are described as a framework of identification that can help those returnees who

belong to that denomination to re-integrate into their congregations. However, it

is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe all the different Anabaptist and

Mennonite understandings of theological core beliefs. A brief historical summary

will provide an introduction to the reader.

According to Snyder (2004, 16), those in the sixteenth century who practised the baptism of adult believers were Anabaptists. This movement sought spiritual renewal and biblical reform. There were three distinct baptising movements: the Swiss, the South German–Austrian and the North German-Dutch groups. They shared convictions such as being inspired by the Holy Spirit, reading the Bible without proper supervision, and responding to social, economic and political turmoil (Murray 2010,136).The Swiss group understood the church as a society of the redeemed, and baptism as a symbolic yet rational experience. They were radical in the restoration of New Testament Christianity and emphasized discipleship (Schrag 1956). Snyder (2004, 17) summarizes their common understanding as being the "fear of God, God's Word, true faith, deeds of love, confession of faith, baptism as a covenant, serving God, a holy life, steadfastness, and tribulation." One can also add a focus on discipleship and anti-clerical, anti-sacramental and anti-political convictions. The Schleitheim Confession (2011) provided them with a simple constitution, which added non-violence to the characteristics of Anabaptists. The South German–Austrian Anabaptists have been the more spiritualistic, independent movement, with a concern for social justice and strong apocalyptic elements. The Dutch Anabaptists had a more mystical, legalistic and eschatological view. Some movements were peaceful in the beginning, but became militant later, which led to the terrible events in Münster in 1534.In a third phase, the Dutch Anabaptists returned to their peaceful origins and ideals. A former priest, Menno Simons, emerged as a

central pastoral leader. He opposed the militants and his teachings were strictly biblical, aiming for a pure church.

Anabaptism as known today developed from these three groups. By 1528, many of the early Anabaptist leaders had been persecuted, tortured and killed. They formed a implicit ecclesiology, underveloped systematically. However, their initial reflections nurtured a rich theological understanding as described in the following sections.

2.2. The Peace Witness

In general, Mennonites take up an incarnational perspective: faith finds expression in daily life and is always non-coercive. Mennonites therefore offer a gospel of peace, centred upon Christ. In his widely read work, John Roth (2005) argues that Mennonites understand themselves as a hermeneutical community and see themselves as sent to the world. The Mennonite hermeneutic acts on the assumption that every believer can read and hear God's Word through the congregation. The theology and practice of discipleship is an important part of the Mennonite/Anabaptist faith and provides a crucial approach to biblical authority. God invites believers to participate in the new creation. This participation in equality is enabled by the Spirit and is embodied in the new community of reconciliation through obedience and commitment in following Jesus. The community of believers discerns and interprets the Bible together. Christ is the benchmark for interpretation. When they gather in readiness to hear, the Spirit helps them to interpret God's word and to respond in obedience. In Mt 18, Jesus

gave his disciples authority to "bind and loose"; therefore, the community of believers has authority to discern God's will for its life.

Mennonite theology seeks to integrate peace into life and to practice grace (A. Kreider, E. Kreider and Widjaja, 2005, 1). The biblical background is the Abrahamic promise to be a blessing to all nations (Gen 12:1-3) and to reconcile enemies in "a bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). God's family is one of forgiveness and reconciliation (Mt 5:43ff., Luke 6:27ff.). God offers reconciliation through his suffering love. The crucifixion of Jesus is the deepest expression of God's love. The lamb conquers through the power of love. God took the first step; he paid the price of sin and did not demand restitution. The love of enemies is the very nature of God. People were saved although being enemies (Rom 5:1, 10) and are called to bring peace (1 Cor 7:15, Heb 12:14, Eph 2). The method of proclaiming the gospel must be consistent with the non-coercive substance of the message. The authors of "*A Culture of Peace*" (Alan Kreider, E. Kreider and Widjaja) evoke this idea when they summarize that "peace is our response to God's action" (2005, 3). Kreider (A. Kreider, E. Kreider and Widjaja 2005, 4) consequently says, that "the church's task is to pass on Jesus' way."

2.3. Salvation by Grace Through Faith; Following Christ in Daily Life

Anabaptists and Mennonites believe in justification by faith, but also stress the fruits of faith. Important leaders like Balthasar Hubmaier, Menno Simons and Michael Sattler were convinced that preaching leads to repentance (Pipkin and Yoder 1985, 415, 521; Hoekema and Kuitse 1997). Yielding to God's will is the appropriate answer to God's salvation. Redeemed sinners then become

new creations and the Holy Spirit enables them to follow Jesus daily, to change

conduct and to witness about God's grace and power. Without Christ they can do

nothing (Jn 15), but by his grace they live a Christ-like life and are obedient to his

commands. Works are not salvation's cause, but righteous works arise from a

changed heart. Jesus is the centre of our faith. Hans Denck, a sixteenth-century

Anabaptist leader, said, "But the medium is Christ whom no one can truly know

unless he follows after him in daily life, and no one may follow him unless he has

first known him" (Denck II, 1956, 45,also: Denck, Hans. Quoted in Walter

Klaassen. ed.1981). Believers surrender to God, follow him in "Gelassenheit,"[20]

in the same willingness to suffer and yield their will to God as Christ did.

Anabaptists insist on the unity of inward obedience, outer sign and external

obedience. Adult baptism is the "covenant of a good conscience toward God" (1

Pet 3:21), the pledge of a complete commitment to obey Christ. Recipients of

grace are made into its agents. With this understanding returnees can learn to do

what they have understood and learned.

2.4. The Body of Christ

The body of Christ is formed by those who have experienced a conversion

and new birth through God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. The

Anabaptist community of faith is shaped by a voluntary commitment of its

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[20] According to Snyder (2004, 163), *Gelassenheit* is "a spiritual principle that could be measured by visible manifestations …one's entire way of living could be read as a book, revealing one's degree of Gelassenheit … . Faith [is] about trust evidenced in obedience in life." Finger (2004, 123) states that for some groups like the Hutterites, *Gelassenheit* "became outward not only in personal Jesus-like behavior but also in structured communal forms." These communities had a missional impulse and called others to surrender to Christ, resembling God in his nature and to produce righteous works.

members to follow Christ in daily life and to be accountable to one another and to

God. They commit themselves to holy living and discipleship. Following after

Christ "is carried out in community and is deepened by mutual obligations of

love" (Snyder 2004, 138). The community acts according to Mt18:15-18 and

believers yield to the collective will. As witnesses, Mennonites strive to

acknowledge their different gifts, talents, traditions and knowledge. God has

created humans different and unique. When people belong to the body of Christ,

there should be diversity in unity through this belonging. Yoder-Neufeld (2007)

interprets and refers to Eph 2:13ff., which explains why humans can be reconciled

and how they are "fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's

household" (Eph 2:19). Forgiveness removes the walls between men and God,

and between each other. Eating the Lord's Supper together is a fellowship

experience made possible by that forgiveness (Becker 2008, 10), which is seen as

a means toward community. The Lord's Supper is also intended to celebrate the

manifestation of an intimate spiritual relationship with God and between one

another (Becker 2008, 99) and to explore one's conscience. Discipline carries the

danger of rigidity and strict legalism. Some Anabaptists emphasized the ideal of a

pure congregation "without blemishes or wrinkles," which was often linked to a

concentration of power in the hands of a few elders. Snyder (2004, 88, quoting

Simons 1956, 411f) agrees with Menno Simons that mutual obligation must be

carried out in a spirit of love to reconcile: "If you see your brother sin, then do not

pass him by ... [but] raise him up by gentle admonition...."

Anabaptists are convinced that faith must be based on God's word. Right from the beginning, the Anabaptists expected their members to know God's word and to be able to give reasons for their beliefs and behaviour. Scripture must be interpreted together and should result in the spiritual and moral betterment of the people. Christ's life and words are the benchmark for this interpretation. Such a hermeneutic community provides a framework for returnees to discern their experiences in the light of Scripture and within the community of believers they belong to.

Mennonites have traditionally understood themselves being part of God's larger story, participating in his mission into the world, willing and prepared to pay the cost, to suffer if need be. Christians do not belong to this world or its rulers (Col 1:13, Eph 2:12), they are resident aliens. "The world would not tolerate the practice of true Christian principles in society, and the church could not tolerate the practice of worldly ways among its membership. Hence, the only way out was separation" (Bender 2004, 15). Often Anabaptists haven fallen prey to a legalistic, rigid polarity between world and church, such that separation took place without solidarity and appreciation of others. By being peacemakers and sharing God's gifts, Christians should bring healing and hope to the global community. The gifts with which they have been entrusted are a call to service. By serving especially the persons on the periphery of society and those who are victims of violence and oppression, Christians express the messianic character of a faithful church. Active love must depend on God's grace and the knowledge that God acts in history. Snyder (2004, 26f.) describes the body of Christ as a

visible gathering of saints in the world, living a new and holy life with a christocentric understanding of spirituality. Believers together follow Christ's example and so witness to the world. Forming a new community as an alternative to the surrounding society is a consequence, which has an eschatological dimension. The body is missional and has several functions: it is a community of believers that invites people to be reconciled with God, men and creation (*koinonia*); it must proclaim the gospel through word and deed (*kerygma* and *diakonia*); it witnesses through daily life and persecution (*martyria*); and it celebrates and worships God (*leiturgia*). The church participates in the "*Missio Dei*" in bold humility, knowing well that they are resident aliens[21] and wounded healers.[22]

Yoder, the most influential Mennonite theologian of the twentieth century, understands the body of Christ as a political reality (2001, viii). The people of God are called to demonstrate a kingdom lifestyle. Yoder (2001, ix) describes it as a calling "to be today what the world is called to be ultimately." In Yoder's opinion all Christian practices are ordinary forms of human behaviour and therefore can be commended to any society and culture. They are public, procedural and accessible (Yoder 2001, 46). They are identification markers for a group doing them, and, when humans do them, God is also doing them. All of

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[21] The term is used by Hauerwaas and Willimon (1989), referring to 1 Peter2:11 to describe one possible response of Christians to a culture that is post-Christian: to transform culture instead of accommodating to it.

[22] A phrase used by Henri Nouwen (1979. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Bournemouth: ImagePubl.) to describe that we can give life to others in our weakness.

them derive from the work of Jesus Christ (Yoder 2001, 44-45). His study focuses on five ways in which the body functions as a social organism and reflects on how the early church demonstrated that understanding in its social practices.

The first social practice Yoder refers to is the mandate of binding and loosing (Mt 18:15). The voluntary community of believers is called to forgive, to reconcile and to restore. Accountability is fostered. Jesus has passed on the authority to do so. This action is simultaneously God's action (Jn 20:21).

Yoder (2001:14) describes the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42) as the second social practice of the body of Christ. The common meal was central for the disciples of Jesus. According to Yoder (2001, 17), "sharing was rather the normal, organic extension from table fellowship" and included economic solidarity. The meals should reflect kingdom ethics, like thankfulness, the change of hierarchies (1. Cor.11), the beginning of the messianic age and even the solidarity with the poor. The body of Christ lives the values of hospitality and community formation. Breaking the bread "is an economic act" (Yoder 2001, 21).

Baptism and living as the new humanity is the third way to demonstrate kingdom lifestyle (Yoder 2001, 28). Baptism means repentance and introduces persons to a new humanity on the basis of their free choice; it has a social and egalitarian meaning (Yoder 2001, 33). New life and change are possible. God's covenant overrules former identity and enables to overcome all barriers. In Christ, different people, cultures and histories become a new creation (Gal 3:27-28). The messianic age has begun. Conversion brings change and identity is defined anew (Eph 2:14-15). The church is and models a new society (Yoder 2001, 31-32).

Mission is the proclaiming of that new reality: it aims to change identity,

understanding, and behaviour, as well as "the rejection of all ethic, sexual and

class discrimination ... rooted in the work of Christ" (Yoder 2001, 40). Even the

dignity of an enemy is protected.

A new mode of group relationships, as described in Eph 4:11-13, is

Yoder's (2001: 47) fourth distinctive mark of the body of Christ. The body of

Christ consists of all believers. Every member has a "distinctly identifiable,

divinely validated and empowered role" (Yoder 2001, 47). These roles aim to

empower and build up the body (Eph 4:11-13) so that it can serve in the world

and incarnate God's kingdom. All believers are called to consolidate and make

use of their charisma, which have been entrusted to them by grace. They are part

of the victory in Christ and can only be exercised in their reciprocal

accountability and interdependence (Yoder 2001, 53). All of the gifts are of equal

dignity, even when Paul calls for an orderly communication process (1. Cor 14).

Christ is the head of the body; all other hierarchy is relative. Since all members of

the body are Spirit-empowered and complementary, ministerial roles can be

performed by males and females.

The fifth identification of the body of Christ, according to Yoder (2001,

61), is the Spirit-driven unity. Yoder emphasizes the pattern of decision making

through open conversation (Acts 15, 1. Cor 14). The Spirit leads to unity. The

process needs only to be moderated and its conclusions recorded (Yoder 2001,

67). This approach embraces the willingness to hear both the neighbour and

adversary, because everyone must be given the floor. Every voice is part of the

truth-finding process (Yoder 2001, 69). "Dialogue under the Holy Spirit is the

ground floor of the notion of democracy" (Yoder 2001, 72). The body can serve

the world. The church shapes reality in its bridging to social structures. It serves

its context, brings "good news" and incarnates Jesus' redemptive work. As Yoder

puts it, "The believing body is the image that the new world ... is on the way ...

[it] is the instrument of renewal of the world" (Yoder 2001, 78) and, thus taking

an alternative stance, it has much to say.

2.5. Discipleship

Mennonites define church as a community of followers (Mennonite World

Conference 2006). So does Bonhoeffer, who wrote that "Christianity without

discipleship is always Christianity without Christ" (Bonhoeffer 2001, 17). He

reflects on the difference of knowing Christ formally or following him with

obedience (2001, 16-18). Following Christ includes taking on the character of

Jesus Christ, which can be achieved through the grace of God and human effort.

Discipleship is a process of being moulded and transformed into Christ's likeness.

It not only requires our willingness to be shaped, but also requires obedience. It is

the daily choice of letting God guide our lives, imitating him in thinking,

behaviour and action. Such a lifestyle can only be developed step by step, as one

grasps the concept of the cross and resurrection as linked to Jesus' life and

teachings. Bender (2004, 11) understood discipleship as being the "transformation

of the entire way of life of the individual believer and of society so that it should

be fashioned after the teachings and example of Christ." Discipleship is a journey,

a process, a lifestyle and a living relationship to Christ. Christians participate in

Christ's continuing work of salvation. Christ is not only a model to follow, rather he is divine and the Holy Spirit enables believers to follow. Accountability, mentoring relationships and prayer support this entire change of life. Disciples will radiate Christ to those around them. When one experiences God's love, it will impact others' lives.

Anabaptists and Mennonites do not separate justification from sanctification. Faith that does not result in action is not faith (Lk 6:46-49; Heb 11:6, 12:1-3; James 2:14, 17). In their important works on Anabaptist essentials, both Bender (1944) and Snyder (1997; 2004) describe major aspects of Mennonite discipleship: yieldedness to and participation in Christ,[23] willingness to do the will of God (expressed through baptism), suffering in the spirit of Christ, transformation into Christ's image, nonconformity to the world, giving first loyalty to God's kingdom, acting in peace, justice and non-resistance, holiness of life, discipline, responsibility and mutual care, and the church as the new community of disciples (The Mennonite Confession of Faith 2010). Discipleship is personal as well as social-ethical and communal. It is deeply connected to the missonal understanding of the body of Christ.

Yoder proposed a Christian ethical framework based on discipleship. He defined discipleship as imitation-participation:

> There is but one realm in which the concept of imitation holds ... this is at the point of the concrete social meaning of the cross in its relation to enmity and power.... Thus — and only thus — are we bound by New Testament thought to "be like Jesus (Yoder 1994 b, 131).

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[23] Described with *Gelassenheit*, which is self-surrender, resignation in God's will (*Gottergebenheit*), yieldedness to God's will.

2.5.1. Discipleship in the Old and New Testament

In the Old Testament, people often occupied master-pupil or master-disciple relationships. Geddert (1994, 155-162) proposes that God has always guided his people through complementary gifts: the priest who is inviting God's people into a relationship with God and who encourages people to come to God as they are. There is the prophet, who strengthens the idea that God wants to change us into his image and therefore reminds his people not to stay as they are, but to confess sin and repent. The wise men speak from experience and offer models and methods to live according to God's will. All three of these figures work together to serve God's people (Geddert 1994, 155-162). Leaders, teachers, wise men and prophets taught mostly in an informal way. Identity and knowledge were built through narratives and memory. In the "Get it!" program, storytelling and narratives are used to strengthen the student's identity. Jesus asked questions, raised discussions and used life situations to promote learning-by-doing (Dt 31:9, 29ff. 31:9-13, Neh 8, Ezr 7). In the Old and New Testaments, family, feasts and rituals (Ex 12:14ff., Dt 15ff., Neh 8) played an important role in communal life (Eph 5:18ff.), as well as for the transfer of faith, relationships, character building (e.g. Prov 3:13, Rom 12:2f., 2. Pt 1:3-11, Rom 8:13-17, Gal 5:22f., and Phil 1:6), authenticity, prayer and mission. Families, wise men and scribes, prophets and elders, leaders and priests worked together to bring God's people in touch with God's will and to educate people so that they could understand, translate and interpret Scripture and live as role models to show God's love and grace to all humans. The "Get it!" training uses means of experimental learning, rituals and

transparency to teach students. The leadership team is asked to share life stories with the students, so that they learn to see God's influence in their own lives.

In New Testament times, groups like the Pharisees, the Zealots, the Essenes and the disciples of John the Baptist fostered a discipleship system. All of them had the tradition of imitation of the teacher's life, character and ministry. Jesus based discipleship on friendship, mutual respect, servanthood (Lk 9:23-25), submission, the transformation into his likeness and on passing on (Mk 16, Mt 28:18-20). Mennonites emphasize discipleship as an important means to transfer faith and to form identity. Mission is about discipleship, which starts with the revelation, which John 17:26[24] describes, that God reveals himself in human lives. In Christ, God can be experienced. His Spirit and word transform human beings. John 17:17[25] reminds readers to grow into a new reality. Reading and interpreting God's word as a community of believers and applying insights gained into daily life deepens that transformation. This process is described in Mt 13:19, 23.[26] When disciples hear, understand and obey God's word, they will mature. Jesus did what he saw the Father do; he taught his disciples in everyday situations by living out God's will, by explaining parables to them, by letting them participate in his life. He delegated tasks to them and evaluated their experiences with them

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[24] "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (New International Version).

[25] "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

[26] Verse 19: "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path." Verse 23: "But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

(Luke 10:1-24). He required them to observe and learn from him so that they would follow his model and imitate him. His disciples did what they had understood and sometimes they just copied what they saw Jesus do.[27] God also seeks to influence every area in human lives and desires to transform them "until Christ is formed in [us]" (Gal 4:19), so that believers are "to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Rom 8:29) and they will "be transformed by the renewing of [their] mind" (Rom 12:2).

Jesus described a process of discipleship: to listen, to do what one had understood and to be obedient (Mt 13:19, 23). Jesus trained and prepared his disciples for mission in the context of community using a variety of methods (Hull 2006, 65ff.; Camp 2008; Ogden 2003). The disciple's missional challenge was to interpret tradition in a new context (e.g., Luke 24:13-35).

Paul later focused on role modeling (2 Tm 2:2, 2 Tm 3:16ff.). He often imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1) and expected others to imitate him in his love. Paul's role was consultative and collegial (Banks 2004, 42). His teachings were mission-oriented and missional (Banks 2004, 142). The "Get it!" program also focuses on team work, its leaders model how to follow Christ in a radical way, and Scripture is read and contextually interpreted together.

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[27] i.e., John 15:27 – Acts 4:20; Lk 24:46 –Acts 3:12ff; John 5:8 – Acts 9:34

2.6. Priesthood of All Believers

Anabaptists strongly believe that every member has a contribution to make. Membership is voluntary. The call to follow Christ includes all, but it demands a decision and a "counting of costs" (Luke 14:28ff.). Early Anabaptists challenged coercion in matters of faith, including the dominance of the state church clergy over church life. They strove to organize a church composed solely of earnest Christians who formed a "brotherhood" acted out in an actual practice of sharing possessions to meet the needs of others, and who operated in an ethic of non-violence. Women and men were equal in sharing the gospel. True conversion and a commitment to holy living and discipleship were and are a basic understanding.

The willingness to support one another and the confession of faith in baptism leads to the priesthood of all believers, meaning that

> ...every man has free access to God by repentance and faith in Christ, but also that all believers have a priestly office to perform for each other in that in Christ each can be a channel of God's grace to his fellow and indeed has a responsibility to be such." (Bender and Miller, 1989)

This relates to the Hebrew understanding that a person is never a solitary unit isolated from others. A place must be found to allow for the development of individual gifts and talents. For this to happen, justice and love must be allowed to grow. The congregation is called to discern its preaching and deeds by discerning though Scripture (Götz Lichdi 1983, 3 and Menno Simons in Bender and Miller 1989). The Mennonite Confession of Faith (1995, Art. 9) comments:

> Participation in church life is a participation in Christ. Following Christ in life, a response of faithfulness to the baptismal covenant and to communal

loyalty, is a way of knowing Christ. Works of love and service are an extension of Christ's ministry in and through his body, the church.

Committed to the priesthood of all believers and a radical discipleship, Mennonites understand the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20) as the norm for disciples of Christ. Discipleship cannot be separated from mission.

<div align="center">2.7. Hospitality</div>

The Old and New Testaments strengthen the idea of a hospitable God: God invites men and women into a covenant. Humans have not earned this invitation, but God comes near to them. He exhorts men, but also cares for and protects them. When he comes near, people celebrate. Due to his care and love for men, they can be transformed and become a new creation. His invitation to enter into a loving relationship is offered to all humankind. In Old Testament times, the foreigner was taken in as a guest and experienced care and safety. By doing this, it was possible to win over a foreigner so that he became a friend. Hospitality creates a space for respect and often becomes a blessing (Gen 18:1-15; Janzen 2002, 4-15). Jesus stresses the same idea in parables and through his behaviour.[28] God's love for humankind is expressed in his hospitality (Titus 2:4). Consequently, from the very beginning, the New Testament body of Christ has understood hospitality to be a sign of the kingdom of God. Hospitality is a lifestyle. Mennonites value hospitality and love of the enemy as an expression of God's love to all humankind (Hershberger 1999; W. Janzen 2002). The church

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[28] Ex 24:1-2, 9-11; Ps 23:5-6; Isa 25:6-8; Mt 22,1-14; John 2:1-12; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 22:7-38; Luke 24:18-35.

family gives and receives nurturing and healing. Church is a place to practice unity in Christ amongst all views and opinions. Returnees here can share, process and develop new ideas.

Gittins (1994, 397-416) discusses the deeper implications of hospitality to strangers. A host has a position of power and the control of initiative (Gittins 1994, 398). To create a mutual relationship between host and guest, the host must reflect on the guest's (or stranger's) perspective and what it means to receive hospitality. Having received the grace of hospitality, the reciprocal behaviour, ultimately imitating Christ in his unique way of reaching out to fellow human beings, is intensified. Pohl (1995, 121-136) also strengthens that logic in her article. Hospitality, undergirded by the host's experience of marginality, can transcend social boundaries and reflects divine hospitality (Pohl 1995, 121ff.). Gittins (1994) turns to the Synoptic Gospels to show that Christians need to move beyond hospitality (Mt 25:35) in order to follow Jesus' lead. Jesus' example (Luke 22; 9:48; Mt 5:38ff., 10:23, 41) removes the self from the centre. Following Jesus, then means relating to others not in a role of power (as a teacher, missionary, as one who has something to bring) but with appreciation, as one who has received grace and therefore can invite others to meet that source of grace. Jesus radically redefined status and undermined the dominant social pattern (Gittins 1994, 401). Jesus sent forth the disciples to take nothing (Mt 6:19) but their very selves (Gittins 1994, 406), to love their enemies as people with little power, to ask for help ("ask, seek, knock": Mt 7:7); thus he installed a behaviour of meeting each other's needs.

Mennonites have a long experience of persecution and flight. Many of them had to find a home in a foreign country. They often experienced unexpected hospitality that transcended social boundaries (.See also Lapp, John A., and C.A. Snyder 2006). Hosts responded to their needs. These experiences nurture the Mennonite understanding of hospitality. It fosters an alternative culture within the surrounding society by demonstrating a kingdom-shaped spiritual, social, and economic reality which realizes and responds to the needs of people. It offers a place to practice community and to overcome boundaries by inviting both the people on the margins and those of the majority culture. Friendships forged in hospitality contradict the individualism of today. Hospitality ties in to accountability and provides a framework of mutual learning.

2.8. Missional Church

The project of this study has to do with mission trips. Therefore this theological rationale presents an understanding of the missional church nurtured by an Anabaptist perspective.

God's nature is mission. His compassion to see all things reconciled in Him (Eph 1:10) is the driving force of mission. God is calling and sending the church to participate in God's mission. The nature of the church is to demonstrate God's reign, to be a contrast society. God forms a peoplehood that incarnates God's intention and that serves as a prototype of it. The mission of the church is to deal redemptively with the sin of the world (Suderman 2005, 8-9); it extends beyond the borders of the church (Gen 12: 1-3). Thus the church is not a sending

agency but is the called and sent people. Historically the Anabaptists see the Great Commission as still binding on the church (W. Shenk, 2005, 101).

The "Get it!" program partners with churches and supports the church in this mission. Each missional and local community discerns and designs its life and ministry in response to the sending God. This discernment can be guided by asking what God is doing in the world already. Looking around and realizing where God is already active in the neighbourhood and families enhances the vision of a church. New creativity and imagination can be set free by asking a second question: "What does God want to do in the world?" Each such outcome will vary according to the cultural context, so consequently a missional congregation and participants of a partnering program learn about its context, discern Scripture together and find ways to proclaim and express the Good News in a manner appropriate to its context. By doing this, some Mennonite core beliefs and practices can contribute to this process: the emphasis on worshipping Jesus, on disciple-making and accountability, to consolidate and make use of the spiritual gifts; to demonstrate hospitality and a preferential option for the plight of the poor, the weak, and the marginalized; to struggle for justice and peace, and to implement a priestly and prophetic imagination; to share economically; and to work for reconciliation (Suderman 2005, 14-15).

Participants in the "Get it!" program are "learning by doing" about this vocation of the church, its relationship to the world and how to be responsive to the culture without becoming submissive (Shenk 2006). The "Get it!" program

needs to cooperate with churches to promote the paradigm shift entailed in being missional. God calls the church to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to teach a Jesus-centered discipleship that values gifts and proclaims kingdom-values in word and deed for the sake of the world (Yoder 2001, 31-32). Those who embrace that understanding can encourage, empower, train and support every church member in responding to God's call.

2.9. Summary

The Mennonite core beliefs comprise a distinct understanding of discipleship. In following it, Mennonites aim to follow Christ in daily life, to commit themselves in "*Gelassenheit*" and to incarnate and express Jesus' character in word and deed. Faith leads to action. Forming a new and alternative community, where each other's gifts are complementary and in which imitation and participation are practised, points to the kingdom of God. It also provides a social reality one can belong to. The church models a new society and can help believers to live a new life and to become change agents. The Mennonite Confession of Faith (2010, Article 9) states that

> Commitment to one another is shown in loving one another as God loves, in sharing material and spiritual resources, in exercising mutual care and discipline, and in showing hospitality to all. ...the church is a new social and political reality.... Participation in church life is a participation in Christ. Following Christ in life, a response of faithfulness to the baptismal covenant and to communal loyalty, is a way of knowing Christ. Works of love and service are an extension of Christ's ministry in and through his body, the church.

Mennonite faith is formed, grows and finds expression within the accountable community. As a hermeneutic community, believers listen in the

willingness to strengthen the other side, so that the best of both positions is brought out. This framework allows for an understanding to do missions in partnership by valuing the perspective and cultural context of local partners as equals.

By appreciating their spiritual heritage, Mennonites are provided with excellent tools to deal with returnees and their re-entry shock. Believers are encouraged to demonstrate a kingdom-mentality and to have accountable relationships; discipleship is strengthened; and hospitality provides a framework for sharing and relationships . Participants can establish a sense of belonging; they can learn to serve within precisely this Mennonite identity which aims for transformation. Returnees have changed and they need a framework to process changes and to transfer them into daily life. They often return with challenging new insights and perspectives, especially in the areas of justice, poverty, social activism and a heart inflamed for mission. The church models a new humanity and kingdom mentality, which includes a prophetic understanding. This understanding opens a space for returnees to contribute their gifts and even radical new insights. Gifts and strengths identified during outreach assignments need to be practised in the church, which emphasizes the priesthood of all believers, so that they can be confirmed and developed.

A re-entry process should be established in cooperation with returnees, family, friends, home churches and mission agencies. Churches can reinforce regular programs of ministry, they can sponsor and network in projects, and they can build a new generation of missional Christians. According to Barnes (2000),

success means investing in effective discipleship training and teaching church members thoroughly so they have the maturity they need for a missional lifestyle. In recent decades, emphasis has been laid on a good preparation for mission assignments; however, a more holistic approach for a missional lifestyle, which includes both effective preparation for tasks and a meaningful re-entry process, is needed.

Chapter 3   Selective Review of Relevant Literature

This chapter frames the themes of the project and reviews some critical

literature, literature related to re-entry symptoms and returnees' experiences of re-

integration following short- and long-term mission assignments, as well as

literature that informs the tools that were used for the action project. Most of the

literature examined (books, magazines, journals, dissertations and master's

theses) is related to the English-speaking context which differs in some ways

from the German-speaking context in which the project is rooted. M. Roth rightly

states that "[t]he benefit of English literature is limited because the German

culture and circumstances differ from the English/American one. ... No research

has been done until now concerning the re-entry problems of German

missionaries and missionary children. The secular literature deals mostly with the

re-entry of employees into the companies who had sent them overseas." (2007,

156).

Therefore special focus is placed on those books used by mission

organizations and discipleship programs operating in the German-speaking

context of Switzerland and Germany. Most of the mission organizations have

outsourced member care and recommend that their missionaries participate in re-

entry seminars offered by AEM.[29] AEM uses mostly models for re-entry from

North American authors like Pollock (1987), Jordan (1992) and Austin (1986).

AEM Germany has summarized some information about re-entry in a small

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[29] See Abbreviations.

booklet in German (Boeddinghaus 2003). When professional help and member care is needed they refer to professional organizations like Le Rucher Ministries.[30]

There are two main studies available in the German-speaking context: Neufeld, in his Master's thesis paper (1999), evaluated the experiences of twelve German Mennonite returnees comparing theories of re-entry with returnees' actual experiences. He compared the theories of M. Roth, C. Austin, Jordon and Foyle with the returnees' answers to fifteen questions.

In her book about re-integration of missionaries, M. Roth 31 (2007, 156) evaluated questionnaires filled in by about 220 German-speaking missionaries and 55 German-speaking missionary children "to investigate the problems that both groups encounter when they return to Germany ... and to help them readjust at home." Her sample of study consisted of adults and children who had lived in the mission field for between five and twenty years, most of them in Asia, the United States and Africa (M. Roth. 2007, 14). Neither study focused on finding out what helps students re-integrate into a congregational context after a cross-cultural experience. This study aims to show how collaboration between discipleship programs and churches can help returning students deepen their transformation by applying the benefits of a congregational identity. In this way, churches and returnees alike can profit from the intercultural knowledge and

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[30] Le Rucher Ministries is situated in the French Jura and offers member care services like routine debriefing and crisis debriefing for individuals, families or teams, brief counselling and training courses in English and French. It was founded by Dr. Rhiannon Lloyd.

[31] M. Roth supplied a short summary in English at the end of her book (which is written in German). Direct citation is taken from that summary. Other text passages to which the researcher refers have been translated into English by M. Roth.

denominational identity gained, thereby making a culturally effective contribution to the world.

3.1. Dealing with (Re-)Culture Shock

In dealing with re-entry stress one can in general use and apply the same tools that are helpful for adaptation into a new culture (Ward 1984, 280-293). Culture shock is described[32] as taking place in several phases.[33] The first phase is one of excitement and fascination with the new culture. Minor problems are easily overlooked, and all new things are exciting. The next phase is often described as the crisis period. People feel more and more disturbed by small things, differences are realized as major hindrances, problems look bigger than they are and one may begin to see him/herself in an adversarial relationship with the local culture/people. Helpful tools for dealing with disappointment and emotional upheaval include: knowing who one is in God; being curious; realizing the potential for change and gaining a broader horizon; having a good sense of humour, asking for help; trusting in the ability to learn and implementing gifts and talents; processing expectations; treating others with respect and with the willingness to understand how and why they do things differently; stepping out of one's own comfort zone and trying out new things; communicating and processing transition in an accountable relationship; taking over responsibility for

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[32] Summarized from several authors: Geist (2010), Loss (1993), LaBrack (2000b), M. M. Roth(2007), Oberg (1954), Dearborn (2003).

[33] Lysgaard (1955) describes these phases (euphoria, anxiety, rejection of the new culture, and adjustment) with a U-curve. Re-entry stress begins sooner and lasts longer and is described with a W-curve (see Appendix 25; Safety Abroad 2010).

one's mood and behaviour and willingly serving others according to Jer 29:4-14 (Geist 2010, 58-81). As soon as this phase is overcome adjustment takes place. Culture and differences are accepted in a next stage. One feels at home and enjoys adaptation. Re-entry shock can produce the same effects as described above. To successfully deal with its possible symptoms returnees and all others involved should learn about helpful tools. A variety of these tools are described in the following sections.

3.2. Categories of Findings

The following passages are categorized in thematic sections to highlight the main areas of re-entry that returnees, their families, friends and home churches have to deal with.

3.2.1. Good Closure

Neufeld (1999, 14-15) has developed a questionnaire that relies on Austin's fifteen-step program (Austin 1986), inviting returnees to describe what they found helpful for re-integration. Considering returnees' different personalities, different outreach experiences and the different countries in which they have served, it is impressive to see their correlation on these points. A majority of returnees agreed that a good farewell and closure as well as knowing about re-entry stress and symptoms were helpful for re-integration (Neufeld 1999, 16). Being able to plan future steps (finding a job or knowing what to study) and finding a place to belong (Neufeld 1999, 16) were important means for re-integration for more than half of the returnees asked.

Jordan (1992, 26) encourages missionaries to plan their returns thoroughly and to bring a passage of life to "a satisfactory conclusion." The process of closure has several steps: coming to terms with the reasons for leaving the mission field and embracing the truth of Romans 8:28[34] by doing so; dealing with guilt or condemnation; working through expectations met and unmet; making sure to have learned the lessons God intended to teach[35] (Jordan 1992, 25-39). According to Storti (2003, 37), Jordan (1992: 29-31) and Geist (2010, 86) a smooth departure and thorough planning before leaving the mission field is important. A farewell party (Foyle 1995, 207-8) and debriefing with leaders (Jordan 1992, 37-39) creates an effective closure and a good commencement upon return home.

3.2.2. Awareness of Re-entry Symptoms

A good closure sets free energy to become aware of symptoms returnees have to deal with. In her essay Ursula Nyfeler (2005), a Swiss short-term missionary, reflects on her re-entry experience on a very personal level and confirms that too many missionaries do not know about re-entry symptoms and almost no information can be had about them in German. Many long- and short-term missionaries returning home are not prepared for re-entry at all.[36] Storti

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[34] Jordan insists on the fact that God works for the good of those who love him regardless of circumstances. When returnees embrace that truth they can overcome bitterness and disappointment.

[35] Jordan describes that God continually brings similar situations into one's life, as he did with the sojourning Israelites in the wilderness, until the person has learned the intended lesson.

[36] "Eine Tatsache ist, dass man noch viel zu wenig über Rückkehr spricht. Man findet fast keine Informationen auf Deutsch. Viele Lang- und Kurzzeitmitarbeiter sind auf einen Kulturschock zu Hause nicht vorbereitet" (Nyfeler 2005, 9).

(2003, 38) recommends thinking about re-entry before leaving the mission field, because it is wise to make oneself aware of possible re-entry symptoms.

Re-entry stress is the culture shock that occurs because of loss and disappointment in the home culture (M. Roth 1995, 79). Returnees from different groups and assignments reported higher stress levels during re-entry than during adjustment to a foreign culture (Adler 1975). Uehara (1986) demonstrated that the length of time away from home is not related to the extent of re-entry shock.

3.2.3. Dealing with Expectations and Perspectives

Storti (2003, 38) encourages returnees to deal with expectations and assumptions and to expect the need to readjust. Changes are real, concerns and interests become different (Ward 1984, 281), the social situation has changed and returnees experience a different perspective of their home country. Returnees always have a choice of how to return and how to cope with re-entry stress. Repatriation problems are also culture problems. How returnees relate to and use their cross-cultural experiences varies in dealing with re-integration (Ward 1984, 283). Several authors[37] agree that expectations from returnees and home congregations often collide and weaken cultural encounters that could in fact benefit one another. When returnees and home churches discuss mutual expectations and share developments both parties can benefit and a new quality in the relationship can be established.

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[37] Austin (1986) Jordan (1992), Foyle (1995), Storti (2003), Oberg (1960), Pirolo (2000), Weaver (1987) and LaBrack (2000b).

3.2.4. Dealing with Identity Change

Re-entry is stressful and correlates with identity change. When those at home expect such changes and returnees share about developments the stresslevel can reduce. The returnees themselves have changed socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually (M. Roth. 2007, 19, 21, 158; Adler 1981; Storti 1997; Jordan 1992; Tuttle 2000; and Lingenfelter and Mayers 1986). Those who immerse themselves into a new culture step out from their comfort zones and gain a new worldview, change their values, communication style, goals and relationships, and adapt to new roles (Walling,et al. 2006, 153). Travelers likewise also report positive changes, like greater cultural awareness and sense of purpose, a sense of belonging and of a calling; their experiences inspire personal growth and appreciation of the other culture and its hospitality (Storti 2001, Walling et al. 2006, 157).

Younger students, who are in a developmental stage of their identity formation, experience a tremendous impact from international experiences. Returnees develop ambivalent feelings about different relationships to friends and family; about various aspects and norms of the home culture (e.g. materialism, pace of life, spirituality) concerning global issues and social behaviour, and even seek to dis-identify with the home culture (Walling et al. 2006, 154; Seiter and Waddell 1989). It is crucial for younger returnees to have a time of intense debriefing and to learn how to deal with the effects of a shifting cultural identity. "Being stretched outside their comfort zone/culture shock" (Tuttle 2000) can

nurture spiritual growth when a healthy process of critical reflection about world views and experiences gained is initiated.

However, the authors mentioned above do not discuss how returnees might apply their experiences to a congregational identity or how a home church might offer a certain perspective for re-integration. Denominational mission agencies, student mission leaders and programs offering short-term mission trips can contribute to the process of achieving an integrated identity by supporting returnees' newly gained awareness by helping them to understand why they feel socially isolated and to ease their anger and frustration about their home culture. In working together with home churches, families and friends they can offer a framework to the returnees to help them find purpose and meaning and to pass on their experiences.

3.3. Dealing with Emotions

M. Roth (2007, 28, 158) describes the cycles of re-entry, "which contain phases of denial, anger, grief, and acceptance." She highlights the fact that most returnees and other parties involved are not aware of possible problems that can hinder reintegration (M. Roth 2007, 29). In a first phase of reverse culture shock, returnees enjoy meeting friends and family (M. Roth 2007, 30, 158); people are willing to listen to their stories. In a second phase, returnees become more and more frustrated because of their feelings of disorientation and loss, and they react negatively to the home culture (M. Roth 2007, 31f., 158). They feel overwhelmed, helpless and often withdraw from the surrounding people, judging them. Some returnees do not take time to process their experiences and jump back

into the former life, playacting at being reintegrated (M. Roth. 2007, 33,158).The

returnees themselves are the persons who are different, but they need to realize

this fact (M. Roth 2007, 158). M. Roth warns that "alienation, condemnation or

reversion can lead to the 'ultimate escape.'" This can be figurative, or an actual

suicide (M. Roth 2007, 159). In a third phase of acceptance (M. Roth 2007, 34f.),

changes have been processed, returnees adapt and re-integrate. M. Roth (2007,

37ff., 159) distinguishes between a temporary and a permanent return, which

correspond to returnees' different kinds of needs upon arrival home. Missionaries

described the following themes they had to deal with (M. M. Roth 2007, 38-45):[38]

reasons for return must be processed; a good closure and warm welcome are

important for re-integration at home; returnees need practical help (housing,

transportation, administrative tasks, medical checkups, job finding, financial

help); counseling and mentoring help to reconcile feelings like guilt, shame, loss

and anger and to think about the future. Physical relaxation helps to process

changes and to re-adapt. Returnees need discipline and encouragement to invest

in a good spiritual life (see Jarsetz 2010, 95-101[39]), and they need places and

tasks that bring out their gifts and skills.[40] Both returnees and those who stayed at

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[38] The researcher summarizes only those needs, described by M. Roth, which seem important for this project.

[39] Jarsetz encourages returnees to invest in their relationship with God, to be aware of the temptation to crash after a special spiritual experience, not to feel superior to those who have not been away; not to question values and routines at home, not to act as a mission expert and not to become bitter because of wounds not dealt with. To help returnees to process their experiences the authors provide their readers with a questionnaire that helps to reflect on skills gained and experiences had (2010, 102-112).

[40] M. Roth writes extensively about missionary children and their problems with re-integration. Singles and returnees near retirement also have special needs (M. M. Roth 2007, 42ff.). The researcher does not list these groups' needs, as she focuses on young adults.

home need to understand what re-entry is all about (M. Roth. 2007, Storti 2003, Jordan 1992, Geist 2010), so that a learning process can bear fruit for all parties involved.

Jordan (1992, 3-8) compares adjustment to life back home for returning missionaries with a space shuttle landing, and draws many parallels. He describes the feeling of shock and disorientation when arriving home for both short- and long-term missionaries, often illustrating his statements with biblical stories. Jordan (1992, 41-56) then introduces returnees to several areas of change they should expect to deal with and respond to: physical, social, emotional, political, spiritual and financial changes, and the changes at home in family and home church. Referring to Luke 10, Jordan helps returnees to realize that their identity comes not from what they have done but from the fact that their names are written in heaven (Jordan 1992, 74). M. Roth. (2007, 107-8), Jordan (1992) and Nyfeler (2005) agree that the following practical steps help to solve re-entry problems: gaining a realistic perspective; becoming involved in church activities; taking time to pray and reflect on God's Word; sharing with spouses and other persons who used to live abroad and who understand such feelings; solving conflicts; investing in relationships; grieving loss; nurturing their relationship with God and people; and admitting the need for help. However, they need mission agencies, sending churches, family and friends to invest themselves, so that returnees find enough support to re-integrate in the best possible way.

3.4. Helpful Strategies for Re-Integration

Pirolo (2000, 33-163) describes four areas of concern that complicate the process for a successful completion of re-entry; the amount of time required to re-integrate depends on a variety of factors.[41] The stress in the returnees' lives depends on personality and circumstances (physical, professional, financial, cultural, social, linguistic, national/political, educational, spiritual). Returnees react to re-entry stress according to their personalities (alienation, condemnation, reversion, suicide, integration) and the level of preparation of the support team during the mission assignment (moral, logistical, financial, spiritual, communication, re-entry). These issues form the "standard by which to measure the problems and the solutions to the issues of re-entry" (Pirolo 2000, 14). Returnees' often painful stories underscore the fact that re-entry care is important and has so far been neglected. Pirolo (1996) gives an overview of helpful tools for re-integration. They can be summarized as follows: Returnees need to be active agents of re-entry by: using the same matter-of-fact posture during re-entry that they used for adapting abroad (Pirolo 2000, 59); letting go of the past, creating a structure for oneself and doing debriefing with the mission organization (Pirolo 2000, 94, 247); sharing and keeping communication open and accountable and asking for help (Pirolo 2000, 72, 155, 283); taking time for mental and physical transition (Pirolo 2000, 210); managing the resources God has given them (Pirolo 2000, 228); and developing a good sense of humour (Pirolo 2000, 112; 145).

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[41] Pirolo (2000, 33-46) names the following reasons: length of time the missionary has been in the field, degree of change at home, degree of change in field, attitude of church, time to prepare, time to get home, uniqueness of personality, disadvantaged position, attitude of denial.

Home churches need to know about re-entry stress (Pirolo 2000, 68, 98,

215). They should treat returnees as valuable persons and offer counselling

(Pirolo 2000, 218, 221), spiritual guidance and nurture (Pirolo 2000, 103, 112,

212, 248). A home church's missional perspective is a helpful tool for re-

integration (Pirolo 2000, 108).

Mission agencies and mission programs are responsible for debriefing.

They should initiate collaboration between all parties involved (Pirolo 2000, 247-

50) so that topics like materialism, failure and guilt, helplessness (Pirolo 2000,

132, 141, 229, 246), crises of faith, identity, finances, belonging and profession

(Pirolo 2000, 229): 75-77, 143) can be dealt with.

3.5. Communication

Researchers[42] agree that good communication is important for a successful

return as are social support, age, flexibility and awareness. Neufeld (1999, 16-17)

asked returnees what was not helpful for re-integration. Their answers ranged

from frustration about family and church members who showed no interest in

hearing about the returnee's experiences to the expectation that the "same old

person" comes back from a cross-cultural experience. All of the returnees agreed

that the chance to share their stories with other returnees or alumni is an important

tool for re-integration.

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[42] Summarized from several authors: Geist (2010), Gordon (1995), Loss (1993), LaBrack (2000b),M. Roth (2007), Oberg (1954), Dearborn (2003).

Seiter and Waddell (1989) have studied how American college and university students experience re-entry. They examined how the students' interpersonal communication techniques, relational satisfaction and locus of control[43] for affiliation influence a successful re-entry. Their data indicates that students associated successful re-entry with their own behaviour and actions, as well as with external events and their communication techniques. Assuming that individuals share basic needs of inclusion, control and affection, the study analyzes if and how communication is used to fulfill these needs (Seiter and Waddell 1998, 8). Social interaction helps returnees to readapt and affiliate to their home cultures. Misunderstandings, a lack of communication and changes in relationships then hinder successful re-entry. Re-entry shock can cause difficulties with communication. Discomfort increases the re-entry shock a person may experience (Seiter and Waddell 1998, 19) and can thus set off a negative spiral of miscommunication. Consequently, returnees and their families and friends need to be encouraged to communicate, to re-establish relationships and thereby deal with re-entry stress successfully.

3.6. Relationships and Belonging

During a mission assignment, participants often experience a sense of community and closeness that is hard to match in the home setting. They were sent away with a special purpose, but the home lives of friends and families are

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[43] Locus of control is a concept in personal psychology that measures the extent to which persons believe that they can control their lives or that their environment has power to control their decisions.

often consumed by business and activities that seem to lack deep significance (Dearborne 2003, 91). Every human being longs to belong and is created for relationships. Finding a place to belong (Neufeld 1999, 16) seems to be an important means for re-integration. Returnees report that they often feel that they no longer fit at work or socially. This strangeness of home feels more alarming than the strangeness of overseas. Home is commonly defined as a safe place, where one belongs and can trust the own instincts (Storti 2003, 3, 16, 55). Returnees long for that place again, a place to relax and to be oneself, to be valued and heard. A sense of belonging can be re-established by relationships with family, friends and church members who need to be re-build when returning home (Ward 1984, 284-286, Storti 2003, 119). Because people have gotten along without the person who left for the mission, returnees tend to feel rejected and lonely. The significance of a past episode cannot be shared in the present (Ward 1984, 286). Indeed, relationships depend upon shared experiences. Interests and consciousness have diverged, so keeping new horizons alive and working in respect and mutual acceptance alongside those who have not been away from home are challenging tasks (Ward 1984, 288).

People returning home from an intense mission experience wish again to have contact with others and long for sustainable relationships. Returnees have undergone changes in their values, beliefs and behaviours while in the foreign country (Uehara 1986; Austin 1986). This can cause conflict with the home culture and persons at home. Communication with family and friends is often unpleasant, whereupon alienation increases, adding to the stressful experience of

re-entry (Seiter and Waddell 1989, 5, 18). Neufeld's (1999, 11) findings confirm observations noted by other authors of re-entry literature (Jordan 1992; Foyle 1995; M. Roth. 2007; Storti 1997; Geist 2010):[44] good communication and a trusting relationship between returnees and home church and family are not a given, but rather a crucial goal to work toward. Returnees need accountable relationships to process re-entry experiences and to mature. Culture shock symptoms manifested themselves through personal difficulties and when family, friends, church members react ungraciously. Those who had good relationships with family, friends and home church and who were already well integrated had fewer difficulties re-integrating upon re-entry (Neufeld 1999, 14-15). Returning is a process of re-learning and re-integrating while implementing the experiences and understanding gained (Neufeld 1999, 12; M. Roth 2007, 18ff.; Geist 2010, 86ff).

3.7. The Role of Mission Agencies, Short-Term Mission Programs, and Home Churches in Reintegration

M. Roth (2007, 62; also Nyfeler 2005, 22) emphasizes that "home churches and mission agencies are responsible for their missionaries during their time abroad and also when they return home." Mission organizations are responsible for a good closure and debriefing. They should initiate a process for partnership, training and resources (Pirolo 2000, 247) and inform and train home churches about possible re-entry symptoms (M. Roth 2007, 160). Churches can

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[44] Neufeld writes in German. Text passages have been translated into English by the researcher and are cited indirectly.

form a re-entry support team that is prepared to help prayerfully and practically, so that returnees can re-integrate (Pirolo 2000, 68, 98, 216-18; 1996, 44-63, 94-120). Returnees often feel unworthy; they have been away from their professions for several years and new jobs are hard to find, adding to financial pressures (Pirolo 2000, 68-71). Returnees need seasoned Christians with whom to talk and to share their experiences. They need to understand changes that took place in society, community and church. Home churches can offer counselling for couples, singles and families (Pirolo 2000, 220). A home church with ministering gifts (Pirolo 2000, 95) knows about the spiritual strains affecting returnees (Pirolo 2000, 212; Friesen 2004, 230) and can help returnees to see how their experiences fit into God's plans (Pirolo 2000, 103) and how to establish a daily accountability structure[45] (Friesen 2004, 225). Significant Bible study helps to clarify future decisions (Friesen 2004, 250f.).

Returnees bring unique perspectives to their churches, families and friends, and sometimes can challenge their home churches in prophetic ways (Jordan 1992, 125; Geist 2010). The returnee needs to distinguish between contexts and then criticize constructively, rather than judging particular persons and situations. Churches should react calmly, investing in relationships and leaving open room for discussion (Neufeld 1999, 18). Expectations on both sides need to be discussed. "Returning missionaries expect to be served rather that to serve" and seem "to be critical of everything" (Neufeld 1999, 81, 84). Returnees and home churches should be a blessing to each other. Being aware of both

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[45] i.e., setting time for devotion, organizing daily life, giving the day a structure.

parties' expectations and realizing that both perspectives have elements of truth (Neufeld 1999, 85) can help to overcome difficulties. Together, accountable relationships, a healthy humility and willingness to serve God can overcome frustration. Where church members took the initiative to relate to returnees and to help them find their place, returnees were encouraged to stay and got involved again (Neufeld 1999, 17).

Family and friends who understand feelings of disorientation and ask intelligent questions play a crucial role in helping returnees regain their sense of belonging (Pirolo 2000, 143; 1996, 145). It is important for all parties involved to keep communication open and accountable (Pirolo 2000, 283) and to invest in and rebuild good relationships. Returnees need to deal with different lifestyles, theological understandings, norms and values. (M. Roth 2007,157, 36-45, 36ff.). Family and friends should be aware that they experienced changes in a gradual process while the returnee was abroad (M. Roth. 2007, 62) and should help the returnee to understand these changes.

Friesen (2004a) in his doctoral thesis has done research on the overall impact of short-term missions on beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of young Anabaptist participants using before, after and follow-up longitudinal studies. He states in his summary that

> families and home churches that are supportive ... [are] important in participants' retention of positive change in their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors once they return home from their assignments. ... Their discernment, prayer, support, encouragement and counsel are essential to ongoing positive change in the life of a short-term mission participant... (Friesen 2004a, 13).

Friesen's (2004, 226) findings confirm that the post-trip regression[46] in participants' beliefs and methods of expressing those beliefs are significant. Local church leaders, mission organization representatives and returnees should pay adequate attention to re-entry and follow-up (Friesen 2004, iii; Borthwick 1996, 407; Advancing Churches 2001). He encourages mission organizations, churches and families to nurture a teachable spirit and attitude in their young people (Friesen 2004, 227), to train their young people in discipleship (Friesen 2004, 231), to help develop longer programs focusing on teamwork and cooperation with local churches in cross-cultural communities (Friesen 2004, 228), to cultivate supportive structures (Friesen 2004, 230) and to cooperate together to help their young people work toward an ongoing transformation (Friesen 2004, 232).

Floyd McClung Jr. (1992, 143) argues that each church should develop its own mission policies to help returning short-termers integrate the blessings of their experiences into the service of the church. As stewards, churches and mission agencies have a mutual accountability to see God's blessings realized in the lives of all parties involved in *Missio Dei*. The fires that were lit in short-term missionaries can continue to burn when churches offer prayer, counselling and reflection, as well as a place for ongoing constructive service (Floyd McClung Jr. 1992, 148).

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[46] Friesen lists several reasons for the regression: participants did not process their experiences (2004, 226), the low quality of pre- and post-trip discipleship training and debriefing (2004, 217); the shortness of the mission assignment (2004, 218), programs sending out short-termers without a team (2004, 220); non-supportive families and churches (2004, 221), or assignments that did not focus on relationships (2004, 222).

Pirolo (1996, 1ff.) biblically anchors how a sending church can and should take on responsibility for its missionaries and discusses six areas of support: moral, logistical, financial, prayer, communication and re-entry support. In his newer book, *The Re-entry Team*, Pirolo (2000, 12) emphasizes "the need for a cooperative relationship between the church and mission agency" as described in Acts 14:26-28, 15:35 (Pirolo 2000, 30).

The ReMAP study (Taylor 1997; Hay 2007) names the lack of home support as the number-one attrition factor of New Sending Countries (Taylor 1997, 208).[47] Pre-field training "should be carried out cooperatively by the local church, the school and the sending agency" (Taylor 1997, 209). This idea refers to discipleship training. Churches then know their missionaries and can support them much better. Ongoing support, investment of resources and pastoral care are responsibilities "of everyone in missions — sending church, mission agency, fellow workers and member care specialists" (Taylor 1997, 287).

LaBrack (2000a, 242-43, 245) insists that "pre-departure orientation and training should be linked with post-experience analysis and integration." Mission agencies, mission programs and home churches have to develop a holistic understanding and should bridge between the orientation and re-entry experiences.

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[47] In this study, agencies from the "new sending countries" of Africa, Asia and Latin America (NSC) were analyzed separate from those of the "old sending countries" (OSC) of Europe and North America.

3.8. Spiritual Transformation

Participants in the researcher's study were asked about their re-entry experiences and also responded to questions relating to the most important means of ongoing transformation. Therefore, it is essential to review some studies in the area of spiritual transformation.

The Willow Creek Church in Chicago did an extensive survey in 2004 in order to discover what triggers spiritual growth and how the church can assist in that process (Hawkins and Parkinson 2009). The survey asked for personal experiences and studied how people's spiritual attitudes, needs and motivations align with spiritual behaviours (Hawkins 2009, 49ff.). The researchers learned that "a person's love of God and love of others increases along a spiritual continuum[48] defined by their relationship with Christ" (Revealnow 2007). Those surrendering the most important aspects of life to God have their identity formed by a strong relationship to God, which "triggers movement along the continuum" (Revealnow 2007).

Spiritual growth is nurtured by different reasons. In his book *Spiritual Intelligence* Nelson (2010) applies neurological/psychological research on emotional and spiritual intelligence to the biblical understanding of change and spiritual growth. He stresses the importance of mentoring and spiritual guidance in an accountable relationship (Nelson 2010, 51).

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[48] This continuum is defined by exploring Christ, growing in Christ, closeness to Christ and centeredness to Christ.

Allenspach (2010, 59-66) gives another reason for growth. He describes

spiritual growth and maturity as participation in God's image (2 Pet 1:4). This is

caused by God; creation and growth are part of His being. When God grants

knowledge, spiritual life begins (2 Cor 4:6) and He provides for the necessary

tools (2 Cor 5:17, 2 Pet 1:3). The Holy Spirit enables believers to mature (Gal

5:22-23) and the context (family, peer group, education, culture) then influences

development. Being part of a Christian community, experiencing accountable

relationships and following Jesus as model can nurture spiritual maturity.

Allenspach emphasizes personal self-reflection, a willingness to learn and the

ability to adopt knowledge gained so that transformation can take place

(Allenspach 2010, 61). God sees humans as active co-workers who take on

responsibility for spiritual growth (1 Cor 3:6). Maturity is nurtured when

believers practice spiritual disciplines (1 Tim 4:7, Heb 12:11) and when they

experiment and act on what they have understood (Mt 13:19, 23). God encourages

people to use supportive methods to mature (Eph 4:11-12). Individuals learn in

different ways and individual coaching can nurture growth, especially when

experienced in transitional situations like on short-term mission trips (Pue 2005;

Keel 2007; Bridges 2009). Nurturing a Christ-centeredness through accountable

relationships seems to be an important means for transformation. The "Get it!"

program focuses on this means. Participants are asked to regulary meet with a

mentor or a mentoring peer during the training phase. They also invest in an

accountable relationship with their contact person.

3.9. Summary

This literature review frames the themes of the researcher's project and helps to define categories of her findings. Returnees can only transfer into their ongoing lives and the lives of others that which they have processed successfully. The responsibility to help them reintegrate successfully into different social realities should be shared by returnees, their families, friends, home churches and mission organizations. All relevant literature clearly shows the need for good debriefing and re-entry time to reflect about and process cross-cultural experiences. Sending churches, mission agencies, families and friends should know about re-entry symptoms. Their support, pastoral care, resources and cooperation as a community help returnees to find their place again and to process and pass on what they have experienced. Returnees need people who will listen reflectively, they need those who understand their feelings and encourage them in the learning process. They also need feedback about their experiences and direction to become catalysts for mission. Those who were involved in the life of the church before their cross-cultural experiences have a better chance of reintegrating and realizing their vision. Their church can offer a safe place to re-define identity, to strengthen discipleship and to deepen transformation.

Chapter 4   Methodology and Description of Project

This section frames the methodology of the research action project and analysis. The project evaluates re-entry experiences of short-term missionaries in a Mennonite discipleship program. Most program participants belong to Mennonite congregations.[49] The strong relationship with Mennonite congregations and the Mennonite understanding of the body of Christ provide this study with a certain theological framework which can contribute to re-integration. The discipleship program seeks to strengthen a missional Mennonite identity.

Re-integration is understood as successful when returnees are able to re-integrate in as many social situations or relationships as possible. Re-entry and all related topics have several dimensions pertinent to this study, as returnees are challenged to deal with re-entry symptoms in various different social situations. Returnees need to re-adjust to relationships with families and with friends. They must develop new routines and new daily structures on an individual level. Important questions about lifestyle, implementation of changes experienced, further development of spirituality and re-building of friendships need to be solved. They long to belong again. Family and friends who understand such feelings and disorientation, and who ask intelligent questions, play a crucial role for returnees to regain their sense of belonging (Pirolo 2000, 60, 142). Returnees must find new jobs or define their career and next steps, choose a new course of study, decide where to live and whom to befriend. They are also challenged to re-integrate in a congregation. Specifically, returnees need to find ways to

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[49] See Appendix 27 for data on Mennonite membership.

consolidate the spirituality lived within that congregation with the new understanding and theological framework they have acquired. The researcher has asked returnees, their contact persons and their home churches to evaluate their experiences with re-entry, inquiring into what has helped to deepen and apply the new experiences and knowledge gained, which tools were important in finding a place again and what has helped in dealing with re-integration on all levels. The main focus is on the relevance of the congregations because of the strong denominational connections of the program and its students.

The phases of re-entry shock were described in sections 3.2. and 3.4. In order to create awareness about possible re-entry symptoms, to discover effective tools and positive roles for all parties involved, to motivate all parties to cooperate, and to show how Mennonite core values can contribute to re-integration, the researcher used various different approaches, which are described generally in the following sections. Complex Adaptive Systems Theory helped to clarify core instruments for and obstacles to re-integration. Action research provided ongoing analysis and evaluation, which advanced the investigation of the "Get it!" program's practices and led to the enhancement of policies. Appreciative inquiry helped to define the best possible procedures for re-integration. Elements of grounded theory were used to codify the rich and detailed data gathered through questionnaires and interviews. A deducted pedagogical approach referring to Luke 24 has been developed to strengthen the re-integration learning process.

4.1. The Questions

The data-gathering process consisted of questionnaires for three different groups that were answered in written form. Follow-up interviews with one group of respondents have been transcribed. In order to benefit from a variety of perspectives, the researcher chose program alumni, a selection of home congregations, as well as their contact persons to function as key informants (Bernard, Ryan 2010, 370-73) and to complete a questionnaire of questions using a Likert-type scale in which informants are asked to indicate their (dis-)agreement with declarative statements in 4-5 options.

To gain sufficient context to interpret the answers, additional questions were asked in some areas. Respondents had the opportunity to describe a subject of study in their own words and were given great freedom regarding what and how much they wished to respond (Boeije 2010, 33). The questionnaires consisted of questions relating to change management, helpful tools for re-integration and the effectiveness of the tools and the impact of family, friends, home church and program for re-integration.[50] These questions inquired into categories derived from related studies and re-entry literature. The study could thus shed light on important elements of re-integration and the impact of a meaningful cooperation of returnees, programs, families, friends and home churches.

The "Get it!" program benefits from a network of Mennonites in both Germany and Switzerland, so access to alumni was not difficult. The researcher

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[50] See Appendices 3-7 for the questionnaires, code of conduct and interview guide.

invests in ongoing relationships with "Get it!" alumni which certainly contributed to the high number of responses to the surveys. A first letter/email was sent to "Get it!" alumni to inform them about the research. Their contact persons and home churches received a short introduction to the project when the researcher sent out the questionnaires in June 2010. The researcher selected and approached a sample of alumni to be interviewed via telephone for follow-up conversations. The questionnaires, as well as a contract of consent between the researcher and the "Get it!" students, alumni, contact persons and a sample of home churches, was developed and sent to the respondents in June 2010 in compliance with ethical guidelines.

4.2. The Sample

A total of 112 alumni/returnees[51] of the "Get it!" program were asked to fill in questionnaires. They were chosen from the total of all students who had participated in the program between 1998 and 2010. Of this group, 86 (76.8%) filled in the questionnaires, while 26 did not. The group that completed questionnaires consisted of 33 male and 53 female students originating in Germany (53), Switzerland (25), Paraguay (four), France (one), Austria (one), Canada (one) and USA (one). While participating in the "Get it!" program, 50 belonged to a Mennonite Church, 11of them to a Evangelical (Ana)baptist

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[51] The terms are used interchangeably. See Appendix 27 for data.

Church[52]. and 25 to other denominations (Baptist, Reformed, Brethren and Free

Evangelicals). They experienced their returns between the ages of 20 and 34.

Out of a total of 52 contact persons, 35 (67.3%) responded, of whom 12

were males and 23 female. Some contact persons had moved and could not be

reached; others did not respond. The group consisted of Germans (21), Swiss (11)

and Paraguayans (three). Of the group surveyed, 24 belonged to Mennonite, five

to Anabaptist, one to Baptist, four to Reformed Church and one to a charismatic

Free Church congregations.

Out of a total of 37 home churches, 29 (78.4%) returned questionnaires.

All of the 29 respondents (27 male and two female) belonged to the church

leadership. This group consisted of 19 Germans, six Swiss, two French and two

Paraguayans, of whom one is a leader from a Free Evangelical Church, one from

an Anabaptist Church and the remainder from Mennonite congregations.

The researcher calculated the frequency of similar answers to identify

topics important to those who completed the questionnaires. Patterns of similarity

and difference were revealed (Bernard, Ryan 2010, 53-73, 191-98). Combining

the deductive research with theories derived from literature helped the researcher

understand why re-integration is important to returnees, how policies and

procedures can be enhanced and how all parties involved can contribute to better

re-integration.

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[52] The Evangelical (Ana)baptist Church is known in North America as the Apostolic
Christian Church (Nazarene).

A sample of 12 "Get it!" alumni—one from each of the years that the program ran—was interviewed based on Appreciative Inquiry in September and October 2010. The group consisted of three males and nine females, five of whom were Germans and seven of whom were Swiss. During their "Get it!" participation, five of them were Mennonites, three were Anabaptists and four were of other denominations. They explained their experiences in structured interviews based on an interview guide.[53] The provisional results of the data already analyzed determined the design of the interview guide. The list of questions was emailed to the interviewees prior to the interview dates so respondents had time to reflect on issues and prepare themselves to be interviewed. All questions were asked to all interviewees without exception, so that the findings could be applied across all cases. When essential topics arose, issues were pursued further, so that opinions, experiences, feelings, knowledge and actions could be covered.

Mentoring, sharing, relationships and re-involvement were sub-categories that were frequently judged as important means for re-integration. Consequently, the researcher asked interviewees respondents to share their experiences and to suggest helpful tools for re-integration. Trust and respect were key values in the interviews. When interviewees answered questions, the researcher listened intently and often discussed key phrases and key topics further. They were encouraged to discuss what helped them to deepen and transfer experiences gained and how subsequent students, contact persons, families and home churches

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[53] See Appendix 6.

might contribute to these processes. To avoid the problem of respondents telling the researcher what they think the researcher wants to hear (Bernard, Ryan 2010, 267), their experiences were also augmented with more open-ended questions. Interviewees were encouraged to speak from their experiences. The interviews gave fuller understanding about underlying causes of difficulties experienced by students upon return. Assumptions about findings in the questionnaires were then verified or denied by the interviewees. With the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were taped and immediately transcribed by the researcher at the end of each interview. Interviews were held in respondents' local languages, but transcripts were translated into High German.

Interviewees were selected according to: a) their ability to express themselves well (those who answered questions thoughtfully and expressed themselves clearly when asked open-ended questions to show deep reflection); b) their willingness to be interviewed; c) their ability and willingness to offer honest, transparent and constructive critical answers.

The small sample of this study is limited in its representation. This study differs to others in its geographical and denominational context, its age range and its mission focus. Respondents come from various European countries. The majority were Mennonite/Anabaptist young adults who experienced their return between the ages of 20 and 34. The study aimed to understand each respondent's unique perspective. The researcher has cross-checked findings by searching for instances in new material that do not support the findings (negative instances,

Boeije 2010, 86). Respondents examined findings and confirmed them as credible within their contexts.

4.3. The Role of the Researcher

The researcher is aware of the tension and challenges that arise from the fact that she directs the program being researched while also being the person asking questions, conducting interviews and analyzing results. This potential conflict was brought to the attention of each respondent in the code of conduct given to each prior to the interviews. Bias enters into interviews and questionnaires easily and has been taken into account. The bias to expect answers from interviewees can affect interviews. Therefore respondents were encouraged to answer honestly and not to sugarcoat their input to please the researcher. The leadership of the "Get it!" program emphasizes transparency and open discussion. The program focuses on character formation and living in faithful relationships where weaknesses can be admitted and counsel can be given and accepted. A culture of honest relationships is established, ensuring that respondents feel free to give critical feedback. The European culture is generally critically reflective and encourages people to give clear and honest responses, which contributes to wholehearted feedback. The researcher is a female German Mennonite who herself had to integrate into Swiss culture and into the Mennonite context, as she converted to Mennonite beliefs as a young adult. She took into account her emotional responses and interpretations while analyzing the data. Therefore, results were controlled by defining certain categories within the questionnaires whereupon some respondents were asked to check the findings and to provide

feedback. Triangulation (data and theory triangulation, interviews and questionnaires, as well as the theoretical experience and surveys of relevant researchers, were compared) was applied to ensure accuracy of results.

The participants' thoughts, experiences, actions and expressions were interpreted (Boeije 2010, 8). The researcher sought to discover the motivations behind responses and how interviewees understood the meaning of their behavior. While interviewing respondents, the researcher strove to understand their interpretations of experiences and to place these insights within the larger picture and social perspective provided by other respondents. Interpreting their perspectives required a constant re-definition of the problems with re-entry stress (Boeije 2010, 13). Insights into what was happening during the re-integration process and how it worked were placed against theoretical backgrounds (Boeije 2010, 14) and findings were linked to theoretical models about re-entry (Mayring 2009, 128). The researcher is part of the interpretation process and is aware that she is interpreting descriptions already interpreted by the respondents. The interpretive perspective influences what the researcher finds and how she makes sense of the findings (Osmer 2008, 76). Openness and appreciation of the respondents' interpretations avoid predetermination.

The following rules of interpretation were used: crucial parts of text were paraphrased and categorized with a short form (code) to depict the core topic. Codes helped to reduce and summarize equivalent paraphrases in data (Mayring 2008, 62). Data were analyzed as relating to a more general idea. Combining the deductive research with theories derived from literature then helped the researcher

to understand why re-integration is important to returnees and how all parties involved can contribute to better re-integration results. Constant comparison of the theoretical framework against new data helped generate new ideas to answer the research question (Boeije 2010, 87). To provide intercoder reliability, additional persons were asked to code some of the data (Mayring 2008, 275).

4.4. Questionnaires and Interviews: Methodology and Methods of Analysis

This chapter summarizes relevant literature about methods and tools that were used to bring change to policies and procedures in the area of mission participant re-entry. A survey was used to verify if and which aspects can help successfully to enhance the re-entry process. This was done as an appreciative inquiry to discover the positive aspects and best practices of the "Get it!" program. Action research and Complex Adaptive Systems Theory helped to improve re-integration through collaboration with all participants. Quantitative and qualitative analysis helped to interpret data and to develop a theory. These will each be discussed in this section.

4.4.1. Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is one toll used in this study. It values and recognizes the best in people (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003, 1). It values what works best in an organization and the world around it, instead of looking for a problem to be solved (Hammond 1998; Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003; Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003; Love 2008). It "describes where the organizations want to be, based on the high moments of where they have been"

(Hammond 1998, 7). The art of asking questions, the art of inquiring into possibilities initiates appreciation and helps to design a future. Cooperrider et al. (2003, 87-211) have developed a "4-D" cycle wherein researchers inquire what gives life to an organization (discovery), what might be (dreams), which then helps to develop how it can be (design), which finally results in how to implement the dreams (destiny).

4.4.2. Quantitative Research and Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative research contributes to this study. It approaches data deductively. The questionnaires consisted of some questions[54] that relate to particular categories discussed in the re-entry literature. The respondents were asked to rate them in Likert scales. The researcher then looked for the categories and assigned each a number value. Rank order was counted and assigned a value. This research uses the calculation of frequencies to find out about important topics mentioned and selected by those who filled in the questionnaires (Mathie and Camozzi 2005, 3). These frequencies in the data were then used as indicators within qualtitative analysis to identify patterns and themes in the questionnaire responses. Patterns of similarity and difference were revealed (Bernard, Ryan 2010, 53-73, 191-98) and provided a thematic focus.

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[54] Returnees were asked questions like: "What was the most efficient tool in helping you to apply to your daily life what you have learned during the 'Get it!' time?"; "What was important in helping you to reintegrate and have a good return?"; "What should a home church focus on so that it can be more helpful in re-integrating their 'Get it!' participant?" Questions refer to categories described in chapters 3.3.1. to 3.8.

4.4.3.Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a major tool used in this study. Mathie and Camozzi define qualitative research "as an inductive approach to inquiry. It helps to find out what contributes to people's subjective understanding of reality" (2005, 1). Research builds on data gathered from a particular context so that a pattern of behaviour can emerge and a theoretical understanding can be improved. The "Get it!" alumni filled in questionnaires, as did their contact persons and church members. Coding this data allowed for the identification of themes and issues in a systematic manner (Berg 2009, 228; Bernard and Ryan 2010, 35, 40). Searching for patterns in the data collected brought forth explanations, which led to ideas that need to be tested against new cases (Bernard and Ryan 2010, 266). A sample of alumni interpreted their experiences in structured interviews based on an interview guide. Their experiences were also captured with more open-ended questions. The accuracy of data collected was cross-checked through the principle of triangulation (data and theory triangulation, interviews and questionnaires, as well as the theoretical experience and surveys of relevant researchers, were compared). The questionnaires asked the same questions in three different ways to reduce bias. Combining and comparing answers with theories derived from literature (deductive research) helped the researcher to understand why re-integration is important to returnees, why the re-entry has to be enhanced and how all parties involved can contribute to a better re-integration.

4.4.4. The Use of Qualitative Methods

The researcher used elements of grounded theory to analyze the questionnaires and interviews. Coding data in the grounded theory method by "fragmenting the text into concepts and then putting it back together in larger theoretical categories" (Bernard, Ryan 2010, 270) allows the systematic identification of themes and issues (Berg 2009, 228; Bernard and Ryan 2010, 35, 40, 271). Textual accounts from questionnaires and interviews provided the researcher with common themes, patterns and relationships.[55]

As Boeije (2010,89-93) recommends a spiral of analysis was used to join constant comparison,[56] analytical deduction and theoretical sensitivity and its steps were conducted simultaneously, thus they continually shape and influence one another. Collected data was coded (to clarify and define what the data describes), read, interpreted, compared, verified and selected repeatedly. People bring meaning to terms they use by interpretation. Thus questions aimed at these phenomena brought forth the coding paradigm: What are the conditions and circumstances connected with re-entry? What about the cultural context? What variables were changed? What were the guiding strategies? What are the consequences? A tentative assumption was developed and is shown in Appendix 9.

Coding with gerunds (like mentoring, investing in relationships) depicts action and processes. Questions like "How does the participant act while involved

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[55] See Appendix 15 for sub-categories defined by the coding process.

[56] See Appendix 17 for data related to the rating of the importance of tools for re-integration.

in the re-entry process?", "What causes led to certain developments?", "When,

why and how did the process change?" and "What are purposeful, goal-oriented

activities that returnees and other agents performed during re-entry stress?"

(Charmaz 2006, 51) helped to determine actions. Open coding led to selective and

theoretical coding.[57] Code guidelines and deductive application of categories were

established (Mayring 2009).[58]

Further code guidelines were developed from the interview responses

through value coding by finding similar segments of text and from literature

reviewed (Mayring 2009, 81, 87). Many responses to the questionnaires

overlapped, so case-by-variable matrices were developed (Mayring 2009, 112,

292). Core themes were separated from periphery themes (Mayring 2009, 126).

Memo-writing[59] captured creative ideas to interpret data. Axial coding compares

codes and helps to find contrasts, similarities and differences within a single

category.[60] Partitioning variables helps to clarify matters, note relations between

variables and find intervening variables. Plausible clusters help to define

categories. A list of major themes arose, which led to core categories. A core

category is a central principle around which other codes cluster. The core

category is central, ties in to other codes and categories, and its frequency denotes

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[57] Open coding is the first level of abstraction, which identifies names and categorizes and describes phenomena found in the text. It leads to the discovery of the core variable, which becomes the focus of the theory. Selective coding occurs when the core variable and major dimensions have been discovered. Theoretical coding relates core codes to each other and determines how they can be integrated into theory (The Grounded Theory Institute 2008).

[58] See Appendix 10 for code guidelines.

[59] Memos are short documents that capture emerging ideas and development of theory.

[60] For example, see Table A.15.3. in Appendix 15.

its importance. It supports theories that have already appeared and moves ideas forward. It is defined in terms of its properties and dimensions. They make categories more precise and increase their explanatory power (Corbin, Strauss 2008, 104, 112).

Constant comparison[61] is the dominant principle for developing a theory that is grounded in data. It describes variations of phenomena and how they manifest themselves in different circumstances (Boeije 2010, 83). Constant comparison also goes hand in hand with theoretical sampling. According to Boeije (2010, 38) theoretical sampling means that results from foregoing analysis are checked with newly collected data. Program alumni's responses to questionnaires comprised the first set of data to be analyzed. Answers from the home churches' leadership were then cross-checked. A third set of data came from contact persons. Follow-up interviews with some of the alumni provided the next set of data to be compared.

Constant comparison generated descriptions and various criteria to compare text using questions, such as: What are the main reasons why returnees struggle with re-integration? How do returnees weigh criteria they find important for re-integration, like communication and relationships? How can returnees, home churches, family and friends contribute to a successful re-integration? Axial coding generated a list of major themes. Different circumstances originate phenomena. Core concepts and their interrelated relationships emerged by reducing documents as a whole, so that relationships and influential factors could

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[61] See Appendix 17 for more data.

emerge (Boeije 2010, 84). Triangulation helped to cross-check key codes and concepts that were discovered and developed (Boeije 2010, 86). Negative evidence was welcomed and disagreement between informants or alternative explanations was acknowledged (Mayring 2009, 110). It helped to verify whether conjectures are justified. To ensure quality, theoretical sensitivity (Strauss 1987, 21, quoted in Boeije 2010, 88)[62] was applied in this study.

4.4.5. Complex Adaptive Systems Theory

Seeing the project through Complex Adaptive Systems Theory (CAS) lenses enriches the action research. Characteristics of CAS are emergence, self-organization and change agents. Complex adaptive system theory helps to determine which practices are central and which are possible future obstacles. New practices are tested and integrated before people can execute changes (Cambridge Leadership Associates 2010).[63]

The evolution of new and innovative patterns is influenced by involving different agents in the process (Plowman, et al. 2007). Exchanges among these agents within systems result in new learning and patterns. Giving several groups of agents the opportunity to communicate about their experiences creates a flow of information. Agents resonate through sharing common interests, knowledge, goals and worldviews (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, et al. 2006, 3). They respond to

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[62] Boeije (2010, 88) defines theoretical sensitivity as "the researcher's ability to develop creative ideas from research data, viewing the data through a certain theoretical lens." He (2010, 88) refers to Strauss and Corbin, who recommend that the researcher seek conditions, context, strategies and consequences in data as a tool for structuring data.

[63] Eoyang (2004, 55-60) describes a classification system that represents the landscape of work practioners in human system dynamics, which helps to build a framework.

external and internal pressures and thereby generate system-wide emergent learning and adaptability. A leader can provide conditions for a process of change and motivate agents to seize new opportunities. Cooperrider (2005) sees every problem as a frustrated dream, so even frustrations and problems can function as seeds of hope and trigger change. This approach honours the concept of the priesthood of all believers; each person can contribute with his/her gifts.

Cambridge Leadership Associates (2008) state that creating an adaptive leadership culture requires the presence of five qualities. Their statements help to build a framework for the project (2008, 2): (1) *Shared responsibility*: Can all parties connect to share responsibility for a better reintegration? Can all parties help to recognize their contribution and to "see the value of supporting the contributions of the other parts as well"? (2008, 2); (2) *Elephants on the table*: Can structures become implemented to talk about the "invisible" to date?[64]; (3) *Institutional reflection and continuous learning*: Is time taken for reflection on returnees' experiences and do parties learn from each other?; (4) *Sensitivity to authority*: To what extent are people valued for their own experiences and judgement?; and (5) *Customized professional development*: How can an ongoing development of new competencies and ways of working concerning re-entry be ensured? In Chapter 4.6.,4. 7. and 5.7, the researcher will reflect in more detail how to use CAS characteristics while cooperating with different agents.

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[64] This metaphor borrows from the age-old cliché about family issues—wherein nobody speaks of difficult and painful subjects—that's referred to as the "elephant in the room." Here, structures and actions could become obstacles, since no one talks about them, so they therefore remain "invisible."

4.4.6. Action Research

McNiff (2010) describes Action Research as "a way of investigating your practice in a spiral of steps (Lewin 1946) in order to improve it." The researcher used action research to evaluate and improve the "Get it!" program's conception of re-entry. Problems were identified, and a possible solution was imagined, tried out and evaluated, so that practice could be changed (McNiff 2002, 7). Self reflection is central. Findings reveal a "systematic investigation into your own behavior and the reasons for that behavior" (McNiff 2002, 6). The goal is to gain a better understanding and to improve a process; the researcher becomes an involved party. Berg points out that "action research collaborates with the very people it seeks to study" (Berg 2009, 251). "It involves identifying a problematic issue, imagining a possible solution, trying it out, evaluating it (did it work?), and changing practice in the light of the evaluation" (McNiff 2002, 7). Schmuck (2008, 1) describes the typical spiral of cycles in action research, "...reflecting, planning, acting, and collecting data again." The researcher collaborated with the very people who she studied and participants were able to integrate outcomes in their actual lives (Berg 2009, 248, 251). Giving several groups of agents the opportunity to communicate about their experiences created a flow of information and in this case helped to better bridge the gap between the "Get it!" program training, assignment and home congregations.

4.4.6.1. Action Research with Contact Persons

McNiff (2010) describes action research as an improvement in a situation one is working in (McNiff 2010). When awareness is increased, dynamics in a

process can be understood and people influenced for the better. With her thesis

the researcher seeks to better understand the dynamics of re-integration so that

she can positively influence the people she is working with. In describing her

active, inquiring role, the researcher followed the suggestion of Torbert and

Associates (2004) to frame, advocate, illustrate and inquire. Former contact

persons[65] were asked about their views and experiences, as well as their

recommendations for how to enhance relationships between future contact

persons and the "Get it!" students. They contributed important insights to a

process that then came alive. Based on the findings, a renewed approach to

inform and connect with new contact persons was installed. The researcher was

engaged in making the action happen, but also stood back to reflect on it as it

happened. She interacted with both students and contact persons, and continually

sorted new information. Being both researcher and leading director of the

program, she was able to achieve a broad view of the entire system, as well as

pre-understanding of that system. She was able to work with dynamic complexity

and multiple causes and effects over time (Coghlin and Brannick 2010, 39;

McNiff and Whitehead 2002, 2005) and was knowledgeable of the values and

norms of the context. Authentic relationships were established. Methods were

well thought out. In the action learning process (Coghlin and Brannick 2010, 45),

students and contact persons alike become clients who are able to improve the

quality of their relationships. In the social system of these relationships, change

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[65] Each "Get it!" student chooses a contact person to support, mentor and encourage him/her during his/her "Get it!" participation. See Definition of Terms 1.6.1.

experiments were conducted, problems were identified and solutions were planned, executed and evaluated. Established terms were re-defined and new norms were tried out by the clients, who were given free choice (McNiff 2002) and participated in designing the relationship based on basic knowledge of communication and relationships. Contact persons were encouraged by the "action research team"[66] to network together with former contact persons and "Get it!" alumni in their region to learn from one another. Practice was changed in light of the evaluation.

4.4.6.2. Action Research with Students

The researcher has also been studying the current "Get it!" students, and participated in several group discussions during the "Get it!" training phase. Casual and informal interviews, as well as structured group meetings, were conducted to understand the students' values and expectations. The group of students discussed the model of having a contact person and how to inform their contact person about their tasks in the best possible way. They came up with a catalogue of ideas they then shared with their contact persons. The "Get it!" students understood that their relationships with their contact persons depend on their initiative and willingness to invest time and energy. The researcher set up meetings on a regular basis to assure a high level of alertness. During one "visitor's day," the "Get it!" leadership met with the contact persons, who very much appreciated the chance to connect, ask questions and share their ideas on

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[66] The action research team consisted of some members of the "Get it!" program board of directors and the researcher.

how best to support the "Get it!" students. They agreed to discuss the shape of

their relationship with the "Get it!" students before they left for the mission

assignment. The researcher asked and trained the "Get it!" team leaders to

motivate their students to keep in touch with their contact persons during their

mission assignments.

4.5. Complex Adaptive Systems Theory and Students' Learning

By applying principles from Complex Adaptive Systems Theory

transformation can be created in a system and learning experiences can be

initiated. The vision and mission statement of the Ausbildungs- und

Tagungszentrum Bienenberg is shaped by and rooted in the text from Luke 24:13-

35, in which Jesus appears to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is a

text that helps educators to initiate learning experiences that evoke lasting

changes in students' lives, as well as in their own lives. The Luke 24 pericope

illustrates an educational process of understanding and teaching that can be

described as a participatory cycle of developing practical knowledge that changes

worldviews and behaviour, as Coghlan and Brannick describe (2010, 3ff.). By

applying principles from Complex Adaptive Systems Theory, initiating action

research so that several groups of agents (students, teachers and local churches)

communicated about their experiences, a flow of information and transformation

was created. Every member of an organization (agent) has the potential to

contribute to the organizational change. Agents resonate through sharing common

interests, knowledge, goals and worldviews (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, et al. 2006,

3). They respond to external and internal pressures, and thus generate system-

wide emergent learning and adaptability. The researcher set the conditions for a process of change and ongoing learning, motivating agents to seize new opportunities and share responsibilities. Groome's (1980) "Shared Christian Praxis" informed the action and helped learners to develop the "know-how," "know-what" and "know-why" of an event. Groome's (2010) approach to Christian teaching and ministry invites participants into a dialogue with each other and into a conversation between their lives and the biblical text. The desired outcome is transformation and strengthened identity. Cochran (2008)[67] gives a simple summary of Groome's approach: In a first movement, participants identify present praxis by looking at their life. In a second movement, they reflect on life by recalling events, reflecting about the reasons these events happened and imagining what "better" would look like. In a third movement, participants learn about their faith and hear the Christian story and vision. In a fourth movement, participants work to make that faith their own. In a fifth movement, finally, they make and enact decisions and responses for a lived Christian faith. Groome's approach provided a framework to work on and the researcher developed a cycle of understanding referring to Luke 24, which is described in more detail in Chapter 5.5. and Appendix 24.

4.6. Summary

A variety of methods allowed the researcher to evaluate data and to develop a theory of how to enhance re-integration. Action research was used as a

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[67] See Appendix 23.

methodology for intervention, development and change of re-entry policies and procedures. Appreciative Inquiry helped to find out what works best in the programs researched. Complex Adaptive Systems Theory provided the researcher with a framework to work with in order to determine which practices are central and which are obstacles to re-entry. Both action research and Complex Adaptive Systems Theory were tools to change practice by collaborating with the very people who were studied. A cycle of understanding referring to Luke 24 was developed as a tool for change management. It can play a crucial role in mentoring returnees.

Chapter 5: Outcomes and Evaluation of Project

This chapter presents and evaluates the outcomes of the project as a whole. This includes findings related to the survey (Section 5.2.-5.4.), as well as the researcher's development of a cycle of understanding referring to Luke 24 (Section 5.5.), and results from action research (Section 5.6.-5.7.).

The findings of the survey are presented descriptively through storytelling, referring to verbal descriptions of all four data groups as well as to tables and Charts[68] generated from data. The findings generate a theory that fits the substantive data. Storytelling sustains comprehensibility to all involved in the area of study. Referring to Chapter 2, possible contributions of Mennonite core beliefs to reintegration are mentioned when appropriate.

Collected data about re-integration were analyzed using elements of grounded theory. Perspectives given by the various respondents were treated as a whole. The emerging process led to groupings and categories of data. Comments, findings, assumptions and observations were noted while reading responses; memos were written to organize and interpret data; interviews were recorded and transcribed. An example of note-taking can be found in the Appendix[69] and depicts how it helped to combine process with action research.

Code words served as heuristic tools rather than as a condensed representation of facts; they are signposts that point to things in the data. The

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[68] Charts and tables are numbered separately. Numbers are each given in sequence according to the chapter number.

[69] See Appendix 8 for an example of note-taking.

emerging patterns, relationships and concepts were interpreted in relation to the

social realities that all respondents referred to (Boeije 2010, 5). An overarching

core category of "belonging" emerged.

5.1. Analytical Steps

Sections 5.1.-5.1.1. serve two goals: What was described in general in

sections 4.3. 4.5. and 5 is now described as an example of data analysis. This

example helps the reader to understand the steps that have been taken to analyze

all questions and responses from all four data sources. It also presents the

category of "accountability," which is one of the sub-categories of the core

category of "belonging" as described from Chapter 5.2.1. on.

Chart 5.1.1. Process of analysis

| Verbal descriptions | Frequency of terms | Coding and categories | Core category or ranks | Findings |
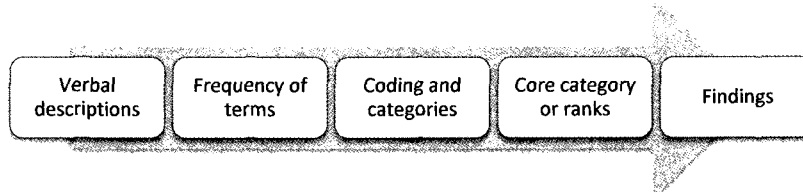
As described in Chart 5.1.1., in the process of coding, data were divided

into meaningful parts to realize what areas to explore further. Verbal and frequent

descriptions from alumni such as "sharing and listening foster reflection";

"sharing helps to see and appreciate changes"; "take time to talk with friends" and

"clarifying expectations" led to the application of various codes. This

categorization of the data using codes helped to identify themes. By looking for

statements and explanations from respondents (open coding) that dealt with the

same subject, a system of codes developed. Some codes were "in-vivo" (used by

the respondents), some were created by the researcher, while others were derived

from social theory and were "constructed codes" (Boeije 2010, 109).

Table 5.1.1. gives an example how the researcher dealt with raw data. In

Appendix 16, this process of generating themes is shown for other data.

Table 5.1.1. Expectations of returnees towards family, friends, home churches
and contact persons

Some verbal explanatory responses	Number of times occurring	Codes	Expectations towards	Categories	Rank of categories	
					Category	#
Processing experience	1	Re-entry symptoms	Returnees	Knowing about re-entry stress	Showing interest	65
Being welcomed	10	Interest	Friends, family	Investing in relationship	Knowing about re-entry Stress	33
Felt interest for me	22	Understanding	Friends, family	Investing in relationship	Mutual sharing	29
					Appreciating and allowing for changes	13
Time to adapt	1	Time	Returnees	time	No expectations	7
					Offer mentoring	2
New role, freedom to change	1	Changes	Church, family	Allowing for changes	Offer practical help	2
Take time to listen	1	Sharing	Those at home	Communication		

(Arrows show the ongoing analysis.)

Chart 5.1.2. Expectations toward family, friends, home churches and contact persons

Q.13. Returnees (n=86) wanted family, friends and church members to meet the
following expectations:
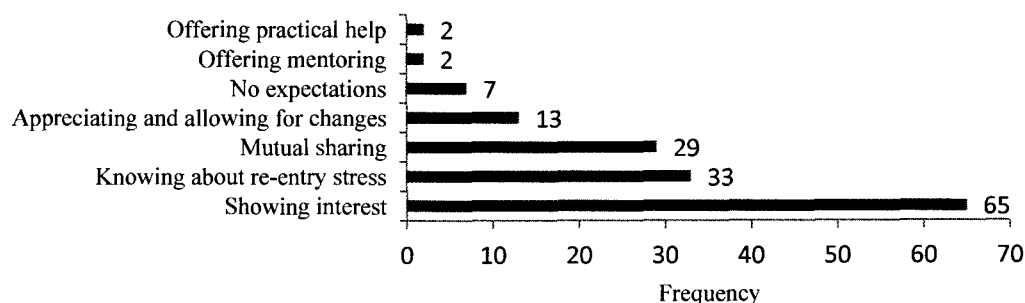
Axial coding helped to find the relevant and dominant topics and the

researcher was able to reduce and re-organize data. Axial coding also provided

the researcher with an idea, a direction by which to pursue and to determine the

properties of the categories (Boeije 2010, 109). The following categories have been defined by axial coding. They point to patterns and behaviours respondents named as relevant or problematic, which helped to develop theory (Boeije 2010, 84):

- Communication: Mentoring, support, encouragement from contact person, friends, family, church, sharing, processing, re-adapting, finding ways to transfer experiences

- Relationships: Accountability, encouraging returnees to pass on their knowledge, getting involved again (in church, family, networks of friends), taking initiative, sense of belonging

- Re-entry: Learning about possible re-entry symptoms and how to deal with them, change management, awareness of changes, realizing cultural differences, taking time to process

- Spirituality: Nurture spiritual disciplines, passing on experiences

- Structure: Developing life perspective, developing daily routine, organizing daily life, setting goals, planning career.

Tables Appendix.2.a.- 2.5. in Appendix 2 give an overview of all responses (including the rate of "no response") according to data groups. The results led to the concepts described in sections 5.2.-5.2.3. These concepts thus became a framework to describe and explore the driving forces during re-integration and what tools are most helpful for re-integration. Concepts and categories led to identification of a core category, which represents the main theme and ties together all different categories. In some questions returnees,

contact persons and church leadership alike rated given categories in a Likert

scale to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. The answers rated

as "most efficient" or "crucial and important" were counted and listed in

descending order in Charts, revealing the emerging top categories.

5.1.1. Accountability (Example of Category Description)

"It was so valuable to be able to have someone to whom I was accountable and someone to ask me how I'm doing. When I came home I just needed someone to take me along, even when I didn't feel like it. That's how I found my place again." —program alumnus

This section describes the process used to define the category of

accountability and to show how all data were processed. Returnees described the

concept of "relationships" using phrases like "feeling of being understood";

"having a strong, established relationship with a person before the mission trip";

"caring for each other"; and "having established and strong relationships in

church, at home." These statements framed certain means for re-integration for all

parties involved: appreciation; awareness; bridging the gap; challenging and

encouraging returnees; re-creating the feeling of belonging; investing in ongoing

relationships; mutual updating; ongoing contact; understanding; offering

mentoring.

Chart 5.1.1.1. shows the ideas contained in the data as it relates to

concepts of "relationships" and "communication." Comparisons show areas for

possible improvement, as well as those important for successful re-integration:

All four data groups agree that the concept of "relationships"—with its various

aspects, including "mentoring"; "keeping in touch expressed by visits, a warm

welcome"; "having friends with the same international experience" and "accountable relationships"—is an effective tool for re-integration. Alumni seemed to emphasize the importance that subsequent home churches and students focus on building and investing in relationships. Contact persons and alumni alike seemed to realize that the area of relationships is crucial for re-integration and to deepen change. Verbal descriptions from contact persons—including phrases like "taking enough time to mentor a student is one of the most difficult challenges"; "the students should take initiative to keep in touch during outreach"; and "students should choose a person as contact person with whom a strong relationship is already established and where a mutual agreement for accountability is shared"—confirm this point.

Chart 5.1.1.1. The role of "communication" and of "relationships" for re-integration[70]

The role of communication and relationships for re-integration (multiple answers given)

Category	
Top five ideas for subsequent students:..	46
Top five ideas for subsequent students:..	76
Family, church are expected to invest in..	71
Family, church are expected to communicate	94
Contact persons should focus on..	105
Contact persons should focus on relationships	108 ... 37
Churches should focus on communication	252
Churches should focus on relationships	159
Good communication with church	164 ... 65
Strong relationships with church	179 ... 56
Communication creates a sense of belonging	131 ... 43
Relationships create a sense of belonging	136 ... 35
Communication is helpful for re-integration	
Relationships are helpful for re-integration	53
Communication is important to deepen..	149 ... 54
Relationships are important to deepen change	203 ... 43

Frequency: 0 100 200 300

■ Alumni n = 86   ▨ Interviewees n= 12

■ Contact persons n= 35   ■ Church leadership n= 29

As Chart 5.1.1.1. shows, alumni have experienced how important a constant flow of information, sharing, listening to stories and the clarification of expectations are for a successful re-integration. Returnees seem to be anxious to find open ears and to have the ability to share—either with their teams during the week of debriefing or with those at home. Those at home have expected to hear

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[70] The numbers in Chart 51.1.1. represent the sum of subcategories of "relationships (mentoring, keeping in touch, friends with international experience, visit, welcome)" and "communication (listening, update of information, understanding, sharing, clarifying expectations)." They refer to Tables Appendix.2.a.- 5.2.5.

stories and to take time to share, just as the returnees have expected to be able to share their stories and to listen to those of others. Communication seems to be a major tool to develop a sense of belonging again, a fact confirmed by verbal responses from all data groups describing the concept of "communication" using terms like "willingness to listen," "clarifying expectations, share with those who have the same international experience," "sharing and listening fosters reflection, sharing helps to see and appreciate changes," "keeping in touch," "discussing new perspectives" and "being interested in others and their stories." Returnees are willing to invest in relationships, to share with others what they have experienced and to seek ways to implement and pass on what they have learned. The process of re-entry includes the stress of re-defining friendships, finding good ways to communicate with those at home, and gaining and raising understanding about what re-entry stress is all about. The Mennonite lifestyle of hospitality is an excellent tool contributing to that process. Communal life contributes to the transfer of faith and to relationship building. Seiter and Waddell's (1989, 15-19) study examined how returnees' interpersonal use of communication, their relational satisfaction and their locus of control[71] for affiliation influenced a successful re-entry. Data indicate that successful re-entry is interdependent with returnees' own behaviours and actions, as well as with external events and the use of communication. Misunderstandings, a lack of communication and changes in existing relationships hinder successful re-entry. Returnees and their families and

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[71] Locus of control is a concept in personal psychology that measures the extent to which persons believe that they can control their lives or that their environment has power to control their decisions.

friends alike need to be encouraged to communicate, to establish relationships again and thereby deal with re-entry stress successfully.

In the ongoing process of analysis, connections were made between and within categories, where single categories were then divided into subcategories. The researcher chose what codes were ascribed to what categories. Topics of reference were found in different parts and sets of data and distinctions have been made between relevant data fragments. Reasoning shifted between theoretical codes and actual data, generating new ideas that were tested by comparing them with new material. The categories "communication" and "relationships" indicate the importance of accountability. Theoretical sampling clarified if the different groups describe accountable relationships in similar or different ways. This led to further development of theoretical concepts.

Continuous consideration of data, constant comparison and reassembling data-evolving relationships between data led to a coherent model of explanation and provided a new perspective of the social phenomenon of re-entry (Boeije 2010, 71-79). The higher-level category of "accountability" refers to a distinct understanding of how returnees (should) relate to others.

Accountability is described by alumni and returnees as a trusting relationship with a person who is willing to build that friendship, who acts like a "big brother," is spiritually mature and can understand the process the student and returnee is going through. Interviewees described important relationships that helped them integrate experiences gained. It was important for many of them to have role models to learn from and to invest in friendships with people who were

open to mutual learning, to discuss different cultures of faith and to develop mutual understanding. Anabaptists believe in mutual obligation, accountability is fostered, and a christocentric understanding of spirituality is nurtured. Those disciplines provide a framework to discuss different expressions of faith and to mutual encouragement. Returnees' statements supported concepts in the literature about the importance of accountability (Pue 2005; Bridges 2009; Allenspach 2010; Pirolo 2000) and that there should be a possibility to reflect with someone who has known the student for a long time and whom they can rely on. Alumni described how they benefitted from confidential and open sharing, how advice was given and experiences were evaluated together. Most of the returnees struggled with new insights gained during the mission experience and how to transfer these experiences into daily life. Having a trusted person who understands the changes the returnee experienced and who cares about them personally was described as encouraging and fostered transfer of learned experiences. Alumni consequently encouraged subsequent students to take initiative and invest in trusting relationships before leaving for their mission trip. They also advised students to select an appropriate person for such an accountable relationship and to be explicit in giving him/her an accountability role. Expectations must be clarified and rules of communication must be discussed (how to keep in touch, when to communicate during outreach and how to meet after return). The relationship to the contact person may become that of an accountable friend, though they may not occupy such a role initially.

In follow-up interviews, alumni confirmed the necessity of accountable relationships, associating them with the desire to belong again, to find a place again. Returnees should be aware that relationships have changed and need to be rebuilt after their return.

Responses from contact persons again described the benefits of trusting relationships. Contact persons reflected on the time investment necessary to establish such an accountable friendship. Others pointed to the benefit of cooperation with family, friends and home churches, all of whom can offer mentoring relationships.[72]

Home churches agreed with the importance of mentoring, but also realized that such an accountable relationship depends on already established, caring friendships. Some of the churches delegate accountable relationships to the contact person and opted for church leadership to support and train contact persons to be able to mentor students/returnees.[73]

Awareness of and knowing how to establish an accountable relationship seem to be key for mentoring relationships. Returnees and contact persons alike confirmed that they needed better understanding and practical help to establish accountability in daily life. They saw both programs and home churches as the parties responsible for information and training. Mennonites emphasize discipleship as an important means to train believers and to form identity. The willingness to support one another contributes to these expectations.

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[72] The answers refer to contact persons: Questions 3, 5-9, 14.

[73] The answers refer to home churches: Questions 2, 3, 4, 7.

Accountability is also used as a keyword to describe the relationship with the mission program's leadership team. Alumni responded positively regarding the program's organized mentoring feature,[74] which helps returnees process experiences in an accountable relationship undertaken at their own initiative. Programs thus encourage returnees to cement and develop their new perspective. Accountability also seems to be important in helping returnees to plan their next steps: where to get involved again in church, how to plan their career and how to re-organize their daily life. Alumni here see a necessary cooperation between programs and home churches. Home churches should be open to new insights and should foster development of experiences through mentoring, evaluating and by offering ministry opportunities. Conversation, understanding, and patience are also vital to ensure that the participant's new insights, experiences and ideas are enriching for the congregation as well as for themselves. The Mennonite understanding of forming a new community as an alternative to the surrounding society should offer a safe space to deal with these new insights and can so contribute to reintegration.

The above section has shown how the researcher proceeded along certain steps of qualitative analysis. All other categories that follow have been developed by doing the same steps.

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[74] The summary refers to returnees: Questions 12, 17-20, 25.

5.2. Core Category of Belonging and its Other Variations

The overarching core category of "belonging" can be described by the following categories and their subcategories: accountability (as described in the previous section), being involved again, change management and dealing with re-entry stress. They describe respondents' actions of working for re-integration in different social realities.

5.2.1. Being Involved Again

The challenge to re-integrate into several social realities (in family and with friends, in daily life, within church) was expressed in a variety of descriptions. From 53 female and 33 male alumni who responded to the questionnaire, 33 females and 15 males mentioned the importance of finding a place again.[75] This absolute frequency prompted the researcher to take a closer look at the variation and circumstances of that term. It became obvious that alumni were aware of the need to find new places and roles upon returning home. They realized that they returned with new experiences, different perspectives and many stories to share with others. They mentioned the longing to be appreciated, to be listened to and to find a way to transfer experiences through mentoring.

Chart 5.2.1.1. indicates the importance of re-establishing a sense of belonging. Out of a total of 86 alumni, 59 of them—and 24 of both contact persons and church leadership respondents—rated it as key to implement and deepen change when returning home. Marsh et al. (2007, 4-5) confirm that relationships

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[75] See Appendix 11: Codebook "Get it!" alumni questionnaires.

with family and friends are important to define social identity. Those who feel included participate and contribute to their communities. Alumni and church leadership agreed with that observation and gave "finding a place again" as the most efficient tool for re-integration. Nevertheless, only 16 alumni reported that family, friends and church leadership expected them to find a place again and were thus aware of the importance of this concept. One can assume that this remains an area that requires learning and understanding. Mennonites strive to acknowledge their different gifts, talents, traditions and knowledge and might be able to offer that area.

Chart 5.2.1.1. Variations in data groups. Importance of sense of belonging
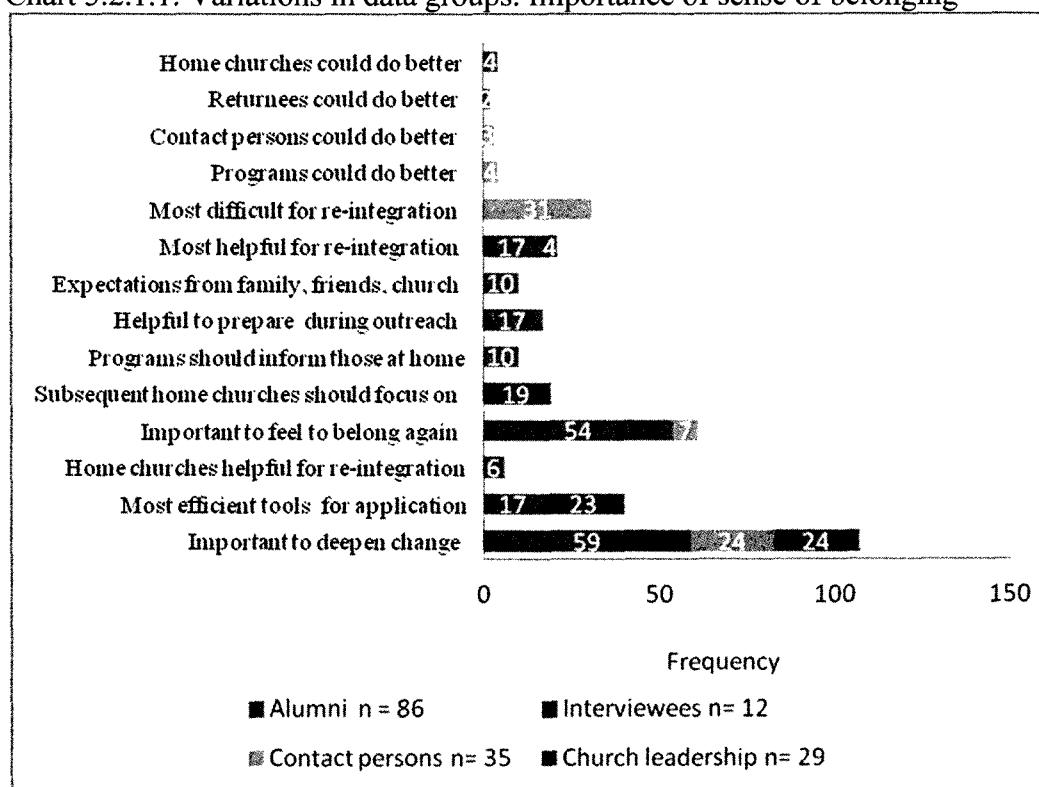
Returnees gave insight into which tools might be helpful to achieve the goal. They ranked three areas as helpful tools in Chart 5.2.1.2., all of which were

connected with relationships and good communication: "Being mentored" (77),

"being able to share" (71) and "listening to the stories of others" (60). Pirolo

(2000) encourages returnees to be active agents of re-entry, as did program

alumni: They named "taking the initiative in practising spirituality" (62),

"ongoing contact with alumni" (59), "getting involved in church" (54) and "being

informed about re-entry stress" (52) as important tools to find a place in church

again.

Chart 5.2.1.2. Finding a place in church again

Q.7. What returnees think is important to feel to belong again (n=86)

Category	Frequency
Having a structured schedule	41
Taking time to adapt	47
Being informed about re-entry stress	52
Getting involved in church	54
Ongoing contact w/ alumni	59
Listening to the stories of others	60
Being initiative in practising spirituality	62
Being able to share	71
Being mentored	77
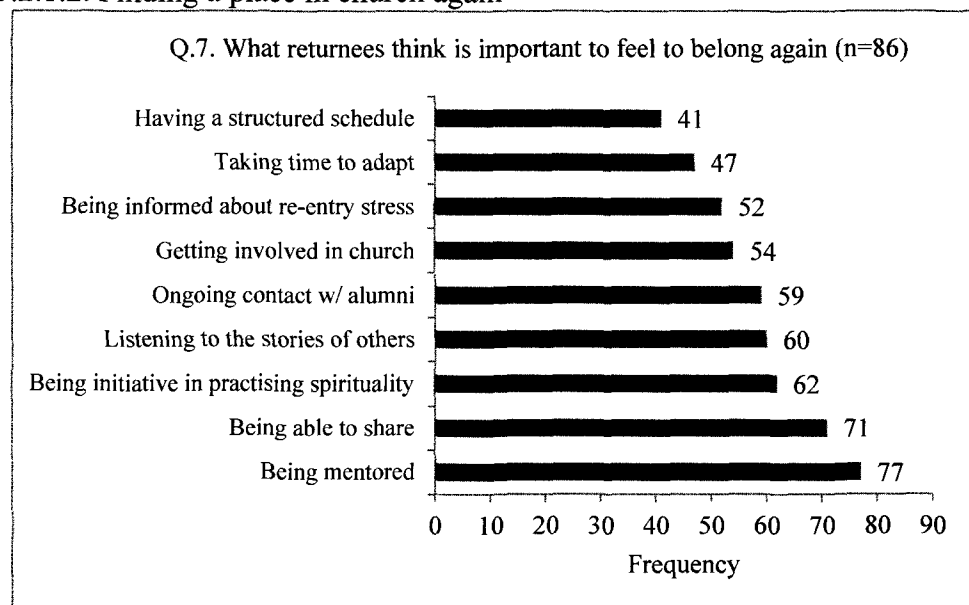
Chart 5.2.1.3. Top five ideas for future students

Q.22. Core categories of top five ideas alumni (n=86) want to share with subsequent "Get it!" participants for their return (multiple answers)

Category	Frequency
Intiative	8
Spirituality	32
Structure	43
Re-entry stress	44
Communication	46
Time	48
Change management	65
Relationships	76
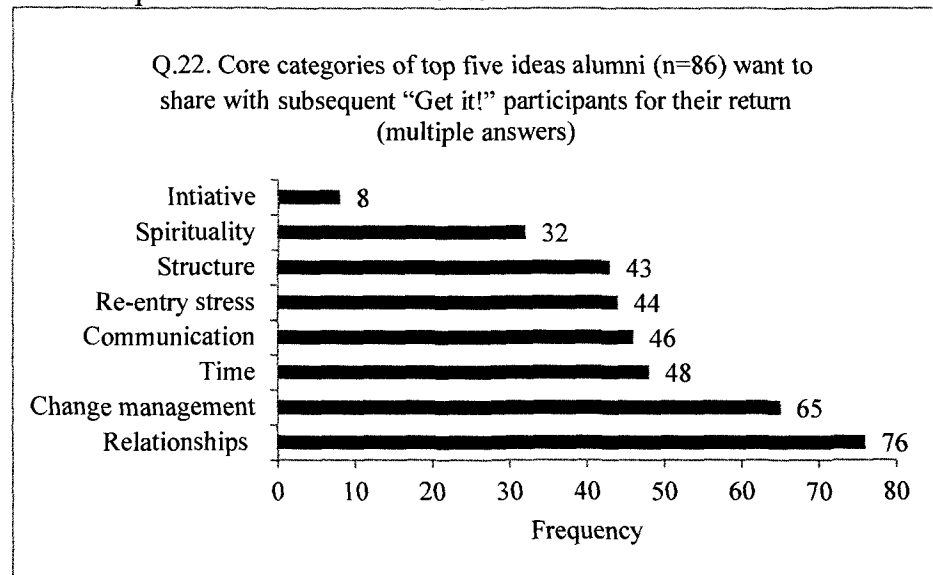
In Chart 5.2.1.3., alumni rated relationships, change management and time as top categories returnees should focus on. Tuttle (2000), Walling, Erikkson, et al. (2006, 154) and Seiter and Waddell (1989) confirm that it is crucial for returnees to learn how to deal with the effects of a shifting cultural identity. Applying their experiences to a congregational identity is a challenge that needs skills in change management. Jordan (1992) and M. Roth (2007, 33, 158) warn returnees to take time to process their experiences and not just jump back into the former life. Ward (1984), Neufeld (1999), Jordan (1992), Foyle (1995), M. Roth (2003), Storti (1997) and Geist (2010) confirm that returnees need accountable relationships to process re-entry experiences and to mature. As shown by the above data, being exposed to an international setting often makes people aware of the importance of belonging to a family, place and nationality. The globalization of culture challenges people to develop a new set of cultural tools. Even short-term missionaries come back with new understandings of social identity and need

to find ways to integrate their new insights and behaviours. According to Marsh et al. (2007, 13, 15) family and friends[76] are still the main form of local belonging. For participants in a mission program, the church also plays a key role for relationships and the sense of belonging. The body of Christ provides a setting to define social reality and its particular tradition can offer a safe place to redefine identity and to reintegrate.

Two questions in the questionnaires specifically asked about the expectations returnees had toward others and what expectations they were confronted with from people at home.[77] The answers also point to helpful tools to nurture a sense of belonging.

Chart 5.2.1.4. Expectations of alumni and of family and church
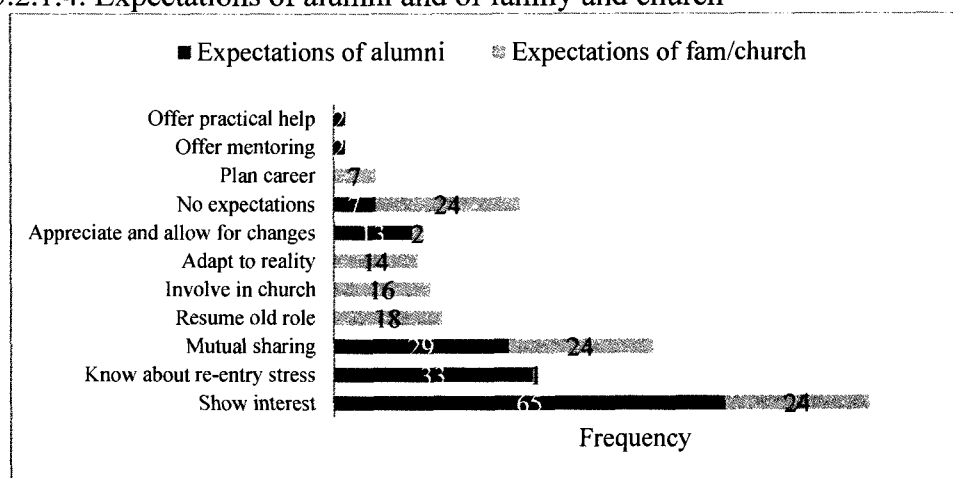
Returnees' responses agreed with the literature,[78] in that they experienced a clash of expectations. Their own expectations were described as "knowing what

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[76] Friendship in Western culture is understood as the intimate, private bond between people (Marsh, Bradley, Love, et al. 2007, 15).

[77] The description refers to returnees' responses to questions 1, 2, 13 and 14.

[78] Austin (1986), Jordan (1992), Foyle (1995), Storti (2003), Oberg (1960), Pirolo (2000), Weaver (1987), Neufeld (1999) and LaBrack (2000b) describe a clash of expectations.

comes next," "planning career and future" and "finding my place and role." Returnees described other people's expectations in such terms: "my family expected me to function in the same old role," "my church promptly asked me to take over responsibility for the youth group" and "friends wanted me to listen to their stories." Returnees expected others "to take time to meet with me and to listen to my stories," "to show their excitement about my return," "to help me to find a place again" and "the church should appreciate my international experiences gained." Chart 5.2.1.4. reflects these statements, as 65 out of 86 alumni shared the expectations that those at home should show interest, should be willing to share and should allow for changes—maybe because they know about possible re-entry stress symptoms. While people at home were willing to listen and share, the reality was that returnees were expected to resume the same old roles, to fit into the existing reality. These responses point to the importance of finding a place again, developing a sense of belonging.

In verbal descriptions, church leadership also described their expectations toward returnees. They want the returnees to get involved in church ministry again, expressing hope that students had matured spiritually and would pass on their faith and insights. Respondents emphasized the willingness to appreciate new perspectives and to help returnees to find a place again. They expected returnees to take initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines and to commit themselves to church again. Returnees should "find ways to serve in church again," "be interested in others and their stories" and "transfer their insights gained so that others can be motivated." Church leadership strongly expressed the

expectation that returnees knew more about their talents and gifts and the desire to involve them again in church ministry. Returnees, leadership respondents maintained, should be able to re-organize their daily lives.[79]

The answers of 29 church leaders were counted and assigned a value for rank order.[80] They agreed that being mentored (25), being able to share (22), getting involved in church again (22) and knowing about re-entry (18) are crucial means for returnees to find their places in the congregation again. Responses from contact persons confirmed that perspective. They expected returnees "to take initiative and to implement new insights" and "to pass on what they have learned." Returnees should bring back a positive attitude and understanding of the body of Christ.

In verbal descriptions contact persons also emphasized the willingness of returnees to contribute talents and gifts and to resume old responsibilities in church. Their awareness of gifts and/or a possible evaluation with church leadership can foster re-integration and the sense of belonging. Programs should teach returnees how to manage change so that returnees can re-integrate into social life.[81]

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[79] The descriptions refer to responses from home churches: Questions 5, 12-14. See Appendix 16 for Charts.

[80] See Table Appendix.2.5.

[81] This description refers to responses from contact persons: Questions 4, 7, 8, 9. In Appendix 12 a table gives further reasons why contact persons believed returnees ought to find a place in church again.

5.2.2. Change Management

"After my re-entry, my friendships changed a lot. Life went on without me. It was good to recognize that and to be able to prepare myself. I know that I need to take initiative–and that it will continue to change." —an interviewee

Chart 5.2.2.1. Assessment of the role of change management
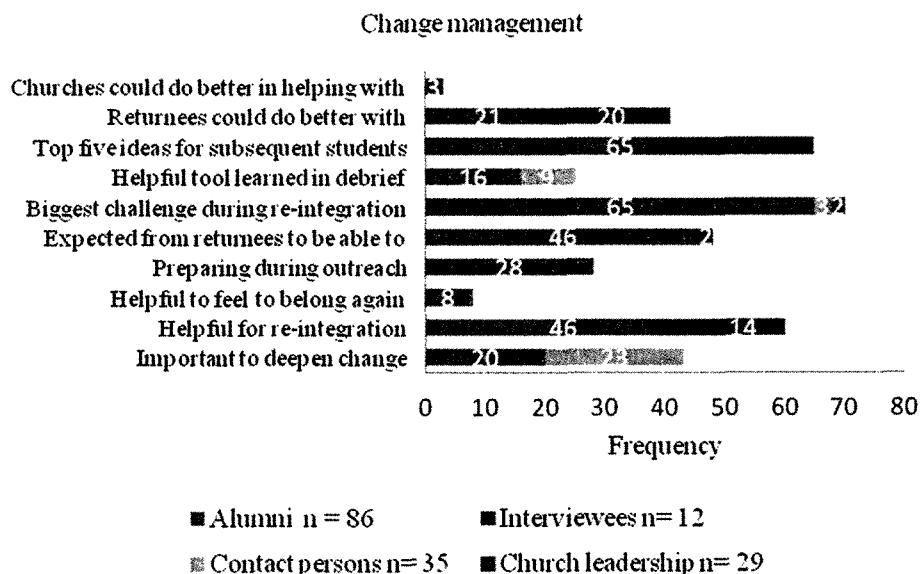
Change management can be used as a category to summarize what returnees must achieve to foster a successful re-integration. Findings correlate with the literature in that returnees have changed socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually (M. Roth 2007, 19, 21, 158; Adler 1981; Storti 1997; Jordan 1992; Tuttle 2000; and Lingenfelter and Mayers 1986). Chart 5.2.2.1. indicates that change management is rated a key element for re-integration by alumni (65 out of 86), contact persons (23 out of 35) and interviewees (all 12 of them) alike. Verbal descriptions stressed that, upon returning home, returnees count on good communication and accountable relationships in which possible changes can be realized through sharing, mentoring and processing to implement changes. Friends, contact persons and

church members alike can offer a safe space to discuss experiences, where they can together develop strategies so that insights gained and spiritual disciplines may be practiced and a sense of belonging can be re-developed. The Chart also shows that returnees felt they could do better (21) here, having experienced change management as the biggest challenge during re-integration. Younger students in a developmental stage of identity formation especially felt a tremendous impact from international experiences (Walling et al., 2006, 154; Seiter and Waddell 1989). This awareness motivated them to name several tools in Chart 5.2.2.2. which they thought could be helpful and might encourage subsequent students to learn and use tools to manage change successfully.

Chart 5.2.2.2. Effective tools for applying experiences.[82]

Effective tools in helping returnees to apply to daily life what have been learned during the "Get it!" time

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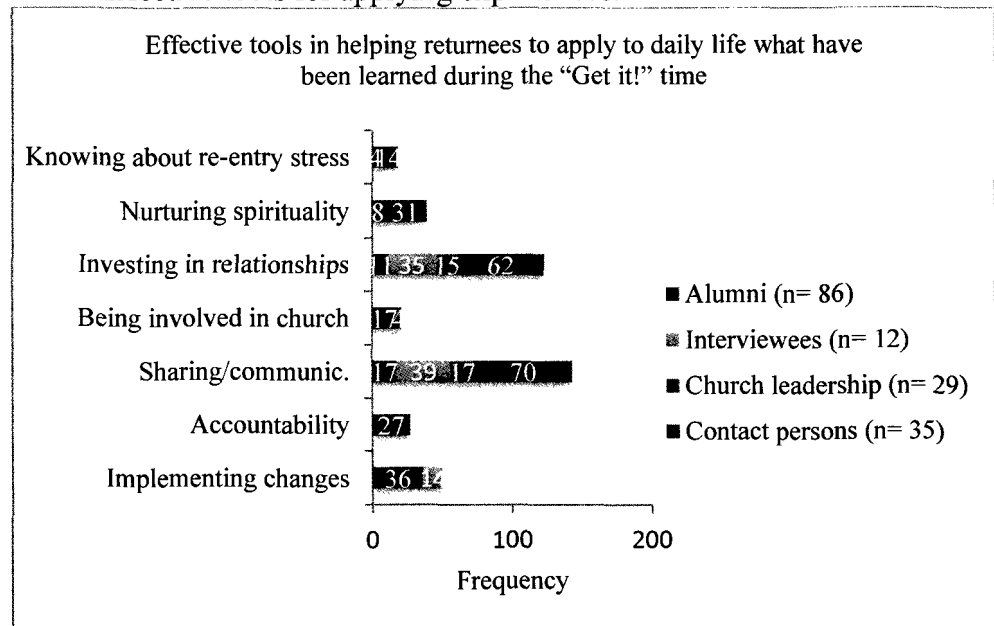
[82] The numbers in Chart 5.2.2.2. represent the sum of subcategories of "relationships" (mentoring, keeping in touch, involvement) and "communication" (listening, update of information, understanding, sharing, clarifying expectations). They refer to Table Appendix.2.4.

As the data indicates, contact persons and church leadership alike rated

relationship and sharing/communication in multiple responses as efficient tools to

apply experiences to daily life–as did alumni, in Chart 5.2.1.3.

Appendix 13 presents the corresponding goals and means; Appendix 14

names further elements of re-integration recommended to subsequent students.

Alumni and contact persons alike think that "having time" is a helpful tool

to manage change. "Having time" is defined as having time to debrief, to grieve

about a loss of friendship or of important expeirences and let go, to take time to

apply experiences gained, to practice what has been learned in teachings and

outreach, to have the freedom to fit into a new role and to take time to understand

changes that took place at home.

Chart 5.2.2.3. The role of time for re-integration
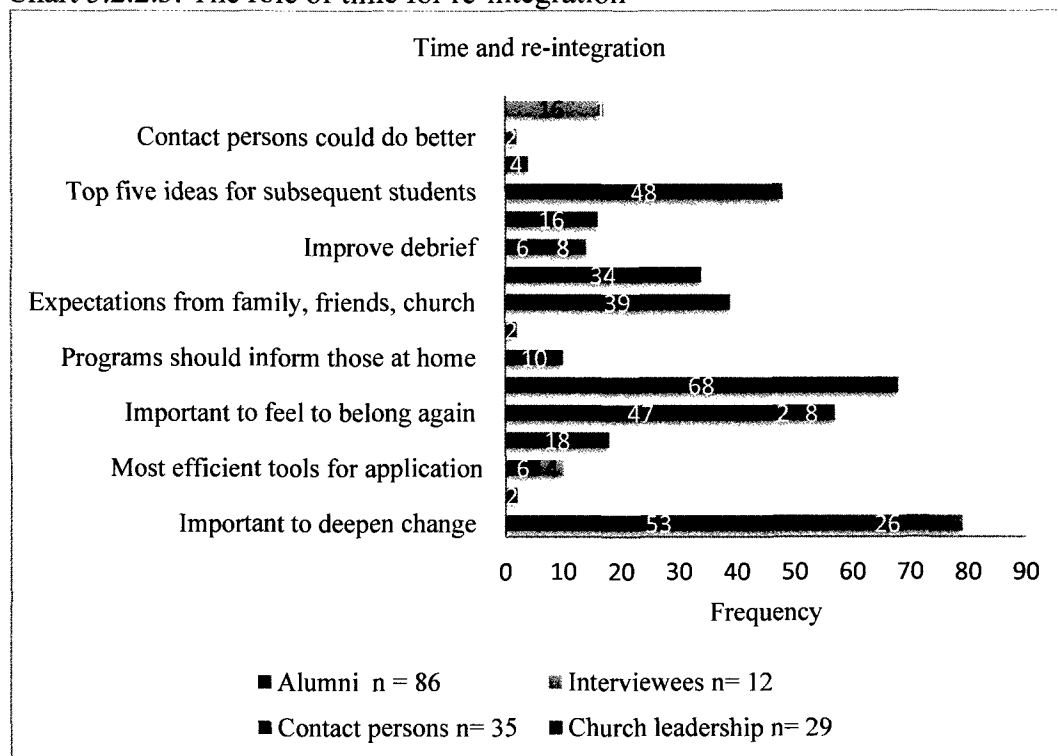
Chart 5.2.2.3. shows that 68 out of 86 alumni recommended that subsequently home churches should focus on re-integration and "give returnees time." Returnees clearly felt rushed by church leadership. Alumni (47 out of 86) realized that it takes time to feel a sense of belonging again and to deepen change (53 out of 86), and consequently recommended that future students take their time upon re-entry. Returnees wanted their church leadership to show understanding and to provide them with time. Churches can help to re-define denominational identity by offering a framework for returnees to help them find purpose and meaning and to pass on their experiences. Taking time before going back into a job or resuming/beginning studies was also identified as important by family and friends (39 alumni out of 86).

Table 5.2.2.1.a. lists various skills to manage change, as defined by alumni. Alumni seemed to understand their responsibility to process experiences and then take initiative to contribute their newly acquired social competencies into family and church life.

Table 5.2.2.1.a. Helpful tools to manage change

To process	• To have room to think, to process, to discuss cultural shifts and new perspectives, to ask questions • To learn about re-entry stress • To use mentoring to process things • To re-read notes taken • To realize one's own personality and how to best respond to changes and challenges • To gain knowledge about change management • To realize the value of different cultures
To take initiative	• To keep in touch with other returnees, which helps to deal with challenges • To keep/develop a positive attitude • To show respect and appreciation • To share with those who already have international experience • To contribute into family and church life social competence gained or deepened • To be open to new possibilities

Chart 5.2.2.4. reveals how data groups assessed the role of structure for re-integration. Verbal descriptions agreed with the literature (Jarsetz 2010, 95-101; M. Roth 2007, 38-45; Allenspach 2010, 61) and clarified that implementing structure in daily life provides space to develop strategies for processing experiences, to develop a sense of belonging, to implement a new lifestyle and to take initiative in various areas, especially in nurturing spirituality. For alumni, praying seemed to be the most efficient tool to deepen change upon returning home, as indicated by Table 5.2.2.1.b. and Chart 5.2.2.5., a conclusion also supported by the literature (Nyfeler 2005; Jordan 1992, M.Roth 2007; Nelson 2010, 51; Allenspach 2010, 61). Identity is formed by a strong relationship with God, which triggers transformation (Revealnow 2007).

Chart 5.2.2.4. The role of structure for re-integration

Structure

- Alumni n = 86   Interviewees n= 12
- Contact persons n= 35   Church leadership n= 29
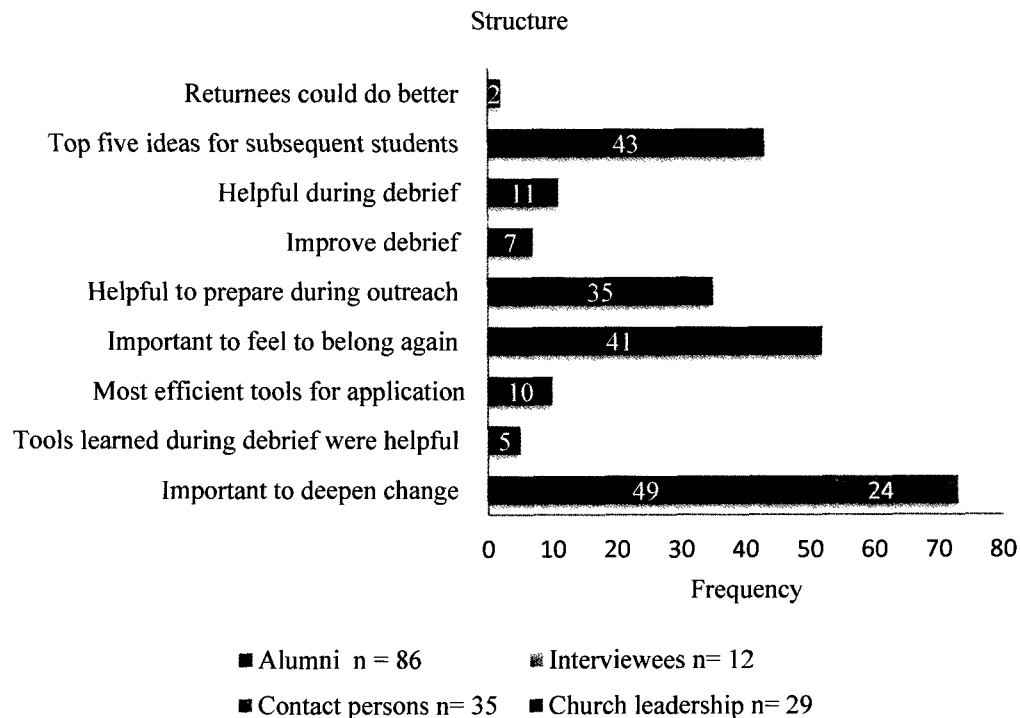
Table 5.2.2.1.b. Spiritual disciplines as helpful tools to manage change

Spirituality/spiritual disciplines	• To nurture love for church • To evaluate gifts • To nurture newly gained spiritual insights • To serve others • To nurture Mennonite identity • To foster spiritual maturity

Chart 5.2.2.5. The role of spiritual disciplines

Alumni: Continuing with spiritual disciplines was important and crucial for returnees (n=86, multiple answers possible) to deepen change upon return home
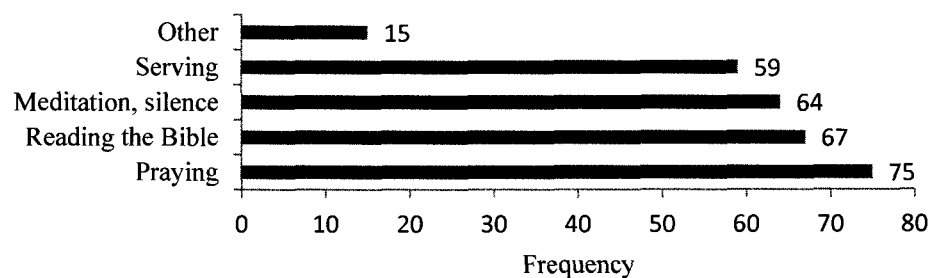
Alumni attach these tools to a learning process that can be fostered

through mentoring and accountable relationships. In these learning processes

returnees, their peer groups and families, their congregations and the program

have different responsibilities. The Mennonite understanding of the body of

Christ and their focus on discipleship here provide an excellent tool.

5.2.3. Dealing with Re-entry Stress

"It was important to me to have regular contact with my support person during my time overseas. It was a huge help and I felt better understood during the re-entry." —program alumnus

Descriptions referring to the phenomenon of re-entry stress were often

repeated in the questionnaire responses.[83] Phrases like these were selected to

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[83] The following description relates to returnees' responses: Questions 4, 7, 10-11, 12, 15-22, 25.

bring more focus to coding: "those at home should understand what the student is going through," "those at home should react patiently to the returnee's (sometimes provocative) ideas," "returnees should learn how to deal with post-traumatic effects" and "programs should give students practical suggestions of what to expect during re-entry, how to deal with emotions, thoughts, behaviours." Alumni responses agreed with the literature (M. Roth 2007; Storti 2003; Jordan 1992) in that returnees, as well as their families, friends and home churches, were challenged to learn about re-entry symptoms. They recommended that team leaders motivate and teach students how to respond to these categories before returning home, presupposing an adequate training for team leaders.

Chart 5.2.3.1. Knowledge about re-entry symptoms

Knowing about, dealing with re-entry

- Alumni n = 86
- Interviewees n= 12
- Contact persons n= 35
- Church leadership n= 29
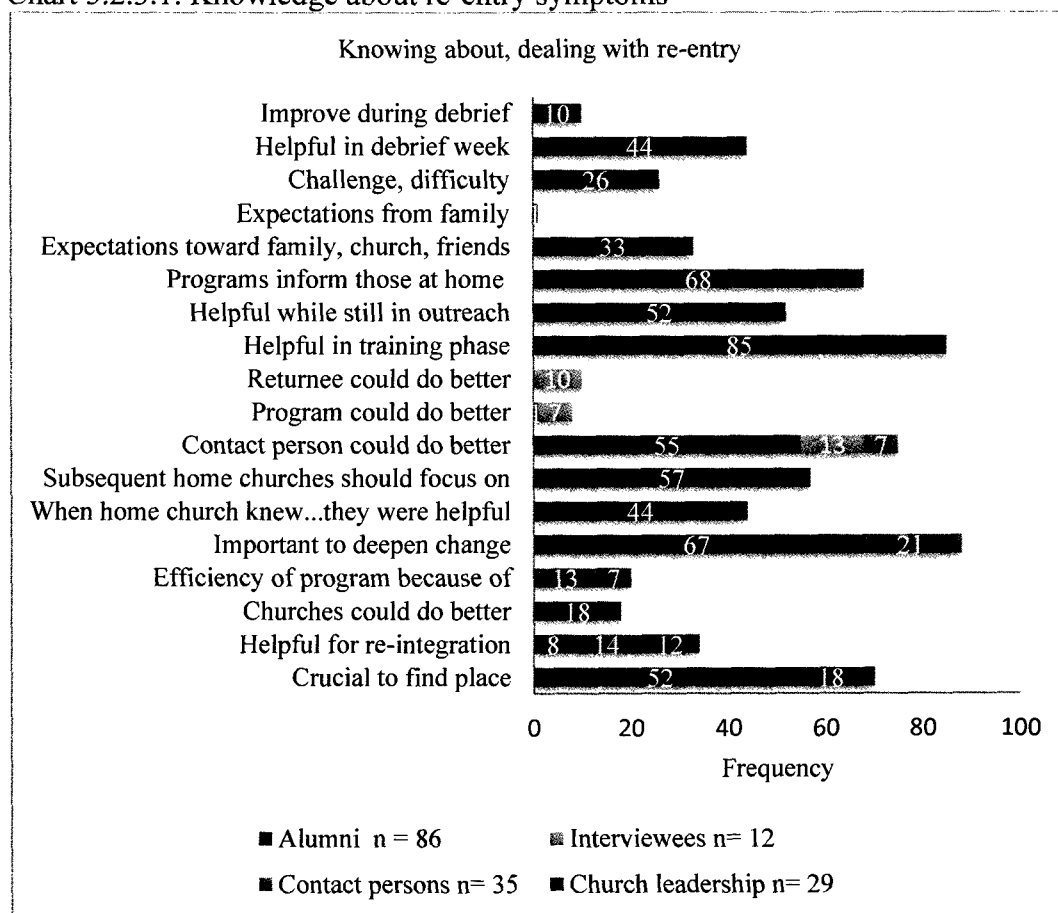
As data in Chart 5.2.3.1 suggest, returnees appreciated all teachings about possible re-entry stress. They also thought all parties involved should know and learn about it. Programs and contact persons can do better in providing information for those at home. Programs should keep those at home updated about the outreach locations and cultures in which students serve, which would foster better understanding and might simplify sharing information following the student's return. The more those at home know about re-entry stress and its symptoms, the more they can understand and deal with them. Being understood fosters the willingness to re-integrate and to get involved again, which in turn fosters a sense of belonging.

Data underscore that families and friends seemed unaware of this challenge. Responses like "those at home should read a recommended book about re-entry before the student returns home" and "those at home should know about re-entry symptoms and how to deal with them" emphasized returnees' desire for understanding. Returnees appreciated help from friends, church members and contact persons in finding places to live, dealing with practical tasks like insurance, applying for further education, etc. Re-integration into the social realities of daily life was perceived as a task to be managed and was described with phrases like "developing life perspective, finding a job, earning money," "organizing daily life again/having a structured schedule and weekly tasks at home," "developing routine, setting priorities and goals" and "realizing own and other's changes and finding ways to implement own changes." School and college play a role in forming a sense of group identity and belonging, as does work,

employment and careers (Marsh et al. 2007, 39-40). Returnees want to fit into the social reality again. This process takes time.

Returnees provided subsequent students with several ideas on how to prepare for possible re-entry stress: "learning about re-entry stress and re-culture shock," "using tools already learned in a cross-cultural setting," "taking time for developing a new framework," "realizing and applying changes," "developing a life perspective and planning a career"[84] and "learning what to expect at home, how to deal with spiritual challenges." Returnees encouraged subsequent students to "involve and transfer in a small group," "to invest in their spirituality" and "to trust in God, fan the flame, and nurture their identity in God."[85]

Chart 5.2.3.1. suggests that churches want to learn about re-entry stress and seek to do better by developing understanding and sensitivity. The home churches that have experience with young people who participated in mission programs or voluntary service in an international setting better understood the need to process these experiences and to give returnees time and support to re-integrate. Church leadership respondents described their possibilities as follows: "to offer prayer, reflecting and sharing time to the returnee," "to offer financial support" and "some gifted and willing members can offer to work with 'Get it!' and so help to bridge the gap between 'Get it!' and the congregation, so that ownership can grow."[86] Participants often return with challenging new insights and perspectives, especially in the areas of justice, poverty, social activism and a

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[84] This description refers to returnees' responses: Questions 12-16, 22, 25.

[85] This description refers to returnees' responses: Questions 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12-16, 22, 25.

[86] This description refers to responses of home churches: Questions 3, 4, 8-11, 14.

heart inflamed for mission. The church is on a journey as the body of Christ and

is the place where discipleship is encouraged, which means that the church ideally

offers space for the (sometimes radical) decisions returnees make. Church

leadership is aware of the challenge to re-adapt to daily life and wants the

program to offer practical suggestions to the returnees on how to re-organize their

life.[87]

5.3. Responsibilities and Roles of All Parties Involved

Sections 5.3.1.-5.3.6. not only outline responsibilities but also summarize

important consequences from the sections above related to all four data groups.

Respondents in this study perceived reality within a certain time and space. The

researcher sought both their perspectives and their definitions of different

responsibilities and roles during re-integration. The researcher accepts the idea

that humans create and fashion social reality and adopt attitudes to fit their

experiences (Osmer 2008, 74-77). Individuals have an active role in the

construction of social reality and are driven by a purpose. Humans attach meaning

to their social reality within a culture and can influence it through choices and

social interactions based on reality, knowledge and learning. Social constructs are

facets of reality in a dynamic process, and depend on knowledge and affirmation.

Using axial coding, helpful strategies and responsibilities as stated by all parties

involved with social constructs during re-entry stress were identified. Change is

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[87] This description refers to responses of home churches: Question 14.

possible in the re-entry process. Humans create their worlds. Mennonites believe in salvation by grace, which enables this change.

5.3.1. The Role of the Home Church

Once again, as shown in Chart 5.3.1.1., alumni saw relationships and communication as crucial for re-integration. Having a good relationship with returnees seems to be expressed by a warm welcome, good communication during and after outreach, and encouraging and supporting friends who know about re-entry symptoms and who provide understanding.

Chart 5.3.1.1. Alumni: The role of the home church in re-integration

Q.6. Alumni (n=86) felt the home church was important, even crucial, in helping them reintegrate and have a good return when...
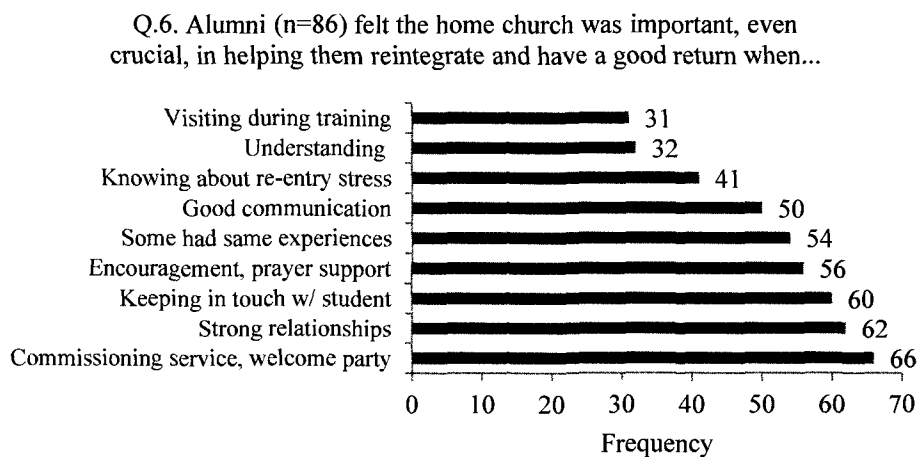
Table 5.3.1.1. correlates with the literature (Pirolo 2000, 68, 98; Neufeld 1999, 16-17; Seiter and Waddell 1998, 19; Dearborne 2003, 91; Ward 1984, 286) and gives a more detailed description how students and home churches share responsibilities while investing in relationships and expressing interest in each other. Sharing information and stories, realizing the shift of cultural values and developing understanding for different perspectives seem to be crucial for both parties in this process. The Mennonite understanding of church as forming a new

community as an alternative to the surrounding society provides a framework to deal with different perspectives. Every member has a "distinctly identifiable, divinely validated and empowered role" (Yoder 2001, 47) which contributes to empower and build up the body (Eph 4:11-13) so that it can serve in the world and incarnate God's kingdom.

Table 5.3.1.1. Alumni (n=86): What was important in helping students to reintegrate and have a good return in relation to the home church?

Context	Means	Goals
Communication (23)	Mutual information on a regular basis	
Student to home church	Sending prayer letters	Keeping in touch Understanding
	Investing in relationships (15)	Feeling to belong
	Showing interest in others (5)	Focus is on kingdom of God, not student
	Talking about expectations	
	Taking time to listen upon return	Appreciation
	Mutual information on a regular basis (news, reports, minutes, etc.)	Keeping in touch
Home church to student	Prayer, financial support	Understanding
	Initiative	Openness
	Investing in relationships (15)	
	Giving room to share after return, taking time to listen	
	Realizing and discussing different cultures, worship styles	
	Offering mentoring (3)	Processing experiences
	Missional understanding	Sending church (6)
	Clarifying expectations	
	Evaluating after return and discussing how student can be involved in ministry (6)	
	Contact person	Ongoing information

Home churches[88] play an important role in re-integration.[89] Appreciation of, having and investing in a strong relationship with church members are

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[88] This description refers to the following responses questions: Returnees: 5-8; Home churches: 3-7, 14.

[89] Pirolo (1996) situates how a sending church can take on responsibility for its missionaries in a biblical context.

considered top instruments for helping returnees re-integrate within their church successfully and restore their sense of belonging.

Nevertheless, out of 86 alumni only 37 expressed feeling well integrated again into their home churches and 15 did not feel well integrated. Out of 86 alumni, 34 changed church affiliation because of enrolment in a university, a new job assignment, or marriage. Within the alumni group, 8 left because of a conflict or a weak relationship with the church.[90] Suggestions from returnees in Chart 5.3.1.2. on what home churches need to focus on to help re-integration of subsequent participants point to areas for possible improvement. As Friesen (2004) states, data show that home churches exhibit strong support during a person's participation in a mission program, but seem to lack understanding about the importance of providing ongoing re-integration support in various areas. Out of 86 alumni, 57 recommended that home churches should learn about re-entry stress, which can foster awareness and better understanding of the church's role. In correlation with the literature (Pirolo 2000, 220), alumni wanted churches to offer counselling and evaluation.

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[90] See Chart A.16.3. and A.16.4. in Appendix 16.

Chart 5.3.1.2. Alumni: Recommended focus for future churches

Q. 8 Returnees (n=86) think it is important and crucial for re-integration
that subsequent home churches focus on...

Category	Frequency
Visiting during training	30
Asking for information about program	39
Clarifying expectations	41
Mentoring	42
Support contact person	44
Communicating on a regular basis	55
Offering warm welcome	57
Learning about re-entry stress	57
Financial support	61
Offering prayer, time to share	61
Giving students time to re-adapt	68
Encouraging students to enroll in program	71

Frequency
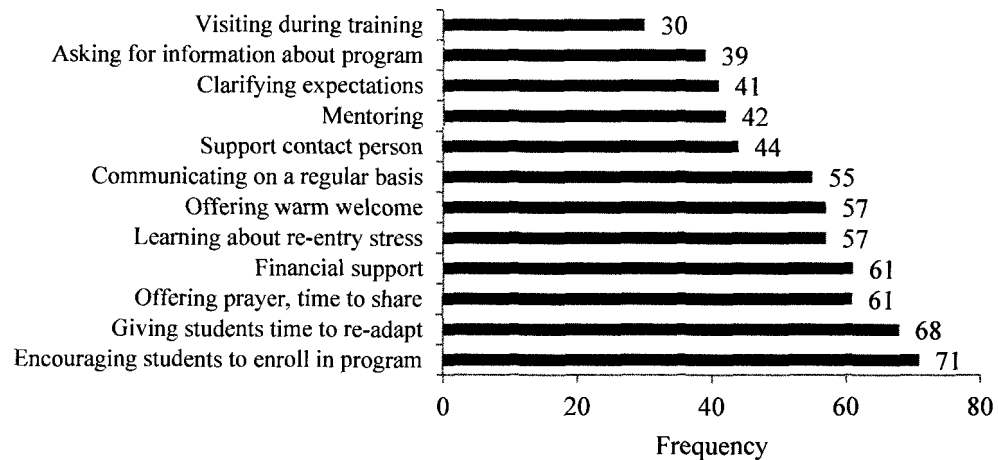
When home churches were asked about their awareness of their role in

reintegration, their responses, as shown in Chart 5.3.1.3., also point to an area for

possible learning. They realized that they could do better by investing in

relationships, by maintaining open communications and by offering post-return

support in various forms. Some contact persons emphasized the idea that mission

is a task of the church, not of the individual believer alone (as does McClung

1992, 143). When churches have a missional understanding, they offer ministry

opportunities and nurture discipleship.

Chart 5.3.1.3. Church leadership: Churches can contribute

Q.7. Church leadership (n=29) thinks that they can contribute to a good re-integration in a better way when they...

Cooperate with program — 16
Offer ministry opportunities, share — 16
Know about re-entry — 18
Give student time to adapt — 22
Offer mentoring, evaluation — 37
Have ongoing communication — 41
Invest in relationships (invite, support student) — 43

0   10   20   30   40   50

Frequency
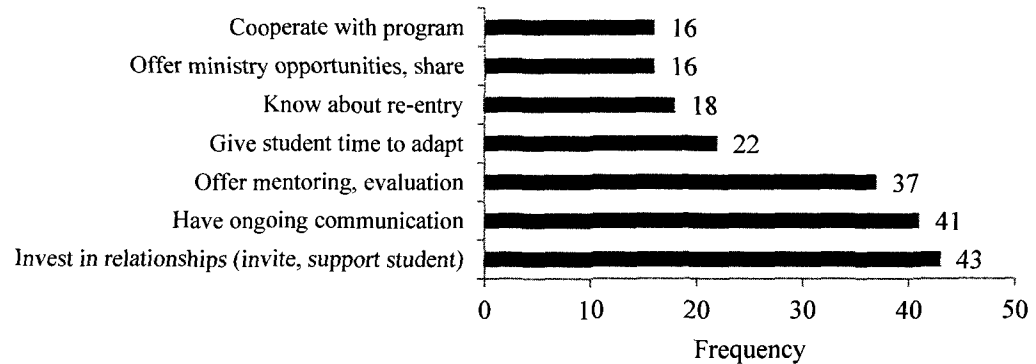
5.3.2. The Role of the Contact Persons

The willingness of contact persons to offer ongoing accountable relationships plays a crucial role in re-integration and change management of returnees. As Charts 5.3.2.1. and 5.3.2.2. indicate, contact persons saw their responsibilities and possible support in prayer, encouragement and being accountable and faithful friends. The length of these relationships seems to relate to their quality and accountability. Clarification of expectations and good communication on a regular and reliable basis are requisite.

Chart 5.3.2.1. Contact persons: The length of the contact person's role

Contact persons think their role ends....

Category	Value
no response	8
A year or longer after return	12
6 months after return	4
3 months after return	8
a month after return	2
When the "Get it!" participant returns	1
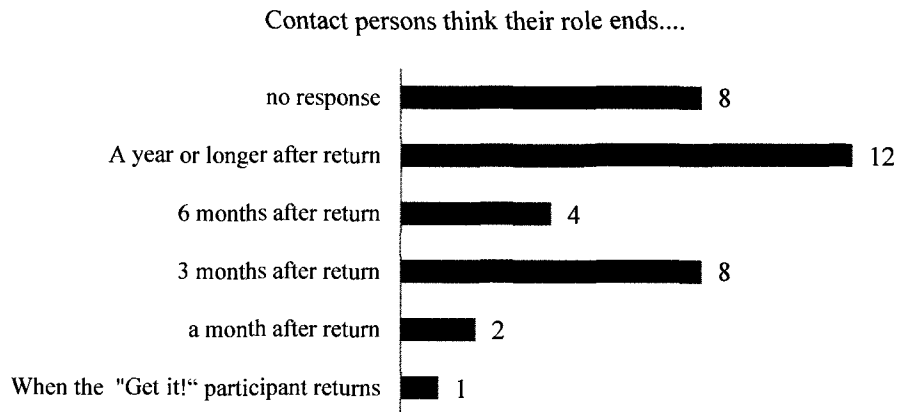
Contact persons recommended that subsequent contact persons should improve collaboration with the returnee's church and family, keeping them informed, as well as by learning more about re-entry themselves.

Chart 5.3.2.2. Contact persons: Important aspects for re-integration

Contact persons (n=35) felt these aspects were important and crucial for them to help with reintegration:

Aspect	Frequency
Visiting during training phase	14
Knowing about re-entry stress	14
Having international experience	19
Organizing commissiong	20
Keeping church updated	20
Sharing, encouragement	22
Ongoing communication with student	28
Having strong relationship before outreach	29
Giving prayer support	31

Frequency

Recommendations from alumni for future contact persons also stressed cooperation with family, friends and churches, and knowledge about re-entry stress as shown in Chart 5.3.2.3.

Chart 5.3.2.3. Alumni: Focus of future contact persons

Alumni (n=86) think future contact persons should focus on:

Category	Frequency
Participating in debrief week	34
Working together with family, friends	47
Knowing about re-entry stress	50
Keeping church informed	51
Visiting during training	54
Working together with church	55

Frequency
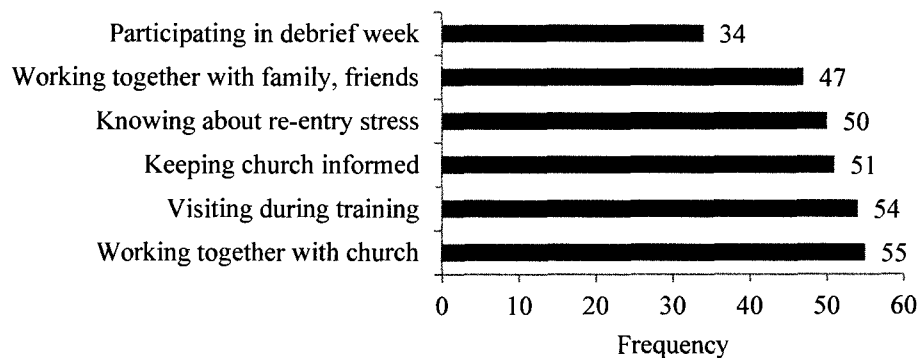
Students and contact persons[91] alike said the concept of having a contact person is an important means for re-integration. Of the group surveyed, 32 out of 35 contact persons confirmed this statement, while three did not answer. Previous "Get it!" participants suggested that the responsibility of a contact person can be divided among multiple people. A majority of the contact persons (26) agreed that there is no need to have more than one contact person or to be in touch with other contact persons. Verbal descriptions made clear that former contact persons were well aware of the important role they played: as a link to the congregation, as well as providing support and guidance for the participant, who is being confronted with many new experiences. They offer a "seam/bridge" between the familiarity of home and new experiences and changes during the schooling phase, as well as the overseas assignment. Through the contact person, the congregation is better informed as to what is taking place in the discipleship training school and can therefore pass on specific prayer requests, take part in the experience and hopefully process and understand the participant's stories better when he/she

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[91] This description refers to the following responses to questions: Contact persons: 1-3, 5-9, 14; Alumni: 1, 3, 9, 12-16, 22 and 25.

returns home. This is an opportunity for everyone involved to take part in the experiences and development of a student, making his/her return home smoother and helping them to find his/her place in the congregation again. Contact persons recommend better cooperation between family and home church than many of them had experienced in reality. They criticized the fact that they felt inadequately prepared for their assignments and recommended informing subsequent contact persons about job requirements. This suggestion led to an action research with contact persons and students as described in Chapters 4.5., 5.5. and 5.6. The action team improved procedures and developed a job description for contact persons,[92] a checklist for students and an information sheet for congregations to help clarify expectations and motivate contact persons.[93]

Former contact persons realized that taking enough time to mentor a student is one of the most difficult challenges as a contact person. Daily life demands much time and energy, and therefore the student's initiative in maintaining contact during outreach supports this ongoing relationship. Contact persons stated that students should choose a contact person with whom a strong relationship is already established and a mutual agreement for accountability is shared. Action research with students and contact persons, as well as responses from alumni in follow-up interviews, helped to define some qualifications of future contact persons. All parties agreed that it was advantageous when the contact person came from the same church, because they share the same

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[92] See Appendix 18.

[93] The material can be found in Appendices 18-21.

denominational identity and are able to help transfer knowledge gained. The contact person should be familiar with the mission program and with possible re-entry symptoms. A better understanding increases ownership and helps people work together. Contact persons and students alike need to be willing to invest time and to form an accountable relationship.

5.4.3. Students' Responsibilities

Contact persons (25 out of 35)[94] and church leadership (25 out of 29)[95] agreed that returnees should become aware of changes and transfer new perspectives; they have the opportunity to be positive change agents in the world. They need to realize and apply changes in worldview, their perspective on the global church, about poverty, etc., and then use tools already learned in a cross-cultural setting, such as curiosity and awareness of changes and processes to integrate new concepts and to reach out to others, asking for help, investing in relationships. Returnees have a unique perspective to bring to their church, family and friends, including sometimes challenging their home churches in prophetic ways (Jordan 1992, 125; Geist 2010). Contact persons felt that communication, strong accountable relationships and a healthy spirituality enable transformation, as shown in Chart 5.3.3.1.

All respondents agreed that returnees should re-build relationships. Contact persons commented that re-integration is much easier to handle when the returnee has a strong relationship with his/her home church prior to leaving for a

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[94] See Table 5.1.4.

[95] See Table Appendix .2.5.

mission experience. They related successful re-integration with a new involvement in church, post-return.

When asked what and how subsequent "Get it!" participants could do better, 21 of 86 alumni strongly encouraged them to take initiative to keep in touch with those at home, which agrees with Pirolo (2000, 94, 247). When returnees take initiative in processing and implementing experiences gained, in learning about re-entry stress and in installing a daily accountability structure[96] to avoid going on spiritual "vacation," they can find a place again.

Chart 5.3.3.1. Contact persons: Crucial means to deepen transformation

Contact persons (n=35) said these actions are crucial for returnees in deepening the transformation they have experienced:
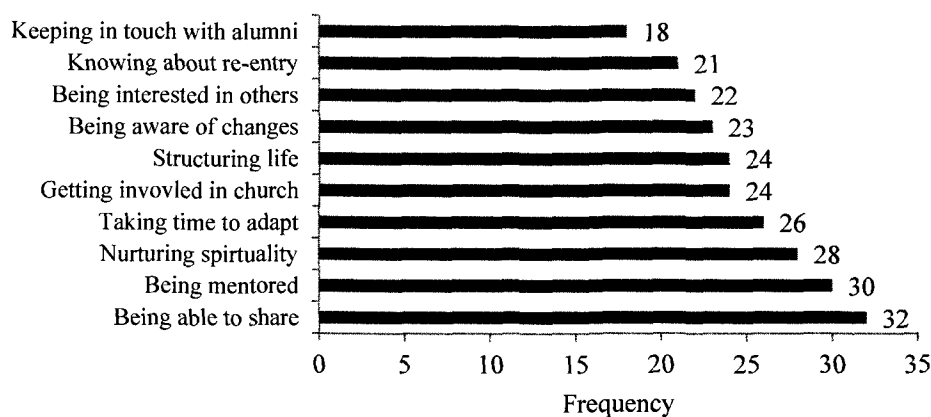
5.3.4. The Role of Those at Home

In Chart 5.3.4.1., returnees expressed certain expectations towards those at home. These included interest and the willingness to share. Returnees longed to be understood and therefore hoped that those at home had learned about possible re-entry symptoms. Contrasting expectations from family and church toward

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[96] See Chart 5.2.2.4. and Table Appendix.2.1.c-d.

returnees, shown in Chart 5.3.4.2., identifies possible areas of conflict. Resuming

an old role and functioning accordingly instead of making allowance for change is

such an area of potential conflict. The relatively small number of returnees who

became aware of expectations toward them is a signpost, in this regard: Open

communication of mutual expectations seem to be rare.

Chart 5.3.4.1. Expectations toward family and church

Expectations of alumni (n=86)

Category	Frequency
Offer practical help	2
Offer mentoring	2
No expectations	7
Appreciate and allow for changes	13
Mutual sharing	29
Know about re-entry stress	33
Show interest	65

Frequency
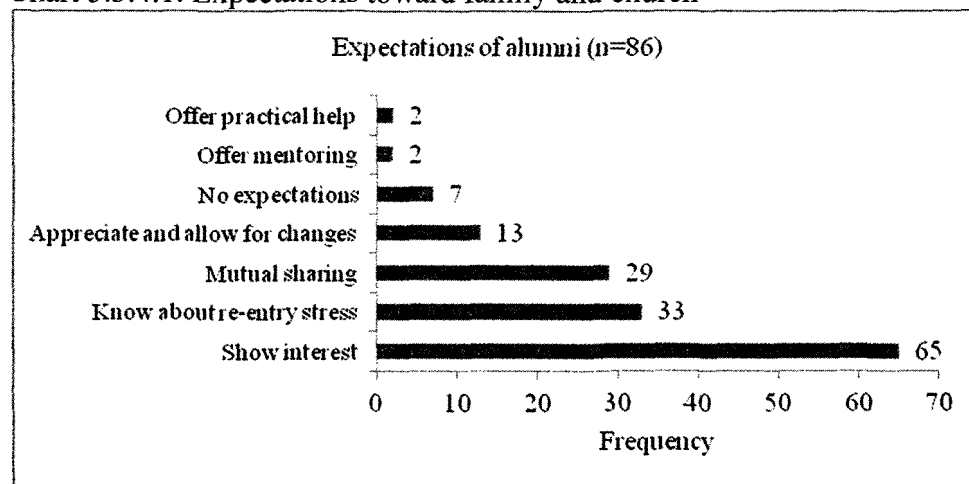
Chart 5.3.4.2. Expectations toward returnees

Alumni (n= 86) learned what family/church expected from them

Category	Frequency
Know about re-entry stress	1
Appreciate and allow for changes	2
Plan career	7
Adapt to reality	14
Involve in church	16
Resume old role	18
Show interest	24
Mutual sharing	24
No expectations	24

Frequency
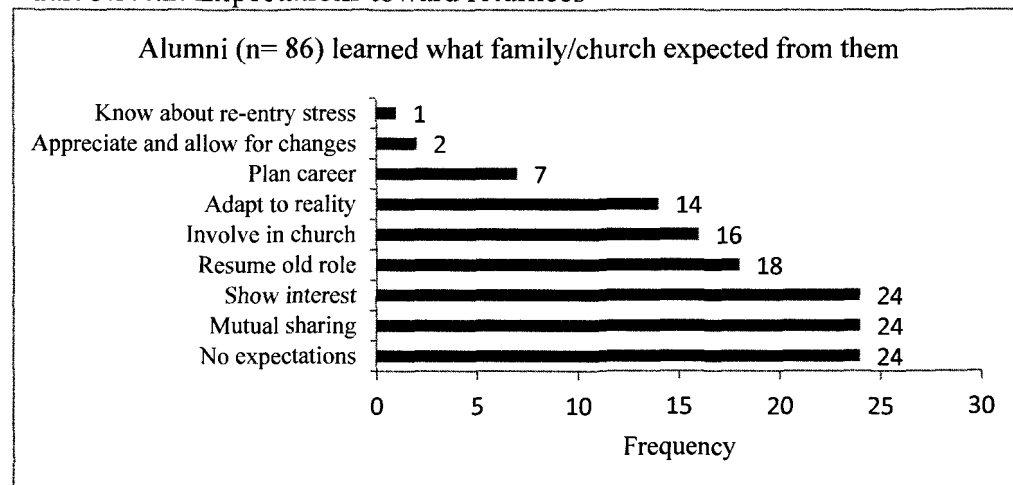
Friends with international experience are able to understand what a returnee is

going through, and these persons play an important role in re-integration. The

need to mutually re-build relationships and to know about re-entry stress were

understood as important means of integration by all groups of respondents.[97]

Friesen (2004, 221) confirms that supportive families can have a significantly

positive impact in retaining returnees' positive changes.[98] Consequently,

collaboration between those at home and the mission program is necessary, as

shown in Chart 5.3.4.3. Alumni and contact persons agreed on the role of a

contact person for collaboration. Church leadership also understood their own

responsibility. As the literature (M. Roth 2007; Nyfeler, 2005) recommends,

programs must assume the responsibility to ensure the collaboration of all parties

involved.

Chart 5.3.4.3. Importance of collaboration

Collaboration of all parties, multiple answers

	Frequency
Helpful for re-integration	26
Difficult for contact persons	8
Contact person should focus on	45
Churches could do better	3 18
Programs could do better	1 4
Programs's responsibility	27
Contact person should do better	55
Churches should help with	39

■ Alumni n = 86   ▨ Interviewees n= 12
■ Contact persons n= 35   ■ Church leadership n= 29

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[97] See Tables 5.2.2.a.-5.2.5.

[98] This description refers to responses of returnees: Questions 1-4, 7, 10-12, 15-25.

5.3.5. The Role of Programs

Programs play a key role in providing necessary information to all parties involved. Verbal responses show that programs should keep those at home updated about topics that were taught and discussed during the training phase, about the goals of the program and possible impacts of a mission trip and what students experience during outreach. Programs are expected to install and provide tools and procedures to keep the information flowing and help students "to become aware of changes," "to develop a life perspective," "to deepen teachings and experiences gained," "how to organize daily life," and to enable them "to understand what re-entry stress is all about." Program leaders are those who impart knowledge about change management and possible re-entry stress, as Chart 5.2.3.1. shows. Findings correlate with the literature (M. Roth 2007; Pirolo 2000).

Chart 5.3.5.1. Programs inform those at home[99]

Programs inform those at home

	Frequency (0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)
Possible changes	18, 3, 9
Change management is important for..	46, 14
Preparing for change management..	28
Change management is biggest..	65, 3
Possible re-entry stress	68, 7, 13
Time to process	10
Allow for new role	9
Appreciate expect.	9
Strengthen student's responsibility	12
Expectations	20
Possible collaboration	27

■ Alumni (n= 86) ▨ Interviewees (n=12)
■ contact person (n= 35) ■ church leadership (n= 29)

Contact persons criticized the fact that, while programs provide a safe framework for the mission experience, they often fail to train returnees how to transfer the experiences they have gained. Coming back home, returnees were met with realities they found difficult to deal with. Many had given up jobs or had used time between high school and college for a mission experience. They needed to get help to plan their futures and to develop careers. Here, cooperation between programs, churches and family could play a positive role.

Verbal descriptions and action research made clear that returnees and contact persons would have wanted the leadership team to have informed them

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[99] See also Charts A.16.23. and A.16.24.in Appendix 16 .

about the concept of a contact person, to have communicated job requirements

and to have helped to define the relationship between student and contact person.

The more clearly contact persons understand the program's expectations in regard

to mentoring students, the better they may take initiative and bridge the gap

between church and student. Returnees wanted the program to have kept in touch

and to have encouraged alumni, as indicated in the following Charts:

Chart 5.3.5.2. Refresh meetings

Q.23. Alumni (n= 86) think that a(n) (bi)annual Refresh meeting
would be helpful for reintegration. it could help returnees to keep in
focus what they want to apply to daily life

Female   ■ Male

	n	Not important at all	Potentially helpful	Important	Crucial	No response
Female	53	7	30	18	8	2
Male	33	5	8	2	2	4

Frequency
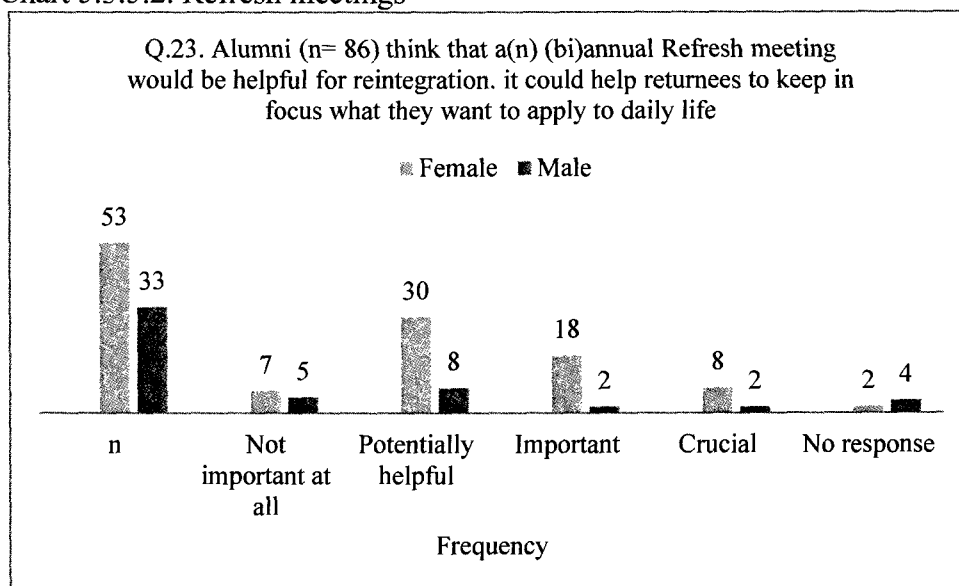
Chart 5.3.5.3. Follow-up after program

Returnees (n = 86) wish to receive these kind of follow-ups from the „Get it!" leadership team

Category	Frequency
Reminders about „Get it!" goals and visions	22
Network Community	22
Update of current training	28
Ongoing teachings	28
Offers for seminars etc	29
Input via E-Mail	29
Personal coaching or via tel.	31
Follow up meetings or „Get it!" Refresh	50

Frequency: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60
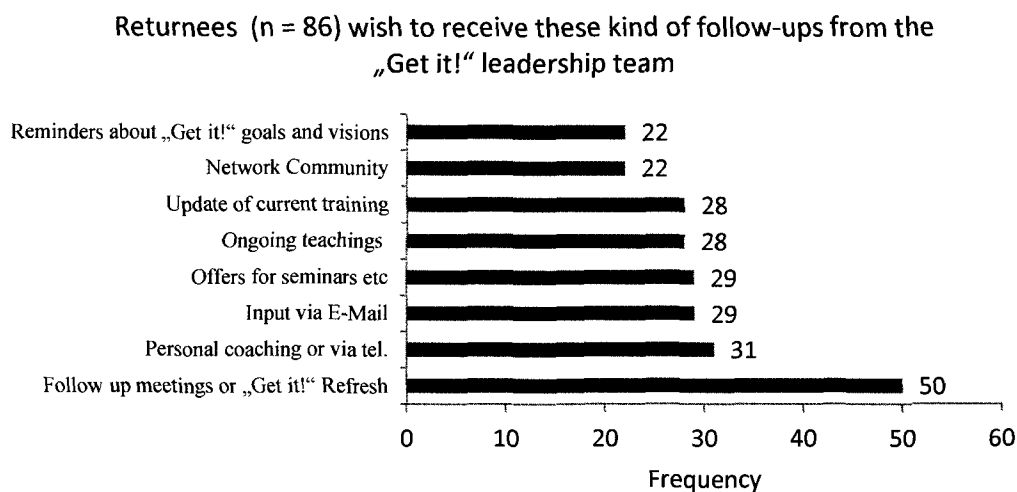
The description of the roles of all parties involved in re-integration refers to the recommendations in re-entry literature (Friesen 2004, 226; Borthwick 1996, 407). Home churches and mission programs/agencies share responsibility for their missionaries during their outreach assignment and upon returning home (M. Roth 2007, 62; Nyfeler 2005, 22). Mission programs are responsible for effective closure and debriefing. Follow-up with alumni helps to process and transfer positive changes and can mobilize the next generation in long-term mission. Program leaders should initiate a process for partnership, training and resources (Pirolo 1996, 247). Returnees need seasoned Christians with whom to talk about and share their experiences. They need to understand changes that took place in society, community and church while they were away. Often they require continuing discipleship and assistance to deal with a spiritual "crash" in their devotional lives (Friesen 2004, 230). The home church can offer support in all these areas (Pirolo 1996), thereby encouraging returnees to stay and get involved again (Neufeld 1999, 17). Friesen (2004, 229) stresses the essential role of home

churches and families in nurturing the qualities of a healthy missionary before he/she departs on short-term missions.

Family and friends who understand feelings of disorientation and ask intelligent questions play a crucial role in helping returnees to regain the feeling of belonging (Pirolo 1996, 60, 142). It is important for all parties involved to keep communication open and accountable (Pirolo 1996, 283) and to invest in and rebuild good relationships.

5.3.6. The Role of Debriefing

Of the group surveyed, 45 of the 86 "Get it!" alumni[100] thought that the one-week

debriefing period immediately after returning home, which is part of the program

and prepares returnees for re-entry, was very important and crucial for raising

awareness of their experiences and knowledge gained from their "Get it!"

experiences and teachings. This debriefing period helped them process and apply

that knowledge practically to their everyday lives. Of the group of respondents,

28 criticized the week as not helpful and 13 of them did not respond. Therefore,

the effectiveness of the existing debriefing time should obviously be increased.

Chart 5.3.6.1. shows alumni ratings of the things that were most helpful to them

from the "Get it!" debriefing week: tools to deal with re-entry stress and how to

manage change, how to structure and use time to process experiences and to re-

adapt, and how to best communicate when coming home. Offering suggestions

for how to improve debriefing, returning students pointed toward more individual

and team time to process experiences. Processing might involve to deal with sin

and failure to keep growing.

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[100] This description refers to the following responses to questions: Returnees: 5-8; Home churches: 3-7, 14.

Chart 5.3.6.1. Helpful topics during debriefing

Returnees (n=86) thought that these topics where most helpful
during debriefing time
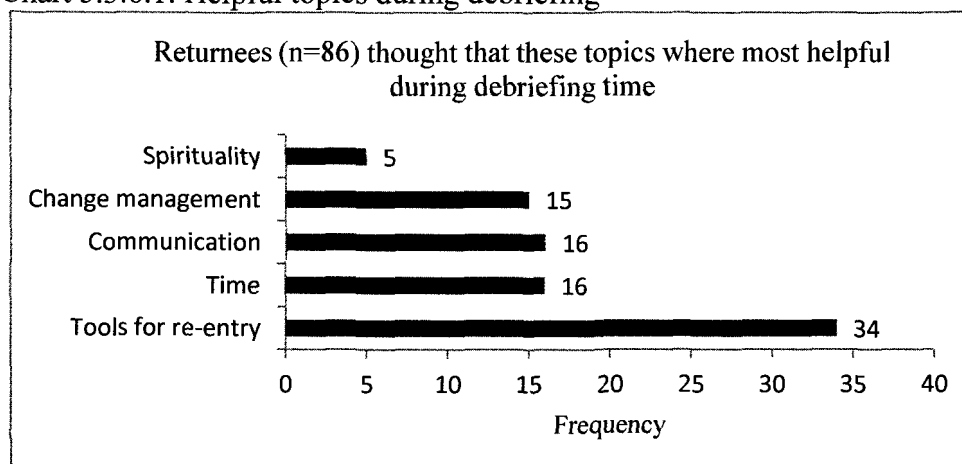
5.4. The Researcher's Cycle of Understanding in Reference to Luke 24

The researcher's project not only refers to a survey, but also includes the

development of a change management tool and entails the creation of a process of

action research as described in Sections 5.4. to 5.6.

The cycle of understanding is a pedagogical response to the needs

described by returnees seeking for tools for change management. The "Get it!"

program wants to enable and empower students to understand and judge their

experiences and to own new insights gained. By reflecting on life and Mennonite

core beliefs and by recalling events and the reasons they happened, they can place

their stories within the broader vision and the bigger story of God's project. Luke

24 inspired the researcher to develop a cycle of understanding (a more detailed

description of which can be found in Appendix 24). Groome's (2010) approach to

invite participants into a dialogue with one another and into a conversation

between their lives and the biblical text later provided a framework to work from.

Groome also refers to Luke 24, and his approach offers a way to construct a

learning framework, to plan action that follows from exploration of the context, to

take action and to evaluate the action taken. Coghlan and Brannick (2010, 19f.) state that experience is "an interaction of inner and outer events" and "occurs in the cognitive, feelings, and body awareness" (Brannick 2010, 20). Experience is reflected at the intellectual level of consciousness (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 20) and thus leads to judgement. Judgement needs to be verified. To take responsibility for actions, understanding must be achieved. The combination of experience, understanding and judgement results in different behaviours and actions.

That is exactly what happened to the disciples in Luke 24, and it can be seen as a re-entry process. The disciples have forgotten the vision they had shared in: the Kingdom of God to be spread out "to all the earth" (Mt 28:18-20). They participate in God's larger story: to bring reconciliation and peace to all men by sharing the Good News of Jesus (2 Cor 5:14-21). That is why Jesus instructs them," explaining to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). He helps them to understand that the Messiah, "Christ had to suffer these things" (v. 26). In that cycle of understanding, Jesus helps the disciples to learn and refocus upon a desired future state. Jesus is establishing and renewing the relationship with them to give them new ownership of God's project. The following steps belong to this cycle of understanding: The disciples experience Jesus' life and death (Luke 24:14-19).They are shocked by these events, disappointed and confused (Luke 24:20-24). Jesus joins them on their way to Emmaus, gives them time to share, to process and to grieve by entering into dialogue with them (Luke 24:17, 19). Jesus accompanies them, but they do not

recognize Him. He asks them to tell the story without giving answers and allows them time so they may "come to see" (Luke 24:17, 31). He provides room for them to complain, process and take a risk by sharing their feelings and understanding (Luke 24:21). Hospitality seems to be an important means in this process (Luke 24:29-30). Jesus then provides them with context and explanation. He paints a larger picture and vision, thereby giving them a theoretical framework in which to reflect on their experiences (Luke 24:26ff.). Jesus helps them to reflect on their experience and thus they are able to grasp the truth of His resurrection. Simply to have an experience is not enough to develop knowledge and understanding. Reflection creates understanding and helps to realize and transfer experiences (Luke 24:34). When they share bread, they come to know Him (Luke 24:31). They immediately bear witness to what they now know (Luke 24:33-35). They share their insights to those who have doubts and misunderstand what they hear (Luke 24:38), and again a cycle of understanding is set in motion. Jesus materializes in their midst (Luke 24:36). Again he shares time, knowledge and bread with them (Luke 24:39-48) and explains Scripture to them. Eventually the disciples are excited and motivated (Luke 24:52). Jesus then empowers them and sends them into the world (Luke 24:49ff.), with the final empowerment taking place on Pentecost, as the Holy Spirit comes down upon them (Acts 2).

One can see how Jesus' attitude as an educator helps the disciples to take their time in processing their experiences. He is with them, not "above" them, and he leads them to develop their own inductive learning process.

Jesus in Luke 24 helps the disciples express what Groome (1980) calls their present action in their historical context. Jesus then engages them in analytical and social remembering and brings them to a critical consciousness (Groome 1980, 146-48). They share their own stories. Jesus introduces them to the promises and demands in the Scriptures over history and thus enables them to ask how the Christian story affirms them or pushes them beyond present praxis (Groome 1980, 147). They now know for themselves and make God's story their own within the Christian community and the world. They are enabled to make decisions about how to live their Christian faith in the world (Groome 1999, 148) and take on the task of the Great Commission.

Active learning is an important goal in the "Get it!" program. As a Mennonite program it emphasizes on discipleship as a process of learning together, of affirming faith, and of listening to others "... as an extension of the work of God, the great listener..." (Augsburger 2006: 161, 164).Students' participation is activated through discussion, sharing, self-reflection, problem posing, questioning and other means. Such techniques help students evaluate the logic of and evidence for their own and other's positions, to apply principles and to articulate what they have learned (McKeachie 2002, 30ff.). Students can reorganize elements of their beliefs, worldview and behaviour in a new way. They might come to conclusions through rethinking, critiquing and judging, and relate prior understanding to new insights. They might apply and implement some skills learned to construct a new meaning that demands application in daily life. They can only do this when returning home. If their experiences are to have lasting

impact, cooperation with students' home churches, families and friends is required. By referring to their concrete, common experience of having lived and served in another culture and having returned to their home culture, students can be motivated to reflect on and to discuss their feelings, expectations, difficulties, excitements and hopes. Constructive problem solving can be initiated. Students are encouraged to gain comprehension, to apply their insights and to analyze facts. To enable them to do this, they are introduced to the theory of re-entry symptoms and re-culture shock–what Jesus offered to the disciples in Luke 24. Students/returnees are challenged to realize how their lives are embedded in the biblical stories and in God's mission and to enact decisions and responses for a lived Christian faith.

5.5. Action Research with Contact Persons

As described in Chapter 4.5., action research aims to improve a situation one is already working in. Section 5.5. summarizes the main results of the action research related to the important role of contact persons. The "Get it!" program leadership team connected with contact persons to increase their awareness how they can help to connect the student with his/her home church during his/her participation in the "Get it!" program. Students, program leadership and contact persons came together at one all-day event to discuss what they might contribute to the mentoring process and to student reintegration. Important insights led to a renewed approach to the concept of the contact person. A job description has been developed to introduce contact persons to their task, as well as an information

sheet for congregations to foster their cooperation and understanding. Students

are provided with a checklist to enhance their cooperation with the contact person

and the home church.[101] Policies have been enhanced successfully because all

parties agreed that these tools were very helpful and successfully increased their

engagement.

The model of having contact persons has been assessed by keeping in

touch with contact persons, students and home churches during outreach

assignments. Evaluation of the following areas can enhance the process

immediately.

- Have contact persons and home church alike understood the model? Do they know about job requirements?
- How will information flow between the contact person, home church and student during outreach?
- Are there needs that should dealt with and how can the program leadership give support?

5.6. Action Research with Students

In questionnaires and interviews, alumni pinpointed several areas for

improvement, so that returnees might better deal with culture shock during their

in-field experience and upon returning home. The training of "Get it!" team

leaders—who accompany, mentor and support each team of "Get it!" students in

their in-field learning experience—has been changed. Alumni recommended that

team leaders could introduce their team members to the main possible re-entry

symptoms, to assist with letting go of the past, to develop plans for home and to

share hopes and anxieties before the team returns home. The researcher has

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[101] All documents can be found in Appendix 18-21.

written a German-language book about the re-entry process based on the experiences she gained during her ministry over the last twelve years. Published in the summer of 2010, the book became a helpful tool for home churches, families and friends of students, institutions and those returning from short-term mission assignments. Team leaders are now introduced to this book and may rely on it to introduce their team members to the concept of re-entry stress. Students receive copies of the book and are encouraged to take it along on their outreach assignments.

Program returnees are given one week of debriefing, which completes their course. The results of the researcher's project have helped shape the design and content of this week. Action research with current returnees helped to evaluate the process, which was then adapted according to the findings. Alumni rated learning about re-entry stress, mentoring and encouragement to invest in relationships and to realize one's own responsibilities as the three most helpful tools for re-integration. The program leadership is asked to offer tools as described in section 5.3.5. and to recommend literature, so that returnees may deal with re-culture shock and set up conditions to pass on what became most important to them when returning home. Teams sit together during debriefing and define goals toward which they want to aim individually, to state a purpose and to draft a plan in regard to what resources and support they will need to implement their goals.

5.7. Reflection on Self by Researcher

The most surprising finding of this research is the crystal clear statement of program alumni that communication and belonging play a key role for successful re-integration. Returnees craved for being able to share their experiences with family, friends and within church. People at home were willing to listen to some stories, but most of them were not willing to hear about the changes students went through. Family, friends and church members expected them to fit in the same old role and to re-integrate smoothly. The lack of knowledge about possible re-entry symptoms only deepened misunderstandings and hindered re-integration. The researcher is impressed by the potential the Mennonite core beliefs provide to process re-entry shock. Mennonite doctrine / culture / identity can be a key factor in both teaching and action related to successful re-entry.

5.8. Summary

The explanatory description introduced the reader to the steps of analysis. Collected data was analyzed by extracting codes from text. Codes were grouped into similar concepts, which led to the creation of categories. Findings were presented through storytelling. Categories provided the basis around which to form the theory that the longing to belong comprises the driving purpose in the re-entry process, which is nurtured through accountable relationships, good communication, awareness and understanding of re-entry stress, and the ability to

manage change. The cycle of understanding referring to Luke 24[102] as developed in this study offers a change management tool to returnees and provides an approach for churches and programs for how to mentor and support believers. Mennonite identity can be a key factor in both teaching and action related to successful re-entry.

The conclusions described in Chapter 6 may help pave the way for targeting future tools and means for re-integration in regard to the program's policies and procedures, and the ways in which other involved parties might respond to the task of re-integration. Remaining problems anticipated in the study enrich the recommendations for further study.

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[102] See Chapter 5.4. and Appendix 24.

Chapter 6   Conclusions

In accordance with relevant literature about re-entry as described in Chapter 3, this chapter highlights the main important findings and conclusions in thematic blocks. The project aimed to enhance re-entry procedures in a denominational short-term mission program so that returnees can successfully re-integrate in different social realities. The unique and new approach in this thesis of examining how Mennonite beliefs can advance this process has as its goal better cooperation of churches and programs and is directed toward the "owning" churches of the "Get it!" program.[103] In Chapter 5, the responsibilities of the different agents concerned with re-integration have been described. Some possible next steps are named here, in general terms, so that other mission programs with a proximal similarity might benefit from the researcher's findings.

Re-integration is not only an important topic for short-term programs but for all who experience change and try to find ways to transfer their new insights. Churches frequently face challenges as to how to re-integrate new believers and different social groups, and deal with diverse perspectives and cultural shifts. It is hoped that denominations will explore how their own core beliefs might enhance re-integration in their context.

6.1. Establishing a Sense of Belonging

The study generated an important insight: A theory was developed that the longing to belong is the driving purpose in the re-entry process. Successful re-

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[103] Since space is limited in the main body of the thesis, detailed impacts of the research for the "Get it!" program are described in more detail in Appendix 26.

integration of returnees depends on the successful re-establishment of a sense of belonging, which is nurtured through accountable relationships, good communication, awareness and understanding of re-entry stress, and the ability to manage change. These factors became the main subjects of comparison. Constant comparison of categories allowed the researcher to test the theoretical assumption that successful re-integration has taken place when returnees have been able to re-integrate in as many local social settings as possible and therefore have a sense of belonging.

Human beings long to belong. Social identity is an important aspect of our identities. Humans define themselves as individuals, but also through membership in social groups. Globalization, new family patterns, communities, brands, and so forth change and re-define the determinants of belonging. Traditional markers like religion and class no longer represent the main categories of belonging. People can identify with categories both globally and locally. Yet people still want to bond, they long for loyalty, security and acceptance. Relationships with family and friends are important to define social identity, as are lifestyle choices, national and professional identity, and shared interests (Marsh et al. 2007, 4-5). Faith is another aspect that fosters and impacts social identity.

6.1.1. The Role of Mennonite Core Beliefs and the Role of Cooperation

Returnees are challenged to re-integrate into the many social settings they belong to. Mennonite core beliefs can be a key factor in action related to successful re-entry. While participating in a Mennonite program, returnees have deepened their understanding about the nature of the church, being the locus of God's presence

in Jesus Christ for the sake of the world. They came to realize that Christians are

to be an alternative society as a demonstration of where God is taking the whole

creation. Unfortunately, only few resources are invested into following up with

mission participants and their home churches to ensure that the positive changes

participants have experienced translate into ongoing change (Friesen 2004, 237).

Too many returning missionaries and those at home know little or nothing about

re-entry. Social interaction helps returnees to readapt and affiliate to the home

culture. Misunderstandings, a lack of communication and changes in relationships

hinder successful re-entry. How returnees relate to and use their cross-cultural

experiences makes the difference in how re-integration is managed. Returnees

should be able to apply their experiences to a congregational identity. For

successful re-integration to take place, home churches, families and friends must

be involved and here home churches can offer a certain perspective for re-

integration. Yoder's five practices provide a helpful framework for that

partnership. Churches should be involved in a participatory process of pre-and

post-assignment preparation. Mission programs, which typically only last for a

few months, could possibly set some learning processes in motion. They should

initiate a process for partnership, training and resources to help inform and train

home churches about possible re-entry symptoms.These home churches could

comprise a re-entry support team that is prepared, prayerfully and practically, to

help returnees re-integrate (Pirolo 2000, 68, 98, 215f.). Their missional

perspective is a helpful tool for re-integration. Friesen (2004, iii) showed that

"post-trip regression in participants' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors one year after

returning from the mission experience was … significant." Returnees need a setting that nurtures and supports the transformation that has begun.

The Mennonite understanding of following Christ through imitation and participation, the appreciation of the body of Christ, its role as a hermeneutic community, as a priesthood of all believers who share gifts and solidarity, and the distinct emphasis on discipleship and hospitality as depicted in Chapter 2, offer helpful terms for re-establishing a sense of belonging and for re-integration.

Believers surrender to God and follow Christ in community. Faith finds expression in all areas of life. It matters that returnees process and transfer what they have learned while participating in a mission program in accountable relationships. The body of Christ provides the means toward community and a framework for accountable relationships. Returnees want to be part of something bigger than themselves, they want to be accepted and loved, with their gifts and limitations. When programs focus on the importance of the body of Christ during training, they strengthen the student's willingness to become involved in church again, which helps to transfer experiences gained. Mutual sharing re-builds relationships and develops a feeling of belonging again. When mission programs evaluate gifts and talents together with students, and even submit a summary report to the church leadership, evaluation for further involvement can take place. The church models a new humanity and kingdom mentality, which includes a prophetic understanding. This understanding opens a space for returnees to contribute their gifts and even radical new insights. Here, cooperation between programs, churches and family can provide a helpful setting.

Belonging nurtures and enables returnees to grow and blossom. Those

who feel included participate and contribute to their communities. With Friesen

(2004, 214), the researcher thinks that this understanding contributes to the

development of relationally focused (as compared to service-focused) programs,

which cooperate with churches, contact persons and families to foster and to

impact social identity. Cooperation is a key element for successful re-integration,

ongoing transformation and discipleship outcome. All data groups agreed to

enhance cooperation with each other so that a safe framework to process and

transfer experiences gained would be provided. Returnees need to be encouraged

through follow-ups and to be involved in cross-cultural service at home so that

they can grow in their mission skills and so that transformative work can go on.

These structures might be more easily developed on a denominational level as

opposed to being left to the responsibility of individual churches. A summary in

Table 6.1.2., informed by data from Chapter 5, suggests how the cooperating

groups can share responsibilities:

Table 6.1.2. Responsibilities of all parties involved for a successful re-integration

Churches	Contact person	Returnee	Those at home	Program
Building relationships Showing appreciation Offering ongoing mentoring Establishing good communication through sharing, understanding Knowing about re-entry stress; giving support in practical areas	Having ongoing accountable relationships Offering mentoring Having open communication, clarifying expectations Bridging the gap between student and church Giving support	Investing in accountable relationships, Awareness of changes, being initiative Transfer of experiences Spirituality Applying knowledge about re-entry stress	Re-building relationships Establishing good communicatio n Knowing about re-entry stress Understandin g Allowance for change	Encouraging investment in relationships and mentoring Establishing communication Introducing tools and resources for re-integration Change management in debriefing

Churches can help returnees grow as followers of Jesus in all areas of life. Scripture calls the church to form disciples through intentional, well organized training and through relational influence on others (Mt 28:20, 2 Tm 1:13-14). It is an effort that can be done only together as individual believers and as the body of Christ. Mennonites strongly foster discipleship, and faith results in action. Incarnating God's kingdom builds on the willingness for change. The Spirit enables people for change, a new life and to become change agents who incarnate God's kingdom and respond to contemporary challenges with complementary gifts. Here the role of the personal relationship to God, the role of small groups within church and the role of congregation and community for discipleship are key elements for the lifelong process of spiritual transformation. The Revealnow study (2010) shows that growing in Christ and in the love of others nurtures spiritual formation, it strengthens the process of "forming Christ in us"[104] and to witness as "wounded healers."[105] Together, mission programs and the body of Christ should commit again to develop people through mentoring, coaching and spiritual direction and then place them to serve in accordance with their character and competencies. The cycle of understanding referring to Luke 24[106] as developed in this study provides an approach for churches and programs for how to mentor and support believers, and how to equip believers to live as authentic

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[104] Gal 4:19.

[105] A phrase used by Henri Nouwen (1979. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Bournemouth: ImagePubl.) to describe how we can give life to others in our weakness.

[106] See Chapter 5.5. and Appendix 24.

Christians within the society they belong to. Mennonite core beliefs provide a framework for such a learning process. According to Stuart Murray (2008), local churches can positively influence today's "post-commitment culture" by "reflecting what level of belonging is needed to sustain incarnational discipleship in an alien culture" ... and to find creative, flexible "expressions of commitment consistent with changing beliefs and behaviour." When the community offers a narrative, intuitive, creative approach to connect fragmented realities and to relate one's own story to God's larger story in a way that has historical relevance, post-Christendom people can find a meaning in life. Churches can provide them with a category to belong to.

6.1.2. The Role of Relationships

The research indicates the importance of relationships for re-integration. Contact persons in the "Get it!" program realized that their understanding of their role, their maturity, ability and willingness to invest in accountable, ongoing relationships were crucial elements for the successful re-integration of returnees. Programs can assist with communication and empowerment. The action research described in sections 4.6., 5.6. and 5.7. facilitated the production of information sheets for those at home.[107] A clear job description enables contact persons to understand what is expected from them. Procedures such as these could help enhance those of other mission programs.

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[107] Checklists for families, friends, contact person and home church about the concept of having a contact person; how to prepare for the return of a student and how to benefit from cooperation and Mennonite core beliefs have been developed. They can be found in Appendix 18-21.

With Wilder and Parker (2010, 175-176.) the reseacher recommends that short-term missionaries need to be surrounded by relationships so that they are constantly reminded of their experiences from every possible angle and through multiple people, so they may deepen the change in beliefs and attitudes they have experienced. Their thinking and actions can be reinforced so that they may realize the role they might have in discipleship and mission. By surrounding them with positive key relationship partners (life leaders, mentor-coaches, short-term team members, the local church), short-termers can develop, confirm and excel through their gifts, talents and skills. A discipleship program can help returnees wrestle with the feelings and challenges of re-entry. Strong relational and emotional support from multiple sources surrounds them with a longer-lasting system to process their experiences and to develop healthy accountability. Churches can assist in this way, inspiring, encouraging, training and mobilizing members to interact with and support participants in mission programs.

6.1.3. Change Management Tools

Learning about and using change management tools seems to be a major element for successful re-integration. One important tool to deal with change is awareness and understanding of re-entry stress. The more returnees are able to deal with re-entry symptoms, the deeper the long-term impact of their mission experiences. Knowledge about possible re-entry symptoms enables returnees and their families, friends and home churches to handle the effects of re-entry with understanding and patience.

Alumni often named "having time" as an important factor to handle change. "Having time" is defined as having time to debrief, to grieve and to let go, to take time to apply experiences gained, to practice what has been learned in teachings and outreach, to have the freedom to fit into a new role and to take time to understand the changes that took place at home in the meantime. Alumni understood that it takes time to develop a sense of belonging and to re-establish relationships. However, change is not transferred by time alone; returnees need to balance reflecting, active planning and initiative. Investing discipleship resources in returning short-term mission participants enables them to become aware of changes in worldview, their perspective on the global church, their attitude toward poverty, and so forth. The Mennonite understanding of being resident aliens in the world supports engagement with counter-cultural values in political and cultural debate and participation in local communities. Returnees most often come back with challenging new insights and perspectives, especially in the areas of justice, poverty, social activism and a passion for mission. Many students return with new plans for their futures and careers. Perspectives and values may have shifted, requiring a new framework in which to act. When churches are open to evaluating such insights with the returnees, and to finding ways to implement newly acquired perspectives, their experience of witnessing as resident aliens can be enriched. Returnees may then use tools they have learned in cross-cultural settings–tools like applying curiosity, integrating new concepts, reaching out to others, asking for help, investing in relationships, facilitating the transfer of new perspectives, the development of structures–to re-adapt and implement what they

have learned from their international experiences. Returnees claimed, however, to lack the support to apply changes in this manner. Those at home were willing to listen and share, but then expected returnees to resume the same old roles and to fit into the same realities. Families, friends and home churches should allow for change. Open communication and the clarification of mutual expectations can help to empower returnees to take initiative again and to decide how to involve themselves in different social realities again. The willingness of both returnees and congregations to incarnate the counter-cultural, missional values they have established and affirmed together can improve the feeling of belonging and the contribution they can and will bring to the community.

6.2. Challenges for the "Get it!" Program

The challenges[108] mentioned relate to the program upon which this

research is based, though other mission programs may easily transfer these

insights. Cooperation between the "Get it!" program and students' home churches

is a key element of successful re-integration. The majority of the "Get it!"

students belong to Anabaptist/Mennonite congregations, and thus their home

churches can build up and deepen Mennonite identity in them and thereby offer a

social identity to which to belong. Raising the church leadership's awareness of

the student's role and the way in which Mennonite core beliefs can contribute to

re-integration is a major challenge.

The "Get it!" program is well known within the owning church groups,

and trust has been well established over the last decade. Ownership of pastors and

congregations was deepened, as pastors and some gifted and willing members

were invited to teach during the "Get it!" training phase. Nevertheless, a step-by-

step process to communicate the benefit of an enhanced cooperation is needed.

Church leadership has many roles and tasks, and everyday activities demand

much time and energy. Mentoring students in a mission program or supporting a

mission program is thus usually not one of the top priorities.

To gain support for cooperation, the researcher invited the potential

change agents (congregations, together with "Get it!" board members and alumni)

to attend a presentation of the research results and to discuss the implications with

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[108] Since space is limited in the main body of the thesis, detailed impacts of the research for the "Get it!" program are described in more detail in Appendix 26.

one another. The results nurtured the conclusions described in Chapter 6.2. Some feedbacks can be read in Appendix 28.

The "Get it!" leadership should invest not only in relationships with churches but with all parties involved. Introducing them to the program's goals and concepts, to the cycle of understanding referring to Luke 24, to the model of having a contact person and how they might support and cooperate with the program and the contact persons represent important means to bridge the gap between returnees, program, families, friends and home churches. Inviting all parties involved to an all-day event during the training phase of the program helps to nurture understanding. As the parties experience what "Get it!" discipleship training means, they get to know the other participants and team leaders, hear about possible re-entry symptoms and spend time with their participant.

The more understanding about re-entry stress is generated among the various involved parties, the less they will feel threatened by the returnee's transformation. Instead, they can bridge the gap and help returnees integrate their experiences so that all may benefit and serve in their local contexts. In this regard, the researcher's German-language publication on re-entry stress is recommended to all parties.

The "Get it!" program holds membership in an international alliance, of similar programs, called "Global Disciple Training Alliance". All programs sending young people on short-term mission assignments struggle with how to mentor, teach and guide returnees, as well as their families, friends and home churches, to reintegrate returnees successfully upon return home. The researcher

will forward a summary of this thesis to these programs via email following graduation, and hopes thereby to be able to offer them helpful tools that they may find both useful and easily transferable to them.

Recommendation for Further Study

The following areas require further research:

Writing from a European context in the twenty-first century imbued the study with a particular perspective. Comparing this study with other international settings or contexts could contribute to opening a wider horizon. This study's sample group was limited to a Mennonite/Anabaptist short-term mission program in Switzerland with international students and its participants between 1998 and 2010. An examination of other Anabaptist groups denominationally connected with short-term mission programs might inform new insights.

This research showed that returnees need to develop a new sense of belonging. Murray (2008) describes the twenty-first century as "a post-commitment culture" and underlines the need to reflect about levels of belonging, as more and more people have never either belonged to or ceased to attend church, "but [nevertheless] identify themselves as Christians and subscribe to Christian beliefs" (Murray 2008). Churches must respond to questions like: What values and beliefs are important in forming ideas of belonging today? What are adequate expressions of commitment? What leads people to leave some groups, and join others? Research can provide greater clarity as to how churches and mission programs might improve their understanding and responses.

In Chapter 1.4., important questions were raised relating to post-Christendom in Europe. The role of the church in a fragmented postmodern reality needs further discussion. The terms of a theology of creation, incarnation and inculturation have not yet been developed.

As Friesen (2004, 246) states, there is but a limited capacity to capture the complexity of spiritual transformation through the use of questionnaires or interviews. The results can only be a snapshot in time. This study confirms the need for mentoring and spiritual guidance in an accountable relationship (Nelson 2010, 51). To find out what deepens spiritual growth and helps transform knowledge gained through international experience requires a longitudinal study about how people's spiritual attitudes, needs and motivations align with spiritual behaviours. Such a study should include nondenominational mission programs.

As mentioned in Chapter 6.1., re-integration is not only an important topic for short-term programs. How to integrate new believers, welcome different social groups and respond to diverse perspectives and cultural shifts are challenges for churches as well. The relevance of denominational strengths for re-integration offers broad possibilities for further research.

Appendices

Appendix 1
Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg: Theological Profile

The Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg is committed to the Bible as God's authoritative word and adheres to the Anabaptist tradition of peacemaking. Christianity as discipleship is emphasized; to be Christian is to follow Jesus in everyday life. The church is the visible community of believers. Members not only commit themselves to Christ, but also individually and voluntarily to one another. Followers of Jesus are to practice an ethic of love and non-resistance. As transformed persons, they seek to be reconcilers who reject involvement in violence and warfare (Becker 2008, 2). Mission is performed in a holistic way, of which presence, evangelism, peace service and social services are important components. The Mennonite tradition is discussed in the light of and in dialogue with other Christian traditions. Students from all other Christian denominations are welcomed. While training students, the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg focuses on a missional[109] understanding of the church that prioritizes local action, global thinking, flexibility and highest quality. Leadership is understood as empowering others, theory and praxis are integrated, and academic work and spirituality are combined (Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg 2009).

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[109] See Chapter 2.9. for a more detailed description.

Appendix 2
Overview of all answers given by alumni

Table Appendix 2.a. Overview of all answers given by alumni

Alumni n=86 (multiple answers possible)	Important to deepen change	Additional comments to 1a	Tools learned during debrief were helpful	Most efficient tools for application	Home churches were helpful for re-integration because	Important to feel belonging again	Subsequent home churches should focus on	Contact persons should focus on	Helpful to prepare during outreach	Programs should inform those at home
Integration, transfer		5		16						
Processing experiences		17		10						
Future, career, goals		4	2	10					28	
Changes awareness, implementation		16		36		8				
Collaboration of all parties		4			4		39	55		27
Re-entry stress (*knowing, dealing with*)	65	2		4	44	52	57	50	85 during training, 52 in outreach	68
Debriefing						50				
Team leader									27	
Spirituality	27	20		8		62				
Communication		20			42		55			13
Listening (been listened to, listening to others)	74					60		54 (contact person)		
Update, flow of information					56		39	51		
Understanding					66		56			
Sharing	75			17		71	61			
Clarifying expectations							41			
Relationships (established, re-build, awareness)	66			11	62			54	35	8
Mentoring	71		24		3	77	42			
In touch (with team; *with those at home*; with church; showing interest)	66 w/ team		12 w/ team	11 w/ team	60 w/ church	59 w/ team	30 w/ church			
Same international experience					54					
Visit				31	32		30	54		
Welcome							57			
Involvement (church, family, job)	59			17	6	54			17	10
Encouragement (follow-ups; gifts; connect with students)			10		56		71			
Support contact person							44			
Financial support							61			
Prayer support					68		61			
Structure (daily life, plan ahead)	49	5		10		41			35	

Table Appendix.2.b. Overview of all answers given by alumni

Alumni n=86 (multiple answers possible)	Expectations toward family, friends, church	Expectations from family, friends, church	Most helpful for re-integration	Most difficult for re-integration	Improve debrief	Helpful during debrief	Helpful topics in debrief	Top 5 ideas for subsequent students	Programs could do better	Contact persons could do better	Returnees could do better	Home churches could do better
Time (to re-adapt, process)	53			6		47	68			10		
Own responsibility, initiative			11			62						
No response			32			2-5	1-4	3-6				
Integration, transfer												
Processing experiences			17		18							
Future, career, goals		7										
Changes awareness, implementation		39		65			16	65			21	3
Collaboration of all parties	13								1			3
Re-entry stress (knowing, dealing with)	33	1	8	26	10	3	34	44	1	5		2
Debriefing					10	3						
Team leader					15					1		
Spirituality			8				5	32			3	
Communication	29		19	16	15		16	46			2	3
Listening (been listened to, listening to others)	65	45								3		
Update, flow of information										7		
Understanding			22	16								
Sharing	29	24					16					9
Clarifying expectations												3
Relationships (established, re-build, awareness)	69		34	23				76			2	
Mentoring	2	16	4		11				3		1	
In touch (with team; with those at home; with church; showing interest)											4 w/ tea m	
Same international Experience												
Visit												
Welcome												
Involvement (church, family, job)		16	17								2	4
Encouragement (follow-ups; gifts; connect with students)								53	6			
Support contact person												1
Financial support												7
Prayer support												
Structure (daily life, plan ahead)					7		11	43			2	
Time (to re-adapt, process)		39	34			6	16	48		4		
Own responsibility, initiative						5		8		12	5	
No response		24				69	41		66	39	42	46

Table Appendix 2.3. Overview of all answers given by interviewees

Interviewees alumni n=12 (multiple answers possible)	Helpful tools for re-integration	Programs could do better	Churches can help returnees re-integrate	Contact person could do better	Returnee could do better
Integration, transfer	9	3	14		9
Processing experiences		4			
Future, career, goals					
Change awareness, implementation	14				20
Collaboration of all parties					
Re-entry stress (knowing, dealing with)		7		13	10
Debriefing	6				
Team leader					
Spirituality					
Communication	23	1	11	12	21
Listening (been listened to, listening to others)	5				
Update, flow of information			8	4	
understanding					
Sharing	11				
Clarifying expectations		20		2	5
Relationships (established, re-build, awareness)	24		22	7	35
Mentoring	9		11		
In touch (with team; with those at home; with church; showing interest)		7			2
Same international experience					
Visit					
Welcome	2				
Involvement (church, family, job)					
Encouragement (follow-ups; gifts; connect with students)	6		10		3
Support/train contact person		4			
Financial support					
Prayer support					
Structure (daily life, plan ahead)					
Time (to re-adapt, process)	4				16
Own responsibility, initiative	4			2	12
No response					

Table Appendix 2.4. Overview of all answers given by contact persons

Contact persons n=35 (multiple answers possible)	Important to deepen transformation	Helpful to find a place in church again	Hindrance to find a place in church again	Helpful aspects in supporting, mentoring and encouraging	What should subsequent contact persons focus on	Helpful tools a program can offer	Helpful tools a contact person can offer	Helpful tools a returnee can use	Difficult for contact persons	Helpful to be a better contact person	More support for contact person from program	Suggestions for improvement
Integration, transfer												
Processing experiences						5		2				
Future, career, goals												
Change awareness, implementation	23		3			9						
Collaboration of all parties					45				8	7	4	3
Re-entry stress (knowing, dealing with)	21			14	7	13						
Debriefing						3						
Team leader												
Spirituality	28											
Communication		2		28	14	3		5	20	8		4
Listening (been listened to, listening to others)	22											
Update, flow of information				20			5					
Understanding										2	6	
Sharing	32			22								
Clarifying expectations							1	3			8	8
Relationships (established, re-build, awareness)		9	11	29	37		4	3	9			
Mentoring	30	2				4			7	3	4	
In touch (with team; with those at home; with church; showing interest)	18 w/ alumni								8			
Same international experience				19								
Visit				14								
Welcome												
Involvement (church, family, job)	24	7	3						31	3		4
Encouragement (follow-ups; gifts; connect with students)				22								
Support contact person											3	
Financial support												
Prayer support				31					9			
Structure (daily life, plan ahead)	24											
Time (to re-adapt, process)	26						1			8	2	
Own responsibility, initiative		3						2		2		
No response		20	22	2-7	2-8	6	19	17		7	20	15

Table Appendix 2.5. Overview of all answers given by church leadership

Church leadership n=29 (multiple answers possible)	Reasons why stud. successfully re-integrated in	Reasons why stud. did not re-	Helpful tools for reintegration	Crucial to find their place in the congregation	Helpful aspects in supporting, mentoring and	Expectations towards returnees	Churches contribution to re-	Programs leadership could	Effectiveness of program, reasons for effectiveness of	Contributions of churches during	What hinders re-integration	A program's contribution for	Contact person's contribution for	Returnee's contribution for	Churches' contribution for
Integration, transfer		1				25	15			12	2				
Processing experiences								6							
Future, career, goals		1													
Change awareness, implementation		1				2									
Collaboration of all parties						26	16			4	3				2
Re-entry stress (knowing, dealing with)				18		12	18		5			2			
Debriefing				18											
Team leader															
Spirituality				16		2				7					
Communication	6		17		36	6	12			6			4	9	3
Listening (been listened to, listening to others)	12	1		21											1
Update, flow of information					34		11	3				6	1		
Understanding															
Sharing				22			22								
Clarifying expectations							10	1				1	1	1	
Relationships (established, re-build, awareness)		2	10		27		19			10					
Mentoring/evaluation			5	25			22	5	4	5		1			4
In touch (with team; with those at home; with church; showing interest)				10 w/ alumni	16		15	5							
Same international experience					13						4				
Visit					6		13	1							
Welcome							24								1
Involvement (church, family, job)	24		4	22			16	1	4	9	1			2	
Encouragement (follow-ups; gifts; connect with students)							19							2	
Support contact person															4
Financial support							19								
Prayer support					17		20								
Structure (daily life, plan ahead)				11											
Time (to re-adapt, process)	1		1	8		2	18								
Own responsibility, initiative						2			5	6				2	3
No response		22						11	9	10	9	19	21	15	14

Appendix 3
Questionnaire for "Get it!" Participants/Alumni/Returnees

Dear [name],

You have participated in the "Get it!" program. As you have read in my recent correspondence, I would like to ask you about your experiences with the program. Your participation is crucial for my project/thesis. Please fill in the questionnaire and send it back to me by the date indicated. Your cooperation is much appreciated!

The findings and results will be used for my project/thesis. Therefore, please read, complete and sign the attached contract. Please take your time to understand the contract, and then kindly return it to me. All data will be used anonymously and the contract will be stored in a different location from the questionnaire to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Thanks so much!

All data will be used anonymously. Your completed questionnaire will be kept only with your permission; otherwise it will be destroyed following my successful thesis defence and graduation. Thanks again!

Your help is very much appreciated! Please fill in the questionnaire anonymously and return it by [date]. That would be great! Please use the enclosed pre-paid envelope to return the questionnaire.

For the following 25 questions, please mark the applicable answers, making a check in the appropriate box (multiple checks are permissible) or answer in your own words. Please answer the open-ended questions, too; they are most important for enhancing the re-entry process. I also ask that you please

answer completely honestly, so that we can use the results to enhance the program. Please do not sugar-coat answers to please me. ☺ Your help is very much appreciated!

In addition, I would love to contact all of you to follow up, but unfortunately I cannot interview all 112 of you. Some of you have already agreed to do telephone interviews, and your willingness and help is very much appreciated. Thanks a lot!

—Heike Geist

The Questionnaire

You are: ☐ Female ☐ Male   Name (optional):

How old were you upon the completion of "Get it!"?

Where was your outreach assignment and how long were you there?

1. What was important in deepening your "Get it!" experiences, both immediately after you returned, as well as once you settled down again?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Mentoring/being accompanied by friends, mentors.				
b. Taking initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines like (please rank the options):				
Prayer				
Bible reading				
Serving others				
Silent retreats				
Other				
c. Finding a new place in church and finding ways to serve and feel at home in church				
d. Once at home, being able to listen to things that the people at home have experienced				
e. Being able to share about my experiences				
f. Ongoing contact with "Get it!" alumni was encouraging				
g. Having a contact person from my home church				
h. Taking time to return and re-adapt				
i. Having a structured schedule and weekly tasks at home				
j. Being aware that those at home had changed, too				
k. Re-entry/debriefing with "Get it!" program provided helpful information				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.

Which were the most important points for you?

2. To what extent was the debriefing week following your return helpful and important in making you aware of and helping you to see the potential application of the new experiences and knowledge you gained during "Get it!"?
☐ 1. Not at all. ☐ 2. Somewhat. ☐ 3. Very much.☐ 4. Crucial.

3. How efficient was the week of debriefing:
a. In highlighting the applicable experiences and goals of the program?
☐ 1. Not at all. ☐ 2. Somewhat. ☐ 3. Very much.☐ 4. Crucial.

b. In providing you with tools to transfer and apply knowledge?
☐ 1. Not at all. ☐ 2. Somewhat. ☐ 3. Very much.☐ 4. Crucial.

c. How well were you able to apply these things/goals?
☐ 1. Not at all. ☐ 2. Somewhat. ☐ 3. Very much.☐ 4. Crucial.

d. How effective was the mentoring given by the following people in helping you to apply what you learned?
    ☐ The "Get it!" program
    ☐ The contact person
    ☐ Home church
    ☐ Family

4. What was the most efficient tool in helping you to apply to your daily life what you learned during the "Get it!" experience?

5. How well integrated did you feel, back in your home church? Please check one:
    ☐ Well integrated
    ☐ Not well integrated
    ☐ Changed church affiliation
    ☐ If the experience changed you, why (study, job, etc.)?

Please answer the following questions in relation to the church to which you returned after the program.

6. Which points were most important in helping you to reintegrate and have a good return experience (in relation to your home church)?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. The commissioning service in my home church helped bridge the gap between the congregation and myself and helped them better to understand what I was doing.				
b. Some members of our congregation were able to experience the "Get it!" visitor's day during the training phase.				
c. My congregation was able to read the "Get it! News" at www.bienenberg.ch.				
d. The congregation received a letter about re-entry from the "Get it!" leadership team before I returned home.				
e. The congregation was kept updated by the "Get it!" teams and/or the "Get it!" leadership team during the training.				
f. Some members of the congregation kept in touch with me during my training phase and during my outreach experience.				
g. The congregation received the team's e-mails.				
h. Some members of our congregation were supportive to me, because they had experienced a DTS themselves and/or have lived abroad.				
i. The congregation offered support and encouragement.				
j. The congregation offered prayer support.				
k. I had a strong relationship with my church before I left on the "Get it!" program.				
l. Some members of our congregation were able to experience the "Get it!" visitor's day during the training phase and listened to an presentation about re-entry symptoms.				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

7. What was important (or might have been important) for you personally, upon returning home and settling in, in finding a place in the congregation again?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Mentoring, being accompanied by friends, mentors				
b. Taking initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible reading, serving others, silent retreats				
c. Finding a new place in church and finding ways to serve and feel at home in church				
d. Once at home, being able to listen to things the people at home have experienced				
e. Being able to share about my experiences				
f. Having ongoing, encouraging contact with "Get it!" alumni				
g. Having a contact person from my home church				
h. Taking time upon return to re-adapt				
i. Having a structured schedule and weekly tasks at home				
j. Being aware that people at home had changed, too				
k. Re-entry/debriefing with the "Get it!" program provided helpful information				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

8. What should a home church focus on so that it might be more helpful in re-integrating their "Get it!" participant?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Offering mentoring and help so that returnees can plan their careers				
b. Having a "Get it!" team visit the home church				
c. Having some church members visit during the "Get it!" training phase				
d. Some members of the congregation could learn about re-entry by reading about re-entry symptoms				
e. Offering prayer, reflecting and sharing time with the returnee				
f. Reacting patiently to the returnee's (sometimes provocative) ideas				
g. Asking for more information about "Get it!"				
h. Congregations should know about the "Get it!" curriculum and encourage members to reflect on and/or practice the same topics				
i. Informing church members about the "Get it!" program before the program starts				
j. Communicating on a regular basis with the "Get it!" participant				
k. Offering a warm welcome to returning participants				
l. Some gifted and willing members can offer to work with the "Get it!" program and so help to bridge the gap between the program and the congregation (growing ownership)				
m. Learning about re-entry stress symptoms and being prepared to react helpfully				
n. Giving room to the returnees to share and find their place in the congregation again				
o. Participating in the "Get it!" visitor's day during the training phase				
p. Participating in the debriefing week offered by the "Get it!" program when participants return home				
q. Asking participants about their expectations before they return home				
r. Sharing about the expectations and hopes of the congregation with the participants before they return				
s. Contact person can inform church about possible re-entry symptoms before the participant returns home				
t. Encouraging and preparing the church's young people to participate in the "Get it!" program				
u. Supporting "Get it!" participants financially				
v. Giving returnees their necessary time to come back home and re-adapt				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

9. What should subsequent contact persons focus on to be more helpful for the re-integration of their "Get it!" participants?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Working together with family, friends before returning				
b. Working together with the home church before returning				
c. The "Get it!" team should visit the home congregation during the training phase				
d. Contact persons should read a recommended book about re-entry before the student returns				
e. Keeping the congregation informed about the "Get it!" program				
f. Contact persons should participate in the "Get it!" visitor's day				
g. Contact persons should visit the "Get it!" training during the second of the three training phases to get to know the "Get it!" teams and leadership, to learn about program dynamics and to speak face-to-face with the student to be mentored				
h. Contact persons should participate in the "Get it!" debriefing week in June				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

Open questions: Please answer honestly:
10. Do you think it is necessary to prepare for return during the training phase?
☐ No. ☐ Yes. If yes, why?

11. What are good ways to prepare for return while still on the outreach assignment? "Before the return trip, it would be helpful if..."

12. What information should the "Get it!" leadership team share with family, friends, the home church and the contact person before the "Get it!" participant returns home?

13. What were your expectations of your family, friends, home church and contact person when you returned home?

14. What were the expectations of you from your family, friends, home church and contact person when you returned home?

15. What was most helpful for you when you returned home?

16. What did you find most difficult?

17. In what way might the "Get it!" debriefing period have been more helpful to prepare you for returning home?

18. Which three things would you change about the "Get it!" debriefing period? Why?

19. Which three topics were not helpful during the "Get it!" debriefing period?

20. Which three topics were the most helpful?

21. Which topics would you have liked to have been added, or that you felt were missing?

22. What are your top five ideas to share with future "Get it!" participants in regard to their return home?

23. Do you think that an annual or biannual "Get it!" Refresh[110] meeting would be helpful to reintegrate and to keep in focus the things you want to apply to daily life?
☐ 1. Not helpful at all. ☐ 2. Potentially helpful. ☐ 3. Helpful. ☐ 4. Crucial.

24. What kind of follow up would you like to receive from the "Get it!" leadership team?
    ☐ On-line community
    ☐ Input via e-mail
    ☐ Information about the current "Get it!" teams/training
    ☐ Offers for seminars, etc.
    ☐ Follow-up meetings or "Get it!" Refresh
    ☐ Offering teachings for alumni to deepen topics the students learned about in the "Get it!" training phase
    ☐ Reminders about "Get it!" goals and vision
    ☐ Coaching on a personal level or via telephone

25. What and how could we—the "Get it!" program, the contact person, the participants—do better? Any further comments or suggestions?

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[110] Alumni are invited to meet and refresh experiences in a meeting organized by the program leadership.

Appendix 4
Questionnaire for "Get it!" Contact Persons

Greetings!

I am requesting your help to improve the "Get it!" program. Since summer 2009, I have been a part-time student at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Canada (in addition to my position at Bienenberg Theological Seminary) and have been working on a thesis for a Doctor of Ministry in the field of practical theology. My topic concerns re-entry following short-term mission assignments.

Someone from your congregation has participated in the "Get it!" program. As a contact person, you experienced his/her development, transformation and return. As per the attached correspondence, I would like to ask you about your experiences and involvement with the "Get it!" program.

As a contact person you mentored and guided one or more "Get it!" participants. I would like to ask you questions regarding your experiences with the participant's re-entry. Your responses are extremely important for my doctoral thesis, so I ask for your full participation. Thank you!

The findings and results of the responses will be used for my project/thesis, so therefore it is necessary to ask you to read, complete and sign the attached contract. The contract will be stored in a different location from the questionnaire to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. All data will be used anonymously. Your returned questionnaire will be stored only with your permission; otherwise it will be destroyed following my successful thesis defence and graduation. Thanks very much!

The questionnaire has fourteen questions. Please plan to take at least thirty minutes to complete it. You may wish to take a few moments to reflect on and remember your experiences with the participant. You may, of course, consult members of your church, or friends and/or family of the participant, if it helps you answer the questions more completely. The purpose is not to evaluate an individual, but rather to highlight overall impressions of the program.

Your help is very much appreciated. Please fill out the questionnaire anonymously and return it to me by [date]. That would be great! It is essential that you help me to gather data and to complete and return the questionnaire. Please use the enclosed pre-paid envelope.

For the following questions, please mark the applicable answers, making a check in the appropriate box (multiple checks are permissible) or answer in your own words. Please answer open-ended questions, too, as these are most important for enhancing the re-entry process. I also ask you to answer completely honestly, so that we may use the results to enhance the program. Please do not sugar-coat answers to please me. ☺

—Heike Geist

The Questionnaire

You are: ☐ Female   ☐ Male   Name (optional):

1. Is the job of one specific contact person necessary?
☐ Yes. ☐ No.

2. Would it be better to have more than one contact person?
☐ Yes. ☐ No.

3. What do you think was important for the returning "Get it!" participant in deepening the transformation he/she experienced?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. He/she was mentored and accompanied by friends, mentors				
b. He/she took initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines, like prayer, Bible reading, serving others, silent retreats				
c. He/she found ways to serve in the home church				
d. He/she was interested in others and their stories				
e. Upon returning home, he/she had opportunities to share about his/her experiences				
f. He/she kept in touch with "Get it!" alumni				
g. He/she was given time to adapt and feel at home again. He/she took his/her time before returning to his/her workplace				
h. He/she implemented structure into his/her day and week				
i. He/she was aware that people at home had also changed				
j. Re-entry/debriefing time informed him/her about possible re- entry stress symptoms				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you (from a to j, above)?

4. Did the "Get it!" participant find a place in his/her church again?
☐ Yes. ☐ No. If yes, what was helpful? If no, why not?

5. How helpful were the following aspects for you as a contact person in supporting, mentoring and encouraging the "Get it!" participant during re-integration?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Organizing the commissioning service in the home church helped to bridge the gap between participant and congregation				
b. Experiencing the visitor's day at the "Get it!" program training phase				
c. Reading the "Get it! News" at http://az.bienenberg.ch/				
d. Receiving a letter with information from the "Get it!" leadership team before the participant returned home				
e. I was able to keep the home congregation informed, thus helping the returnee to re-connect				
f. Ongoing contact via letters and phone conversations with the "Get it!" participant				
g. Receiving the "Get it!" team letter				
h. Having done a DTS or having experienced living abroad myself gave understanding and helped me connect with the student				
i. I was able to support the student through sharing and encouragement				
j. Prayer support				
k. Having a deep relationship with the participant before he/she enrolled for the "Get it!" program				
l. Learning about re-entry at the "Get it!" visitor's day				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you (from a to l, above)?

6. What should subsequent contact persons focus on to make the participant's re-integration as smooth as possible?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Working together with family, friends before returning				
b. Working together with the home church before returning				
c. Inviting the "Get it!" team to visit the home congregation during the training phase				
d. Contact persons should read a recommended book about re-entry before the student returns				
e. Keeping the congregation informed about the "Get it!" program				
f. Contact persons should participate in the "Get it!" visitor's day				
g. Contact persons should visit the "Get it!" training during the second of the three training phases to get to know the "Get it!" teams and leadership, to learn about program dynamics and to speak face-to-face with the student to be mentored				
h. Contact persons should participate in the "Get it!" debriefing week in June				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points to you (from a to h, above)?

7. What else could be helpful for the re-integration of a "Get it!" participant:
    7.1. In relation to the organization of the "Get it!" program?
    7.2. In relation to the contact person?
    7.3. In relation to the "Get it!" participant?

8. The following three things made it difficult for you to function as a contact person:

9. What would have been helpful for you to be a better contact person?

10. Would you have liked to have been in touch with other contact persons?

11. If yes, how often and how closely?

12. When does the role of a contact person end?
    ☐ When the "Get it!" participant returns
    ☐ A month after return
    ☐ Three months after return
    ☐ Six months after return
    ☐ A year or more after return

13. Did you feel supported enough by the "Get it!" program to mentor the returnee?
☐ 1. Not well enough. ☐ 2. Okay. ☐ 3. Good. ☐ 4. Very well.

14. What suggestions do you have for improvement?

Appendix 5
Questionnaire for Home Churches

Greetings!

I am requesting your help in improving the "Get it!" program. Since summer 2009, I have been a part-time student at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Canada (in addition to my position at Bienenberg Theological Seminary) and have been working on a thesis for a Doctor of Ministry in the field of practical theology. My topic deals with re-entry following short-term mission assignments. A person from your congregation has participated in the "Get it!" program. You have experienced their development and return.

As stated in the attached correspondence, I want to ask you about your experience with the "Get it!" participant. This questionnaire is not for the purpose of evaluating an individual, but rather to discern your general observations. Please feel free to ask the congregation, and/or family or friends of the "Get it!" alumnus, to help answer the questions. You may discuss all aspects of the questionnaire with them.

It is essential that you help me to gather data by completing and returning the questionnaire. The findings and results will be used for my project/thesis; therefore it is necessary that you read, complete and sign the attached contract. All data will be used anonymously and the contract will be stored in a different location from the questionnaire to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Your completed questionnaire will be stored only with your permission; otherwise it will be destroyed following my successful thesis defence and graduation. Thank you!

Your help is very much appreciated. Please complete the questionnaire anonymously and return it to me by [date]. That would be great! Please use the enclosed pre-paid envelope.

For the following fourteen questions, please mark the applicable answers, making a check in the appropriate box (multiple checks are permissible) or answer in your own words. Please also answer the open-ended questions, as these are most important for enhancing the re-entry process. I also ask that you answer honestly, so that we may use the results to enhance the program. Please do not sugar-coat answers to please me. ☺ Thank you!

—Heike Geist

The Questionnaire

1. How well did the returnee reintegrate into the home church? Check one:
   ☐ He/she integrated well. If so, why?
   ☐ He/she did not integrate well. If so, why?
   ☐ He/she changed church affiliation. If so, why (study, job, etc.)?

2. In what ways was the home church helpful for reintegration (i.e., organized a welcome party, etc.)?

3. What do you think was important for the returning "Get it!" participant to find his/her place in the congregation again?

0. Not sure. 1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	0	1	2	3	4
a. He/she was mentored and accompanied by friends, mentors					
b. He/she took initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible reading, serving others, silent retreats					
c. He/she found ways in which to serve in the home church					
d. He/she was interested in others and their stories					
e. Upon returning home, he/she was able to share about his/her experiences					
f. He/she kept in touch with "Get it!" alumni					
g. He/she was given time upon return to feel at home again. He/she took time before returning to his/her workplace					
h. He/she implemented structure into his/her day and week					
i. He/she was aware that people at home had also changed					
j. Re-entry/debriefing informed the participant about possible re-entry stress symptoms					

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

4. How helpful were the following items for your congregation in supporting, mentoring and encouraging the "Get it!" participant during reintegration?

0. Not sure. 1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	0	1	2	3	4
a. Visit from a "Get it!" team helped the congregation better understand what discipleship training is all about					
b. Some congregation members were able to be supportive because they had experienced a DTS themselves and/or had lived abroad					
c. Some congregation members were able to experience the "Get it!" program visitor's day during the training phase					
d. The "Get it!" participant had a strong relationship with the congregation before participating in the program					
e. Reading the "Get it! News" at http://az.bienenberg.ch/					
f. The contact person organized the commissioning service in the home church, helping to bridge the gap between participant and congregation					
g. Receiving a letter about re-entry from the "Get it!" leadership team before the student returned					
h. Getting updates from the "Get it!" teams and/or the "Get it!" leadership during the training period					
i. Contact person informed the congregation on a regular basis					
j. Receiving the team e-mail					
k. Giving prayer support					
l. Learning about re-entry at the "Get it!" program visitor's day during training phase					
m. Being informed about the "Get it!" program in general helped to support the student					

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

5. What did you as the home church expect (consciously or not) from the returnee upon his/her return (cooperation, input, transformation, etc.)?

6. How well-informed was the returnee about these expectations?
☐ Well informed. ☐ Ill informed. ☐ Could have been better informed. Why?

7. For you as a congregation: What should a home church focus on to be helpful for the reintegration of a "Get it!" participant?

1. Not important. 2. Helpful. 3. Important. 4. Crucial and decisive.	1	2	3	4
a. Offer mentoring and help so returnees can plan their careers				
b Have a "Get it!" team visit the home church				
c. Some church members should visit and observe during the "Get it!" training phase				
d. Some church members could learn about re-entry by reading about re-entry symptoms				
e. Offering the returnee time for prayer, reflection and sharing				
f. React patiently to returnee's (sometimes provocative) ideas				
g. Ask for more information about "Get it!"				
h. Congregations should know the "Get it!" curriculum and encourage members to reflect on and/or practice the same topics				
i. Inform church members about the "Get it!" program before it starts				
j. Communicate on a regular basis with "Get it!" student				
k. Offer a warm welcome to returnees				
l. Some gifted and willing members can offer to work with the "Get it!" program and thus help to bridge the gap between the program and the congregation (growing ownership)				
m. Learn about re-entry stress symptoms and be prepared to react helpfully				
n. Give room to returnees to share and find their place in the congregation again				
o. Participate at the visitor's day during the "Get it!" training phase				
p. Participate in the debriefing week (offered by the "Get it!" program) when students return home				
q. Ask students about their expectations before they return home				
r. Share about the expectations and hopes of the congregation with students before they return				
s. The contact person should inform congregation about possible re-entry symptoms before student returns home				
t. Encourage and prepare church's young people to participate in the "Get it!" program				
u. Support "Get it!" students financially				
v. Give returnees the necessary time to re-adapt				

Please add any additional information that you feel is important.
What are the most important points for you?

8. What information/support/help would you have liked to have received from the "Get it!" leadership team better to support the returnee?

9. From your observations, how effective is the "Get it!" program in evoking personal transformation in participants?
□ Very effective. □ Effective. □ Inadequately effective. □ Ineffective. Why?

10. How effective do you think the "Get it!" program is in nurturing transformation and motivating the transformed people to become transformers in their churches

☐ Not sure. ☐ Very effective. ☐ Effective. ☐ Inadequately effective. ☐ Ineffective. Why?

11. Based on your observations, how effective/helpful is the "Get it!" program for European Mennonite churches?

☐ I don't know. ☐ Very effective. ☐ Effective. ☐ Inadequately effective. ☐ Ineffective. Why?
☐ Is the "Get it!" program necessary?
☐ Or is there another option? If so, what sort of option?

12. What aspects of your congregation could be helpful for the reintegration of returnees?

13. What aspects of your congregation could hinder the reintegration of returnees?

14. What else could be helpful for the reintegration of a "Get it!" participant:
    In relation to the "Get it!" program?
    In relation to the contact person?
    In relation to the "Get it!" participant?
    In relation to your congregation?

Thank you!

Appendix 6
Interview Guide

A sample of twelve "Get it!" alumni—one from each of the years that the program ran—was interviewed based on Appreciative Inquiry in September and October 2010. They explained their experiences in structured interviews based on an interview guide, the design of which was determined by the provisional results of the data already analyzed. The list of questions was emailed to the interviewees prior to the interview dates, so respondents had time to reflect on issues and prepare themselves to be interviewed. All questions were asked of all interviewees without exception, so that the findings might be applied across all cases. When essential topics arose, issues were pursued further, so that opinions, experiences, feelings, knowledge and actions could be covered.

The interview questions:

In answer to the question "What was important in deepening your 'Get it!' experiences, both immediately after you returned, as well as once you settled down again?" program alumni mentioned the following two things as very important: "mentoring/being accompanied by friends or mentors" and "being able to share about experiences."

Can you please tell me how you have experienced these aspects? What was helpful? What should subsequent students, families, friends, home churches and contact persons focus on to be more helpful for the re-integration of "Get it!" participants?

Responses from alumni/returnees to the questionnaires suggested that church members were not very aware of the need for mentoring, evaluation or practical help for re-integration. What do you suggest that home churches can contribute and is possible for them to do?

Contact persons understood their own importance or role in ensuring a successful re-integration. They also gave feedback that they did not fully understand the job requirements when they had been asked to step into the contact person role, and they felt inadequately prepared for it. What and how could be done better?

It seems that the following elements are vital to a good re-integration: how students felt integrated in church and with friends, and how successfully they re-built relationships after their return, as well as the quality of communication between students, family, friends and home church. Do you agree with that? What do you think is most helpful for re-integration?

Many of alumni/returnees stated that it was difficult not to be overwhelmed by daily routines and that it was a huge challenge to transfer and apply knowledge and experiences gained. Some 37 out of 86 alumni confessed that they felt they lost what they wanted to apply or transfer. Thirty-four of the respondents said the debriefing week following their return was only somewhat helpful and important in making them aware of and helping them to see the potential application of the new experiences and knowledge they had gained during the "Get it!" program.

Only 24 of 86 alumni said the debriefing time provided them with tools to transfer and apply knowledge, with 18 responding that the week of debriefing was effective. What tools were helpful for you to apply what you learned during your "Get it!" experience to your daily life? What and how could the "Get it!" program do better?

Appendix 7
Code of Conduct

Ethical guidelines: Contract between Heike Geist, "Get it!" participants, "Get it!" alumni, contact persons and congregations

The questionnaire participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures and what the researcher intends do with the information obtained. The chosen participants (current "Get it!" participants, "Get it!" alumni, contact persons and a sample of home churches) gave voluntary and informed consent. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted in German and the findings and summary will be translated into English.

- Participation (filling out the questionnaire and/or doing an interview) is voluntary. Participants are free to refuse to answer questions. They will not receive payment for their participation.

- The researcher may discuss findings and results of questionnaires and interviews with the "Get it!" board on an anonymous basis to enhance the "Get it!" program.

Interviews with "Get it!" participants/alumni:

- The researcher will ensure that she is the only person to see the transcripts of the interview. Names will be coded. It may be possible to identify people by their roles, which will hinder total anonymity, so the sample population will be asked to trust the researcher in using their statements for analysis. Transcripts of the interviews will be shredded following graduation.

- The researcher is also part of the "Get it!" leadership and a professor at the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg in Liestal, Switzerland. The researcher is aware of this dual role.

- The "Get it!" program is owned by the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg in Liestal, Switzerland. Mennonite and Anabaptist churches in Switzerland, Germany and France support and own the Ausbildungs- und

Tagungszentrum Bienenberg." The project/thesis is not funded by the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg and therefore the intellectual property of the project/thesis is that of the researcher (Heike Geist).

The participant agrees to the following (place a check mark in the appropriate boxes):

- ☐ I agree that my responses to the questionnaire be placed in storage, so that they may be used to benefit and improve the "Get it!" program.

- ☐ I wish my responses to the questionnaire to be destroyed following the researcher's graduation.

- ☐ I agree that the data may be used for Heike Geist's project/thesis and I give my permission for analysis of this date to be published both in the project/thesis and in subsequent related publications.

- ☐ I agree that I do not need to be consulted prior to publication. The results of the research shall be accessible via libraries.

- ☐ I recognize that Heike Geist possesses all rights to future publication.

- ☐ "Get it!" participants/alumni: I agree that interviews will be recorded so that transcripts may be written and the data used for the Heike Geist's project/thesis. All transcripts will be destroyed following graduation.

[Date]   [Signature]

Appendix 8
Note Taking (as referred to in Chapter 5.1.)

The following example of note taking illustrates how it helped to clarify the next steps of the analyzing process and to combine it with action research.

Reflection: Contact persons repeatedly reported a lack of understanding about their role. This position requires a better job description and clarification of expectations. The present student group should be involved in developing job requirements.

Plan: Meet with students to discuss how to enhance the relationships to contact persons. Have them discuss the upcoming suggestions with their contact persons.

Action: The present group of students acted very supportively in the discussion about the job requirements for contact persons. Contact persons will be invited to an all-day event where we all sit together and discuss how to improve information and hear their input.

Observation: Collaborative inquiry with students about their relationship with contact persons: I analyzed the data collected through questionnaires and fed findings to the present "Get it!" students to inform our discussion. Their reactions and comments nurtured a write-up of the meeting circulated to all participants. During the first meeting with the students, we experienced a slow start. I realized that the students had in fact been informed by letter about the possibility of having a contact person, but they needed a more personal introduction to the model. I then responded to that need in our first meeting and gave them time to think it over. Prior to the second meeting, I checked the data again to see if

contact persons had come up with clear expectations or suggestions on how to enhance the clarification of their role(s). During that second meeting we worked together on these issues. There was a high level of trust, people were good-humoured and felt more confident to discuss the contact person model. They gave honest responses to questions and discussed suggestions from contact persons. Students came up with feasible and realistic ideas. To make sure that the notes circulated had an impact and provided for a collaborative basis to analyze the actions taken, we set up further short meetings over the next week during the "Get it!" training phase (October to December, 2010). These meetings helped to keep the focus on actions we all agreed needed to be taken. The meetings became part of the cycles of reflection and action: students began to share with contact persons about the ideas the group had developed, and thus the relationships between contact persons and students changed owing these innovations. In subsequent meetings, the group reflected on their failures, disappointments and successes, and then worked to develop new approaches. These were put into action and reflected upon again. In one-on-one meetings I asked the students how their contact persons responded to our ideas as collected/derived via a collaborative group inquiry, and all of them agreed that it had been helpful for the contact persons. Reflection on the fourth and last experience phase was followed by a closing reflection. The students then left for the Christmas break and agreed to discuss issues with their contact persons face-to-face. During the short-term mission assignment from January to June, 2011, the team leaders were the ones to initiate ongoing reflection and to be responsible for the process of action and

reflection, so that the students would be able to rely on strong relationships when returning home.

Appendix 9
Tentative Assumptions for a (Un-)Successful Re-entry

The figure is related to Section 4.7.2. *The use of qualitative methods.*

Questions directed to various phenomena (topics) gave rise to the coding paradigm and led to a first tentative assumption of the phenomenon "Re-entry".
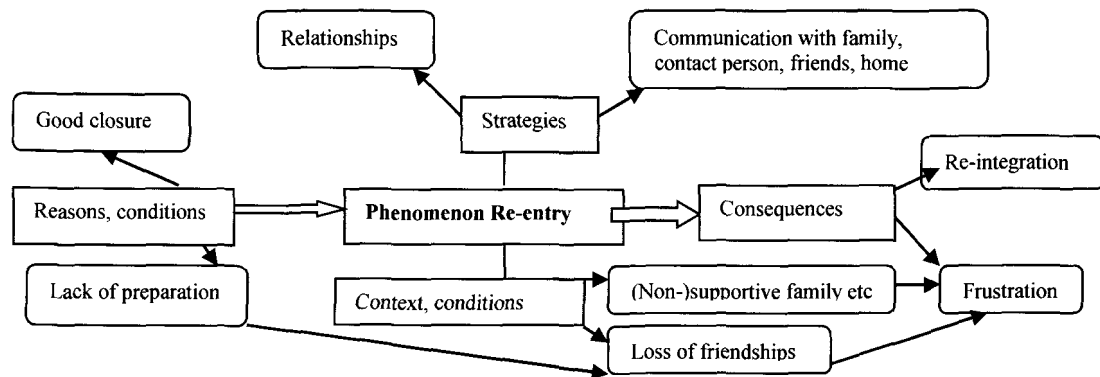
Appendix 10
Coding Guide

Related to Section 4.7.2. *The use of qualitative methods*. The researcher

presents an example of a coding guide.

Example of coding guide

Variable	Category	Definition	Exemplary description	Rules for coding
Communication	Good communication C1	Clear understanding and communication of expectations; awareness of importance to tell and listen to stories; willingness to communicate	It is important to stay in touch, to have room to tell stories, to listen to their stories. (MJRTN 38)	All aspects (see definition) should be met by the exemplary description
	Weak communication C2	Kept in touch with some people only; depend on initiative of others	I expected them to take time and listen to my stories. ESSTN78	If not all aspects defined point to good or poor communication
	Poor communication C3	Poor understanding and communication of expectations; focused on telling stories; did not keep in touch with people	I should have talked more to my contact person. Nobody took time to listen to me. MPPTN6 They just expected me to function in the same old way. SODTL16	All aspects defined should be met by the exemplary description

Appendix 11
Codebook "Get it!" Alumni Questionnaires

Related to section *5.3.1. Being involved again.* The researcher assigns numeric

values to terms mentioned most frequently by male and female alumni.

Codebook "Get it!" alumni questionnaires

Terms mentioned in questionnaires that pointed the researcher toward important areas for further research?	Frequency Women (total of 53)	Frequency Men (total of 33)
Mentoring	36	23
Find a place	33	15
Structure	18	10
Spiritual disciplines	32	21
Encouragement	15	5
Established relationship	17	7
Keeping in touch	33	13
Communication	40	22
Collaboration	44	22
Time	33	21
Understanding, interest	29	18
Re-entry symptoms	45	19
Afraid to re-adapt	3	
Mission	5	
Keeping close to God	25	7
Being welcomed	29	6
Changes	38	12
Time off	21	13
Goals, planning future	30	14
Expectations	21	4
Letting go of past	19	5
People with international experience	6	3
Follow up, counseling	14	8
Transfer experiences	26	9
Finding words to describe experiences	1	1
Asking about events at home	31	14
Find orientation	4	1
Journaling	13	2
Having patience	7	4
Financial support	10	10
Positive attitude	4	1
Processing experiences	19	6
Emotional up and downs	12	1
Being clear about what I need	3	
Tips for re-integration	7	2
Enjoying life again	2	2

Appendix 12
Contact Persons: Reasons to Find a Place in Church Again

Related to Chapter 5.3.1. the researcher presents a summary of statements

from contact persons and what they gave as reasons to find a place in church

again.

Contact persons: Reasons to find a place in church again

Core category	Verbal description	Means to foster re-integration
Accountable relationships	• Returnees established strong relationships in church • Returnees have been mentored	• Re-connect with friends • Mentoring • Professional help
Good communication	• Sharing and evaluating	• With church leadership
Taking time	• It was helpful when congregations did not overwhelm returnees with expectations • It was important that all parties involved realized that adaptation needs time	• Give time to reflect • Putting no pressure on returnees, giving room and time to adapt • Give returnees opportunities to serve and try new roles
Dealing with changes	• Openness of church was important	• Giving returnee the chance to share and develop experiences gained • Church is willing to integrate new things
Willingness of students	• When students showed interest in others • When returnee took initiative to re-connect with people	• Nurture spirituality • Get involved in church again
Getting involved again	• Returnees contributed their skills, gifts and talents • Returnees should talk with church leaders and find out where to get involved again • All parties involved need to understand that it takes time to have a feeling to belong again • Church leadership can help returnees to contribute the experiences they gained	• Resume old responsibilities • Evaluation with leadership • Awareness of own skills and gifts • Re-integrate in small group

Appendix 13
Accountability and Communication: Goals and Means

The following table presents the corresponding goals and means

alumni/returnees identified as the most effective tools that helped them apply to

daily life what they learned during their "Get it!" experiences. The phrases

mentioned most often related to the sub-categories "accountability" and

"communication."

Accountability and Communication: Goals and Means

Context	Goal: To implement changes	Means for successful re-integration
Building accountable relationships; taking time to share	• To realize and transfer changes • To develop and apply discipline	• Mentoring • One-to-one talks • Regular meetings • Accountable relationships
With contact person; good friends With God	• Processing experience • Asking how to translate experience	•Asking God
With alumni; with those who have the same international experience; with church members With a counsellor	• Setting goals • "Fanning the flame"	• Meeting with alumni, sharing, listening to their advice, getting encouragement
	Discuss how to practise insights gained • Develop a feeling of belonging	Mentoring • Safe space, caring support • Cooperation with program • Bible group, prayer support • Listening; sharing
	• Processing experience	• Professional help
Processing experiences gained	• Deepen insights from head to heart • Celebrate God's work • Learn how to deal with possible re-entry symptoms	• Reflect, write diary • Debriefing: suggestions of what to expect during re-entry, how to deal with emotions, thoughts, behaviours
Integration of learning	• Evaluate and adapt experiences • Feeling belonging • Realizing changes and applying them to daily life	Develop strategies, set goals • Listen to the stories of others • Find impacts for daily life • Listen to own intuition • Good friends • Debriefing time • Make a new start; practice what seems good • Be involved in church • Serve others • Respond to challenges

Appendix 14
Elements of Re-integration Recommended to Subsequent Students by Alumni

Alumni recommended various elements of re-integration to future

students. Verbal responses to these questions identified aspects of re-integration

that once again pointed to the core concept of "belonging," which encapsulates

the emerging categories.

Elements of Re-integration Recommended to Future Students by Alumni

Categories	Verbal description	Means to foster re-integration
Investing in relationships, communication, accountability	• Realizing that friendships have changed • Keeping in touch with alumni • Share and reflect with person who knows returnee for a long time and sees changes • Share with those who have international experience, clarification of expectations • Sharing and listening fosters reflection • Sharing helps to see and appreciate changes • Mentoring • Communicate about possible re-entry symptoms and topics that need to be dealt with	• Mentoring • Evaluation • Understanding • Sharing • Reflection • Encouragement • Openness, developing experiences
Knowing about re-entry stress	• Practical suggestions regarding what to expect during re-entry • Ways to deal with emotions, thoughts, behaviours • Knowing about re-entry stress and learning how to deal with it, communicating it to others	• Information • Practical suggestions • Knowledge, preparation
Managing, implementing changes, developing daily structure, taking time	• Taking time to process things • Setting goals, developing strategies to implement changes • Realizing cultural differences	• Practical steps for daily life • Setting goals, strategizing • Taking time to adapt • Serving
Being involved in church	• Finding a place and task at church, investing oneself in ministry • Church appreciates new perspective and helps returnee to find place again	• Cooperation • Appreciation
Nurturing spirituality	• Writing diary • Discussing with God what the next steps are, seeking His will • Work on behalf of underprivileged people • Share with small group, develop experiences	• Reflection • Prayer • Small groups • Ministry

Appendix 15
Coding Process
Table A.15.1. Summary sub-categories alumni, contact persons, church
leadership and interviews

Sub-category	Verbal description (Alumni;cursive= *Contact persons*, bold= **Church leadership**, underlines: Interviewees)	Means to foster re-integration
Accountability	Programs: • Should encourage returnees to *develop* their experiences • Should offer *mentoring* • Offering help so that returnees can *plan their careers* Churches: • Should be open to new insights and foster development • Supports contact person • Offers mentoring Student: • Mentoring, get advice and support • Share and reflect with person who has known returnee for a long time and sees changes; evaluate with friends what and how I have changed • Share with those who have international experience • *He/she kept in touch with "Get it!" alumni, with friends and family, with church members* • *He/she was mentored* • **Accountability (during, after outreach with church)** • <u>Give some person the right for accountable relationships</u> • <u>Accountable relationships, a "big brother"</u> • <u>Coaching; mentoring; inspiration; encouragement</u> • <u>Prayer support, transparent and accountable relationship</u> • <u>Discern goals, help to find place again</u> • <u>Role model</u>	• Accountability • Challenge • Encouragement • Evaluation • Mentoring • Openness, development • Practical steps for daily life • Reflection • *Accompanied by friends, mentors* • *Ongoing relationship* • *Those with international experience were able to understand returnee*
Being involved in church	Church: • Appreciates new perspective and helps returnee to find place again • Church expressed their expectations • Church offered involvement in ministries • *Church leadership can help returnees to contribute their experiences gained* Student: • Awareness, self-reflection • Clarify and develop goals in church • Finding a new place in church and finding ways to serve and feel at home in church again • Knowing what comes next • No pressure • *He/she found ways in which to serve in the home church* • *Contribute skills, gift and talents in church* • *Talk with church leadership and find out where to get involved again*	• Appreciation • Belonging • Clarify expectations • Feeling to belong, to matter • Development • New opportunity to serve • *Taking initiative* • *Implement, develop new insights* • *Positive understanding of church body* • *Willingness to contribute gifts*

	• *Take time to have a feeling to belong again* • Involved in church (youth group, worship) • He/she was mentored and accompanied by friends, mentors • He/she took initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible reading, serving others, silent retreats • He/she found ways in which to serve in the home church • He/she was interested in others and their stories • Upon returning home, he/she was able to *share* about his/her experiences • Involvement in church (down-to-earth attitude • Transferring new perspectives, insights, motivating others, being active in church, contributing gifts) • Offer ministry opportunities, share, know about expectations	• *Resume old responsibilities* • *Evaluation with leadership* • *Awareness of own skills and gifts* • *Re-integrate in small group* • Sharing • Involvement • Mentoring • Transfer
Change managemen t	Programs: • Should communicate to those at home that relationships need to be rebuilt • Should help student to find a place again, accept new role • Should help student to develop own personality • Should help student to become aware of changes • Should help students to develop life perspectives • That the program offered possibilities to practice new insights; teaching could take roots • Student took initiative • Remind student of teaching from training time • Help them to transfer experiences gained • Program should provide contact person with book, information about re-entry stress • Program should contact and inform church about possible re-entry symptoms, experiences gained before student returns • Help returnees to keep respect and appreciate church members and their perspectives, but also share about new perspectives • Provide students with tools how to deal with re-entry stress • Provide students with checklist to organize life • Give room to think critically, to discuss culture shifts, new perspectives, to ask questions • Debrief students who experienced the polarity of being a learner and also a person who ministers during outreach • When they nurtured love for church • When development of character traits, faith, awareness of gifts, strengths and weaknesses • When programs challenge students (step out of comfort zone, try new things) • Through mentoring	• Inform those at home • New role • Awareness of changes • Deepen teachings • Adapt • Appreciation Implement changes • Development, preparation • Understanding • Process • Realize • Reflect • Serving • Setting goals, strategize • Take time to re-adjust • Transfer • Contact person • Practical suggestions, tools • *Church: giving*

	• By supporting willingness of students • By including international experience (new perspective) • When students can transfer experiences gained • When students have stronger faith, new love for church • When students are able to work in teams • When students stay in church and contribute their gifts • By realizing lasting effects (social competencies, new perspectives) • When program nurtures Mennonite identity • When churches cooperate w/ programs Families, churches: • Should anticipate changes • Give freedom for new role in families, churches • Realize new experiences gained • Give freedom to pass on • Fan the flame, enthusiasm • No pressure • *Openness of church* • **Should offer evaluation** Students: • Are expected to adapt to reality again, to act in same old role • Are afraid of going back in old pattern, role • Need to realize changes, implement them • Need to re-adapt to same life style • Should process experience • Should apply what they have learned, realize and apply changes • Should reflect about "Think-home" questionnaire and process experiences • Should invest in ministry • Should set goals, develop strategies to implement changes • Should realize cultural differences • No pressure • *Should implement structure into his/her day and week* • *Should be aware that people at home have also changed* • <u>Should understand and apply what they have learned during the mission training, being able to transfer it into daily life</u> • <u>Should read through teaching notes, reflect about experiences gained</u> • <u>Have gained a wider horizon, a new perspective, should implement changes</u> • <u>Situation at home has changed, returnees need time to understand, process changes at home</u> • <u>Should bridge gap and share experiences to build understanding</u>	*returnee the chance to share and pass on experiences gained* • *Church is willing to integrate new things* • *Implement structure* • *Awareness* • *Ask for and accept help* • *Realize and reflect about cultural shifts* • Transfer • Process • Set goals • Organize daily life • <u>Process, understand</u> • <u>Implement changes</u> • <u>Take time</u> • <u>Reflect, read</u> • <u>Take up responsibility</u> • <u>Mentoring</u>

	• Personal tools to process things: teaching scripts, diary • Re-read teaching notes and apply knowledge • Deepen insights gained with by reading literature • Give things time to go deeper, to take hold • Take time, daydream • How to process things depends on personality • Think of how to fill time • Do not blame others when you cannot integrate experiences, you are responsible • See new possibilities • You have changed, be aware of necessary adjustments • Identify what you have learned • Time with God, spiritual relationship • God is still there at home • Letting go • Implement changes, realize transfer of experiences gained • Realize change, gain knowledge • Being able to discuss things, reason about things • Awareness that relationships change and need to be rebuilt • Take time to adapt and process things • Get help in a practical way • Students should ask and tell people what they need • Mentoring • Debriefing time with program • Have a framework to work in • Training had an impact in life • Program contents • Good preparation for return through debriefing time • Helpful elements • Some insights kept being important and were translated into daily life, others were lost • Better understanding of different cultures	• Structure life
Communication	Students: • Send prayer letters and pictures • Once at home, were willing to listen to what the people at home have experienced • Clarify expectations, share with those who have the same experience • Listen and share—fosters reflection. Sharing helps to notice and appreciate changes • Are interested in their experiences • Invest time with family, friends • Invest in relationship with God • Take time to talk with friends • Feel they are not being understood • *Student should keep in touch and take initiative* • *Student should take initiative and contact their contact person during debriefing week to make appointment*	• Appreciation • Clarification • Communication • Describe experiences • Feeling to belong • Listening • Mutual information • Mutual relationship • Processing • Reflection • Sharing • Understanding

	• **Communication (keep church [leadership] updated, visit with team)** • **Church expected good communication (report of new perspectives gained, things experienced)** • <u>Keep up communication during training and outreach</u> • <u>Sharing was the important means to process—nurtures reflection, brings things to the forefront</u> • <u>Time for sharing, reports</u> • <u>Expectations, openness to ask questions, discuss new perspectives</u> Contact persons: • Bridge gap • *Reading the "Get it! News" on the website, the team letter and keeping the church updated* • *Kept in touch with student during outreach* • *Invested in communication with program* • *Keeping congregation informed about the program* • *Returnees should share with church members* • *Clarification of expectations* • *Information* • *Communicate* • *Show interest, keep in touch* • *Communicate on a regular basis with student* • *Keep in touch with program* • *Program should involve church members* • *Clarify expectations* • *Bridge gap* • *Clarify expectations with student* • **Contact person organized the commissioning service in the home church, helping to bridge the gap between participant and congregation** • **Contact person informed the congregation on a regular basis** Home churches: • Should ask for more information about "Get it!" program • Send minutes, church news to student • Should know about "Get it!" curriculum and encourage members to reflect about and/or practice the same topics • Clarify expectations • Communicate on a regular basis with the "Get it!" participant • Ask participants about their expectations before they return home • Allow space for the returnees to share and find their place in the congregation again • **One-on-one talks with friends, in church** • **Church offered a task and place** • **Student reported in church** • **Evaluation (with church leadership, mission team)**	• Working together • *Sharing* • *Listening* • *Appreciation* • *Organizing the commissioning service in home church helped to bridge the gap between the participant and congregation* • *Kept in touch with program, fostered cooperation* • *Via contact person* • *Via email* • *Having a contact person with international experience* • *Program should provide those at home with necessary information* • *Program should help church to understand job requirements of a contact person* • *Teach returnees how to transfer experiences gained* • *Program should provide contact person with list of helpful questions to ask* • *Write emails and postcards to student* • *Keep church*

	• **Student had time to share** • **Receiving the team mail** • **Have ongoing communication with student** • **Should offer mentoring** • **Should give time to share** • **Have ongoing communication** • **Invest in relationships (invite, support student)** • **Offer ministry opportunities, share, know about expectations** Family, church: • Should take time to listen • Enjoy sharing • Appreciate experiences gained • *Church leadership, contact person should offer mentoring, evaluation* • *Evaluation* Program: • Informs church members about "Get it!" program before it starts; good communication is crucial • They should take time to listen and share • They should appreciate experiences gained • Help student being able to share • Help student to reflect about questions • *He/she was interested in others and their stories* • *Upon returning home, he/she had opportunities to share about his/her experiences* • *Sharing and evaluating with church leadership* • *Programs could provide contact persons with questions and checklist* • **Involve church in process, sharing and listening, learn about re-entry** • **Receiving a letter about re-entry from the "Get it!" leadership team before the student returned** • **Getting updates from the "Get it!" teams and/or the "Get it!" leadership team during the training** • **Should inform church about goals, outreach placements, experiences of students** • **Should provide church with tools for evaluation** • **Should clarify expectations** • **Should encourage students to keep in touch with church leadership and contact person**	*updated* • *Clarifying expectations from both program and student* • <u>Sharing</u> • <u>Clarify expectations</u> • **Mentoring** • **Sharing** • **Relationships** • Cooperation • Information • Sharing • evaluate
Cooperation	Church: • Working together with "Get it!" leadership team and help them better to understand returnees • **Cooperation (teach church about impact of mission experience, help them to understand, involve those with DTS experience)** • **Should cooperate with program** • **Communication (keep in touch during outreach)**	• Evaluation • Flow of information • Understanding • *Program should provide necessary information*

• Mentoring (help to process) • Evaluation (listen to returnees, involve them in church again) • Contact person (train, encourage them) • Cooperation (connect with families, programs) • Welcome • Cooperate with program Program: • Help church understand what the student is going through • *Program leadership should keep in touch with contact persons, help them understand what the student is going through* • *Program needs to be rooted in denomination* • *Program should encourage contact person* • Should communicate evaluation and report (share with church leadership about student's strengths, difficulties, experiences) • Re-entry (share with church leadership about possible re-entry symptoms) • Information (date of return, program contents, culture) Contact person: • Working together with family, friends, church before returning • Keep church updated • *Working together with family, friends, home church before returning* • *With church, family, friends* • *Missional perspective* • *Introduce church to program and its goals* • *Clarify expectations* • *Contact person should motivate church to support student* • *Network with other contact persons* • Communication (inform student and church members) • Clarify expectations • Initiative (plan actions, take time to organize, take tasks seriously) • Bridge gap Student: • *Choose a good contact person* • Visit from a "Get it!" team helped the congregation better to understand what discipleship training is about • Should take initiative • Should involve in church • Should accept support • Communication • Taking initiative, connecting with others • Involvement in church (transfer experiences gained) • Accept support offered	• *Awareness of congregation that they have a mission to fulfill* • *Evaluation* • *Flow of information* • *Student who does mission trip is an agent of the church* • *Program leaders connect with church leadership* • *Program gives job description and a checklist* • *Partnership between church and program* • *Discipleship training should take place in church*

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	• **Communicate (report and evaluate with church)**	
Initiative	Student: • Should take initiative • Address yourself to task, plan goals, get engaged in church • Self-awareness, motivation • Have a positive perspective • Willingness of students; *show interest in others* • *Take initiative to re-connect with people* • *Meet with student before outreach*	• Positive perspective • Self-awareness • *Nurture spirituality* • *Get involved in church again*
International experience	• *Understood how student felt, gave prayer support, encouragement*	• Own experience
Missional perspective	Church: • Is sent by God • Church fosters mission • Church members see themselves as God's agents in this world	• Missional understanding
Re-entry stress	Church: • Some members of the congregation could learn about re-entry by reading about re-entry symptoms • Should react patiently to the returnee's (sometimes provocative) ideas • Should learn about re-entry stress symptoms and be prepared to react helpful • **Learn about re-entry (symptoms, how to re-integrate)** • **Learning about re-entry at the "Get it!" program's visitor's day during training phase** • **Should know about re-entry** Student: • Re-entry/debriefing with "Get it!" program provided helpful information • Should learn about culture stress, use tools already learned • Should get teachings from team leader • Should know how to deal with re-entry • Should learn how to deal with post-traumatic effects • Should let go of past • Should learn how to deal with faith in crisis, with failure • *Re-entry/debriefing time informed him/her about possible re-entry stress symptoms* Contact person: • Should read a recommended book about re-entry before the student returns • *Read a book about re-entry* • *Was able to understand feelings because of own experience* • *Received information from program* • *Help those at home to understand what re-entry stress is all about*	• How to deal with re-entry stress • Information • Knowing how to deal with re-entry stress • Knowing, use ritual to grief loss • Practical suggestions • Program helps to process and let go, develop • Program should teach, inform students and those at home about possible re-entry symptoms • Sensitivity • Understanding • *Contact persons should read a recommended book about re-entry before the student returns* • *Awareness that reactions might*

	• *Help returnees to develop life perspective* • *Help returnees to deal with re-entry symptoms* Programs: • Inform those at home about possible symptoms, feelings and re-culture shock • Should inform about outreach, place, culture • Should encourage all parties involved to read a book about re-entry stress • Should give students practical suggestions of what to expect during re-entry (emotions, thoughts, behaviours and ways to deal with these things) • **Re-entry/debriefing informed the participant about possible re-entry stress symptoms** Family, friends: • Should know about possible re-entry symptoms • Have patience	*be different, depend on personality* • *Offer help to deal with re-entry symptoms* • *Listen to returnee* • *Prayer support* • *Teach returnees* • *Encourage returnees to return to church and get involved* • *Prepare returnees for real life*
Relationships	Student: • Had strong relationship with church before mission trip • Should keep in touch with church • Should invest in ongoing (new) relationships • Should keep in touch with team, program leadership, alumni • Need to know how to re-build relationships • Misses friends from outreach • Misses team • Has accountable relationships • Invests in relationships • Organizes meetings with contact person • *Has established and strong relationships in church* • *Being mentored* • **Accept help (how to deal with re-entry, with problems)** • **Ongoing contact (with alumni, contact person, church)** • <u>Stay in touch with alumni/team</u> • <u>Keep in touch with people from outreach</u> • <u>Students hardly mention partners, spouses (most of them are single)</u> • <u>Rebuild relationships after return</u> • <u>Knowing that old friends still like me</u> • <u>Experience things together</u> • <u>Intense relationships endure</u> • <u>Use new context (new job, study)</u> • <u>Find a way to belong again, have a ritual to be initiated again</u> • <u>Welcome party organized by family and friends</u> Program: • Should hear from alumni, learn their experiences • **Should invite church to visit and observe program activities**	• Accountability • Appreciation • Awareness • Bridge gap • Challenge • Encouragement • Feeling of belonging • Investing in relationships • Mutual updating • Ongoing contact • Ongoing relationship • Understanding • *Reconnect with friends* • *Mentoring* • *Professional help*

	• <u>Should offer follow-up meetings, seminars, contact</u> Church: • *Members kept in touch with and updated students* • *Should organize welcome party and offer a warm welcome to returnees* • *Some members should visit and observe during the "Get it!" training phase* • *Some members should participate in the program's visitor's day during the training phase* • **Appreciation (student was listened to, able to contribute new perspectives)** • **Strong relationship between student and church members** • **Having a contact person was a helpful tool** • **Church showed interest, kept in touch, listened** • **Welcome party** • **Invest in relationships (give prayer support)** • **Some members of our congregation were able to experience the "Get it!" program's visitor's day during the training phase** • **The participant had a strong relationship with the congregation before participating in "Get it!" program** • **Invest in relationships (invite, support student)** • **Should offer warm welcome** • <u>In house churches, everyone is part of the whole and takes on responsibility</u> • <u>Room to share, knowing from one another, caring for one another</u> • <u>Churches need a new awareness to develop a new paradigm</u> • <u>Churches too often start a lot of ministries, people are absorbed and have no energy and time to invent new things</u> • <u>Church is a community and should live in community</u> • <u>How do churches show appreciation for a new perspective? Too often, they only reward normative behaviour</u> • <u>To have accountable relationships so that they can help returnees integrate experiences gained, especially after some months at home</u> • <u>Talk about topics in small groups, develop experiences gained, help to keep things alive</u> • <u>Have models to learn from</u> • <u>Have people who are willing to open up</u> • <u>Learn from others</u> • <u>Bridge gap and share experiences to build understanding</u> • <u>Being responsible for each other, caring</u> • <u>Church should take time, listen, invite returnees to share</u>	• *Visited student during training phase* • *Mentoring* • *Inviting the "Get it!" team to visit home congregation during training phase* • *Contact persons should participate in "Get it!" visitor's day* • *Contact persons should also visit the "Get it!" training in the second third of training phase to get to know the "Get it!" teams and leadership, to learn about program, and to talk with student face to face* • *Contact persons should participate in "Get it!" debriefing week in June*

experiences
- Implementation depends on situation in church
- Discuss different culture of faith
- Clarify own position with church
- Rebuild relationships after return
- Good communication
- Do not judge, but try to understand
- Offer mentoring
- Help translate experiences gained into daily life
- Congregation should understand what a mission program is all about, encourage young persons to participate
- Educate young people, support financially, feel greater ownership
- Keep up communication during training and outreach

Family, friends, church:
- Should show interest
- Should offer warm welcome
- Should help with job, place to live, etc.
- Keep in touch with those at home via email. They were able to understand where student came from

Contact person:
- Can inform the church about possible re-entry symptoms before participant returns home
- The "Get it!" team should visit the home congregation during the training phase
- Contact persons should participate in the "Get it!" visitor's day
- Contact persons should also visit the "Get it!" training in the second third of training phase to get to know the "Get it!" teams and leadership, to learn about the program dynamics, to talk with the student face-to-face
- Contact person should have international experience
- Contact person should take initiative
- Taking time to listen, share, mentor
- *Having a strong relationship before outreach*
- *Listening to returnee*
- *Take time to share with returnee*
- *Keep in touch*
- *Show support*
- *Establish a relationship with student before outreach*
- *Program should introduce contact person to mission goals and means*
- *Contact person should be willing to mentor student for a long time, foster accountability*
- **He/she kept in touch with "Get it!" alumni**
- Keep up ongoing relationship with contact person
- Contact person was able to share joy and sorrows
- Close relationship with contact person
- Contact person was interested in discipleship, maturity

	• <u>Helped to sort things out, mutual sharing</u> • <u>Contact person communicated with congregation, gave a rough update that helped people to understand</u>	
Spirituality	Student: • Should be involved and develop experiences in a small group • Should invest in spirituality • Should trust in God, fan the flame, nurture identity in God • Should write diary • Should discuss next steps with God, seek His will • Should get involved with helping underprivileged people • **Initiative (ongoing relationship with God, development)** • **Mature spirituality** Program: • Should organize worship times • Encouragement • *He/she took initiative in practicing spiritual disciplines*	• Encouragement • Implementation • Ministry • Development • Prayer • Reflection • Small groups • *Prayer, Bible reading, serving others, silent retreats*
Support	Church: • Should offer the returnee time for prayer, reflection and sharing • Financial support • Gifted and willing members can offer to work with the "Get it!" program and thus help to bridge gap between the program and congregation (growing ownership) • Should support participation in program • Should encourage and prepare young people to participate in the "Get it!" program • *Prayer support* • *Understanding* • *Share responsibilities* • *Student should take initiative* • **Some members of our congregation were supportive of the student because they have experienced a DTS themselves and/or have lived abroad** • <u>Giving prayer support</u>	• Participation • Appreciation • *Congregation could give support* • *Student needs to keep in touch*
Structure, schedule, life perspective	Student: • Developing life perspective • Organize daily life again • Setting goals, implementing changes • Having a structured schedule and weekly tasks at home • Learn how to deal with challenges in daily life • Develop life perspective • Develop routine, setting priorities • Realize and apply changes • Plan career • Organize life again • Find a job, earn money • Organize your life	• Routine • Life perspective • Job, task • Program teaches how to deal with changes • Practical suggestions how to implement changes into daily life

	• Develop life perspective • Student find it hard because of lack of daily structure • Find routine • **He/she implemented structure into his/her day and week** • <u>Give daily life a structure again</u> • <u>Organize daily life</u> • <u>Set goals, structure daily life</u> • <u>Plan future, next steps</u> • <u>Student's initiative and willingness is important</u> • <u>Find a new task</u> • <u>Give life new meaning, get involved in ministry againStart anew, reflect on what you want and where you want to involve yourself</u> • <u>New sense of life</u> • <u>Discern without pressure</u> • <u>Set priorities</u> • <u>To evaluate what I want, where I want to contribute my gifts</u> • <u>Take your time; get involved again, but no pressure</u> • <u>Get involved again, but take no leadership</u> • <u>Feeling to belong</u> • <u>What do I have to do, organize?</u>	
Time	Student: • Take time with God • Have patience with myself and others • Develop a new framework • Debriefing time • Time to process • Time to be • Take time to re-adjust • Take time off • **Student had time to adjust** Church: • Should give returnees their necessary time to come back home and re-adjust • Do not overwhelm returnees • Realize that adaptation needs time • **He/she was given time to return and feel at home again. He/she took his/her time before returning to his/her workplace** • Give student time to adjust Programs: • Communicate that students need time to adjust • Give practical information (date of return) • Provide time to relax during debriefing • Provide time to process during debriefing • *Knowing that adjustment needs time* • *He/she was given time to return and feel at home again.*	• Developing new beliefs, behaviours • Realizing changes • Time • Understanding • *Awareness* • *Planning* • *Give time to reflect* • *Put no pressure on returnees, but give space, time to adjust* • *Give returnees opportunities to serve and try new roles* • *Contact person needs good time management skills* • *Invest in relationship with student*

	He/she took his/her time before returning to his/her workplace Contact person: • *Contact person needs to manage his/her time and tasks* • *Have good understanding of job requirements as a contact person* • *Make room to be a good contact person* • *Contact person needs to be aware of importance of job (time-consuming)*	
Understandi ng	Contact person: • *Mentor returnee's process of re-integration* • *Should balance accountability and freedom* • *Contact person should have international experience* • **Read the "Get it! News"** • **Being generally informed about the "Get it!" program helped to support the student** Student: • **Sensibility (understand different opinions)** • Search for persons with same experiences, openness Churches: • **Should have those with global experience** • **Should have serving attitude** • **Communicate expectations** • **Be aware of different cultural perspectives** • **Build familiarity with "Get it!" program** • **Offer support** • **Missional perspective**	• *Learn about different cultures*

Table A.15.2. Responsibilities in Communication

Communication	Goals	Means
Student to home church	To keep in touch	Mutual information on a regular basis
	Understanding	Sending prayer letters
	Feeling of belonging	Investing in relationships
	Focus is on kingdom of God, not student	Showing interest in others
		Talking about expectations
	Appreciation	Taking time to listen upon return
Home church to student	Understanding	Prayer, financial support
	Keeping in touch	Mutual information on a regular basis (news, reports, minutes, etc.)
	Openness	Taking initiative
		Invest in relationships
		Giving room to share after return, taking time to listen

		Realizing, discussing different cultures, worship styles
	Processing experiences	Offer mentoring
	Sending church	Missional understanding
		Clarifying expectations
		Evaluation post-return and discussion of how student can be involved in ministry
	Ongoing information	Contact person

Table A.15.3. Example of Axial Coding
All data was checked for content themes and noted according to identifiers and topics.

Identifiers f/m; year → ↓ Content themes	THHTN 37, f, 09-10	DSKTN77, m, 05-06	Etc.
Mentoring, support, encouragement (from contact person, friends, family, church)	1 2	2	
1. Share stories and experiences	3	3	
2. Accountable relationship	4		
3. Know about re-entry symptoms	5	4	
4. Information	6		
5. Keep congregation updated	7	6	
6. Help to process experiences	8		
7. Help to design future and to enact steps	9		
8. Find place to engage and belong	10	9	
9. Give time and space to arrive	11		
10. Taking initiative, keep in touch	12		
11. Visitor's day			
12. Collaboration of contact person, family, friends, church			
Missionaries/students should:	1	2	
1. Evaluate experiences as a team	2	3	
2. Process experiences, learn to let go	4	4	
3. Invest in relationship with God	5	6	
4. Note what became important in program experience	6	7	
5. Built close relationship with contact person	7	8	
6. Show interest in experiences of those who stayed home	8	11	
7. Keep in touch with team	9	12	
8. Take some time off	10	14	
9. Being structured, developing structures	11		
10. Keep those at home informed	12		
11. Find a place and task to engage in	13		
12. Learn about re-entry symptoms	14		
13. Keep in touch with those at home			
14. Take your time upon return home			
Programs, organizations should:	1	1	
1. Inform about re-entry symptoms	2	2	
2. Offer time for re-entry	3	3	
3. Help process experiences and translate them into daily life	4	7	
4. Help to find a contact person and to define relationship	5	10	
5. Keep congregations informed	6	12	
6. Help to built up a network	7		
7. Offer a visitor's day	8		
8. Keep in touch and check in with alumni	9		
9. Offer one-to-one talks	10		
10. Offer follow-up meetings	11		
11. Motivate alumni via emails			
12. Offer or organize coaching			
Students' expectations:	2		
1. Mentoring	3		
2. People will welcome them, show interest in experiences	4	4	
3. Given room to share	5	5	
4. Offer place to engage	6	7	
5. Give time to process things	7	8	
6. Help to find place	8		

7. Spiritual discipline 8. Help to translate experiences gained 9. Initiative from churches	9		
Role of home churches 1. Keep in touch with students 2. Nurture mission and vision 3. Support students (prayer) 4. Commissioning 5. Welcome returnees 6. Mentoring 7. Evaluation 8. Practical help 9. Know about re-entry symptoms 10. Give time to process 11. Give room to share, do not overwhelm 12. Encourage 13. Know program contents 14. Communicate expectations	1 3 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	1 3 4 8 9 11 12 14	
Contact person should 1. Collaborate with family, friends, church 2. Organize a visit in church for the team 3. Keep the church updated 4. Experience the visitor's day 5. Know and learn about re-entry 6. Keep in touch, encourage, mentor		1 3 5	

Appendix 16
Process of Analysis: Responses from Alumni, Contact Persons, Home Churches and
Interviewees

Table 5.2.1. in Chapter 5 gives an example how the researcher dealt with

raw data (arrows show the steps of analysis). In Appendix 16, this process of

generating Charts is shown using data from all four data groups, as an example.

All data have been analyzed in the same manner. Those Charts which have not

been used in Chapter 5 are displayed here to present a full account of the findings.

Alumni/returnees responded in questionnaires
Table A.16.1. Alumni: What deepened experiences after return?

Q.1. Alumni: What was important in deepening your "Get it!" experiences—immediately after you returned, as well as once you settled down again?	Not import ant at all	Importa nt	Crucial	No respons e	Total
1a. Mentoring	6	34	37	9	86
1b. Continue with spiritual discipline(s), such as:	2	13	5	66	86
1b1. Reading the Bible	13	40	27	6	86
1b2. Prayer	4	32	43	7	86
1b3. Meditation, silence	13	30	34	9	86
1b4. Serving	16	43	16	11	86
1b5. Other	7	9	6	48	86
1c. Find a place or role in church (again)	19	36	23	8	86
1d. Listen to others, take interest in others	6	47	27	6	86
1e. Room to share	7	33	42	4	86
1f. Keep in touch with "Get it!" alumni	16	34	32	4	86
1g. Taking off time before returning to employment or studies	30	26	27	3	86
1h. Structure	36	31	18	1	86
1i. Know about possible re-entry symptoms	19	36	29	2	86

Important and crucial is:
n   86
To invest in spirituality   86
Good communication   74   led to Chart A.16.1.
To be mentored   71
To rebuild relationships   66
To deal with re-entry stress   65

Chart A.16.1. Alumni: Following your return, what contributed to deepening the experiences you learned/gained?

Q.1. Alumni (n=86): Crucial means to deepen change after return
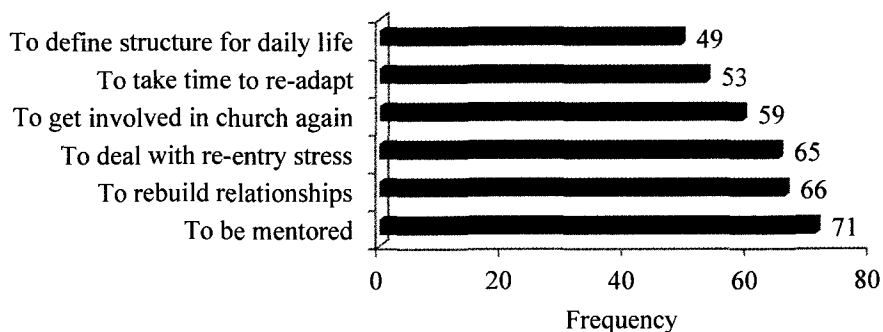
Chart A.16.2. Alumni: The role of a week of debriefing

Q. 2. "Get it!" alumni (n=86) think that a week of debriefing right after returning from outreach helped to transfer experiences gained
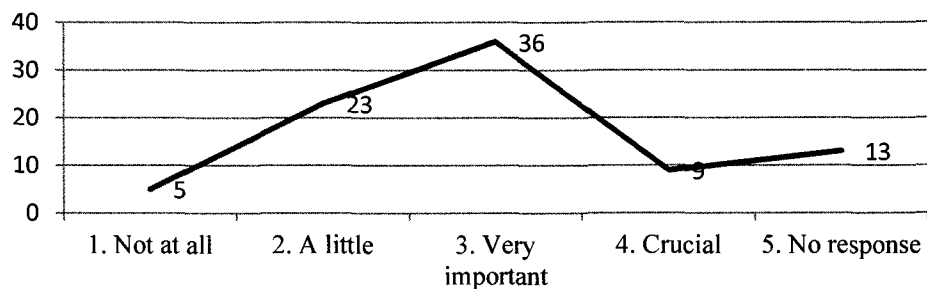
Chart A.16.3. Alumni: Integration in home churches

Q.5. Alumni (n=86): How well returnees felt integrated back into their home church

■ Female ▨ Male
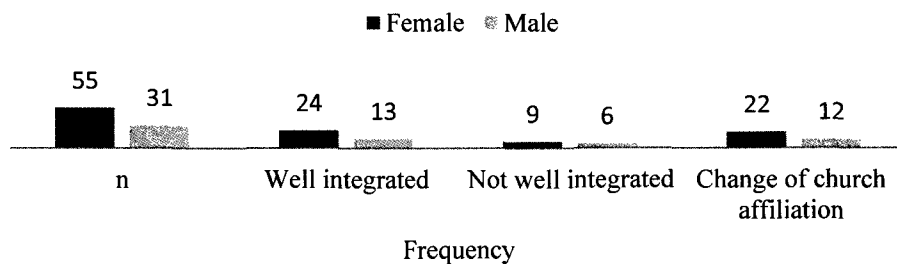
Chart A.16.4. Alumni: Reasons for church affiliation

Q.5. Alumni (n=86): Reasons for change of church affiliation
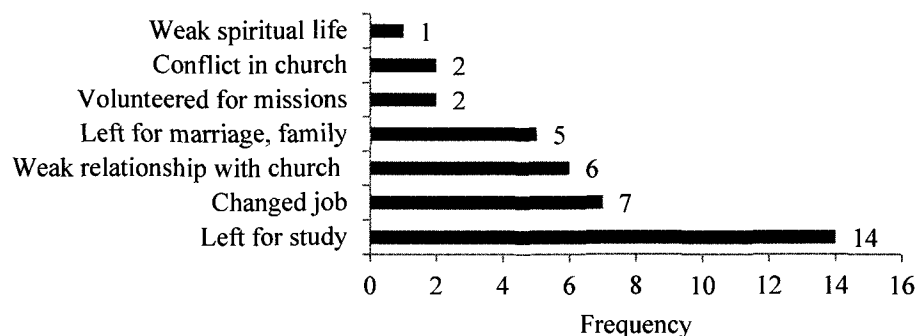
Table A.16.2. Question 6. Alumni (n=86): What was important in helping you to reintegrate and have a good return (in relation to your home church)?

	Most important	1 Not important	2 Helpful	3 Important	4 Crucial and decisive	5 No response	Total
6a. The commissioning service in my home church helped bridge the gap between the congregation and myself and helped them better understand what I was doing	28	3	11	25	31	6	86
6b. Some members of our congregation were able to experience the "Get it!" visitor's day during the training phase	4	13	28	22	9	14	86
6c. My congregation was able to read the "Get it! News" at http://az.bienenberg.ch/.	2	28	28	14	4	12	86
6d. The congregation received a letter about re-entry from the "Get it!" leadership team before I returned home	5	11	14	30	11	20	86
6e. The congregation was kept updated by the "Get it!" teams and/or "Get it!" leadership team during the training	13	7	23	32	14	10	86

6f. Some members of the congregation kept in touch with me during my training phase and during my outreach experience	23	5	12	26	34	9	86
6g. The congregation received the team's correspondence	12	6	20	32	18	10	86
6h. Some members of our congregation were supportive to me because they had experienced a DTS themselves and/or had lived abroad	15	9	11	28	26	12	86
6i. The congregation offered support and encouragement	18	7	17	32	24	6	86
6j. The congregation offered prayer support	30	1	5	29	39	12	86
6k. I had a strong relationship with my church before I left for the "Get it!" program	7	2	12	24	38	10	86
6l. Some members of our congregation were able to experience the "Get it!" visitor's day during the training phase and listened to a presentation about re-entry symptoms	4	20	19	20	12	15	86

Students felt the home church was crucial and important in helping them to reintegrate and have a good return when

n	86
Church organized commissioning service and welcome party	66
Relationship was strong	62
Some members kept in touch with student	60
Church gave encouragement, prayer support	56
Those w/ same exp kept in touch	54
Church was kept updated by all parties	50
Program informed church about	
Re-entry stress	41
Understanding came from church members	
who learned about re-entry stress	32
Church members visited during training	31
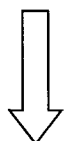
Led to Chart A.16.5.

Chart A.16.5. Alumni: The role of the home church for re-integration

Q.6. Alumni (n= 86) felt the home church was crucial and important in helping them to reintegrate and have a good return when
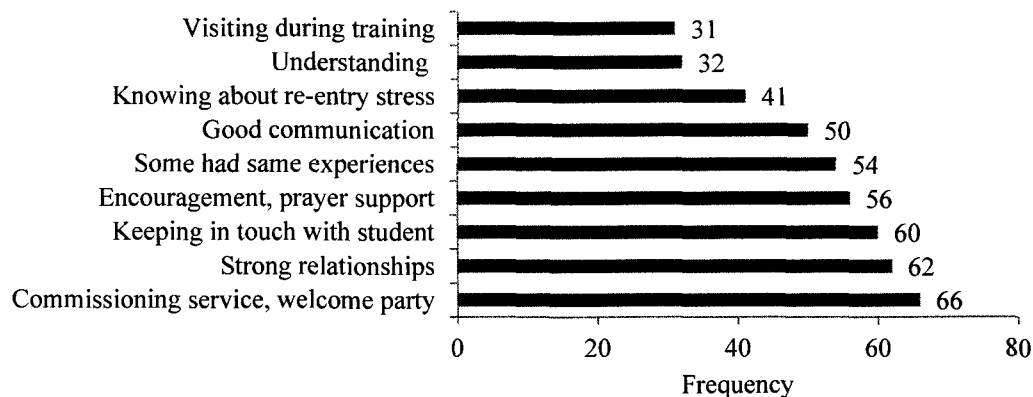
Table A.16.3. Question 6. Alumni (n=86): What was important in helping students to reintegrate and have a good return in relation to the home church?

Context	Means	Goals
Communication (23)	Mutual information on a regular basis	
Student to home church	Sending prayer letters	Keeping in touch understanding
	Investing in relationships (15)	Feeling to belong
	Showing interest in others (5)	Focus is on kingdom of God, not student
	Talking about expectations	
	Taking time to listen upon return	Appreciation
	Mutual information on a regular basis (news, reports, minutes, etc.)	Keeping in touch
Home church to student	Prayer, financial support	Understanding
	Initiative	Openness
	Investing in relationships (15)	
	Giving room to share upon return, taking time to listen	
	Realizing and discussing different cultures, worship styles	
	Offering mentoring (3)	Processing experiences
	Missional understanding	Sending church (6)
	Clarifying expectations	
	Evaluating post-return and discussing how student can be involved in ministry (6)	
	Contact person	Ongoing information

Table A.16.4. Alumni (n=86): How to establish a sense of belonging within the home church

Some verbal explanatory responses	# of all given responses	Codes	Expectations towards	Categories	Rank of categories	# of
Set goals after the short-term mission trip	2	Goal	Student	Future	Structure	41
					Time	47
					Re-entry symptoms	52
Take time to debrief and process	2	Time process	Student, those at home, church	Evaluation/time	Contact alumni	59
					Involvement	54
					Listening	60
Sharing	1	Sharing	Those at home	Communication	Spirituality	62
					Sharing	71
Knowing about re-entry symptoms	2	Re-entry symptoms	Student, those at home, church	Learning	Mentoring	77
					Led to Chart A.9.6.	
Realizing changes	2	Change	Student	Change management		

Chart A.16.6. Alumni: How to establish a sense of belonging within church

Q.7. Returnees (n=86) How to establish a sense of belonging within church

Having a structured schedule	41
Taking time to adapt	47
Being informed about re-entry stress	52
Getting involved in church	54
Ongoing contact with alumni	59
Listening to the stories of others	60
Being initiative in practising spirituality	62
Being able to share	71
Being mentored	77

Frequency
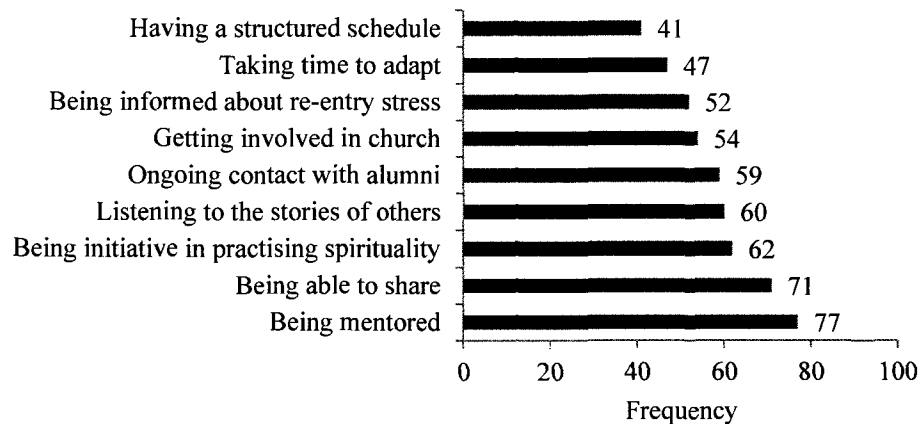
Chart A.16.7. Alumni: Focus of subsequent churches

Q.8. Returnees (n=86) think that it is important and crucial for re-integration that subsequent home churches focus on:

Focus	Frequency
Visiting during training	30
Asking for information about program	39
Clarifying expectations	41
Mentoring	42
Support contact person	44
Support contact person	44
Communicating on a regular basis	55
Offering warm welcome	57
Learning about re-entry stress	57
Financial support	61
Offering prayer, time to share	61
Giving students time to re-adjust	68
Encouraging students to enroll in program	71

Frequency
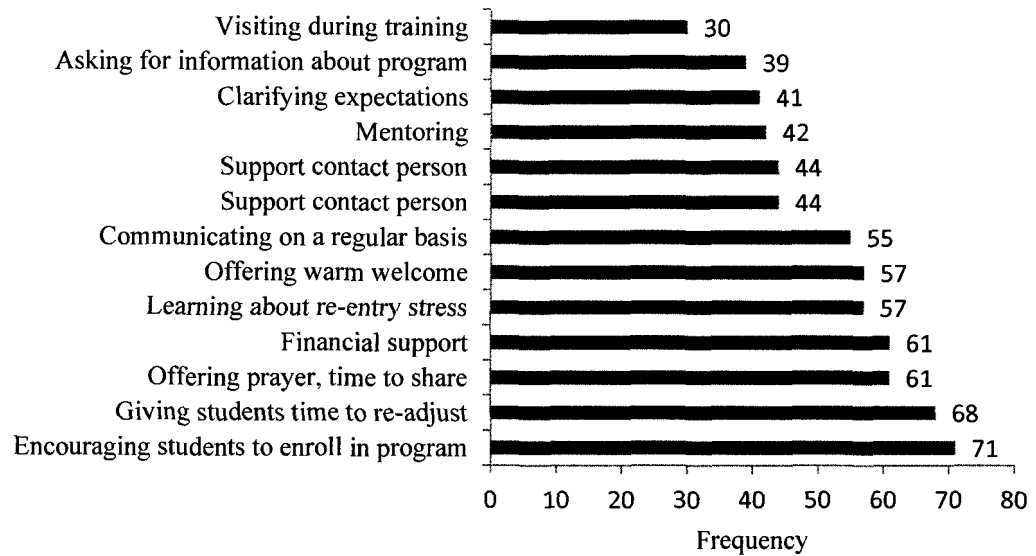
Chart A.16.8. Alumni: Focus of subsequent contact persons

Q.9. Alumni (n=86) think subsequent contact persons should focus on:

Focus	Frequency
Participating in debrief week	34
Working together with family, friends	47
Knowing about re-entry stress	50
Keeping church informed	51
Visiting during training	54
Working together with church	55

Frequency
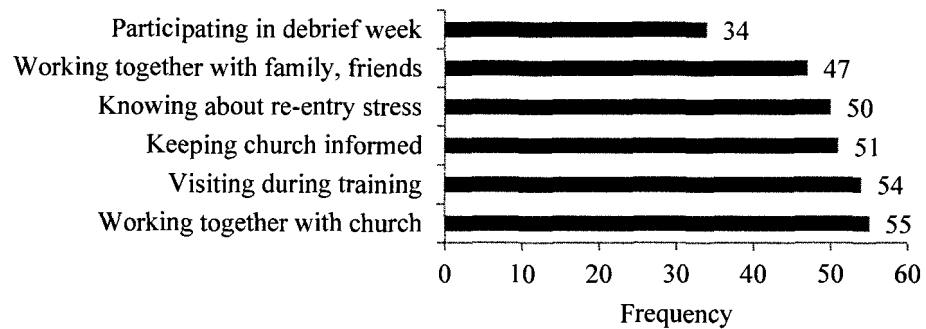
Out of 86 alumni, 52 of them agreed to prepare for re-entry during pre-departure, 34 did not agree.

Chart A.16.9. Alumni: Preparing during training phase

Q.10. + 11. Alumni (n=86) suggest that students prepare for the return during the training phase by:

	Frequency
Setting priorities	7
Developing a perspective for life	13
Investing in relationships	14
Planning daily life	15
Keeping in touch with church	21
Getting teachings from team leaders	27
Learning about toools to deal with re-..	85
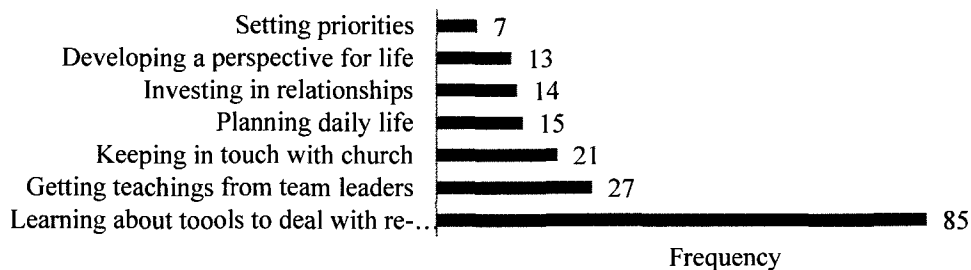
Chart A.16.10. Alumni: Most helpful for integration

Q.15 Returnees (n=86) think most helpful for re-integration was.:

	Frequency
Developing a new framework	4
Mentoring	4
Investing in relationship with God	8
Knowing about re-entry	8
Taking on new responsibilities	17
Good communication	19
Being understood	22
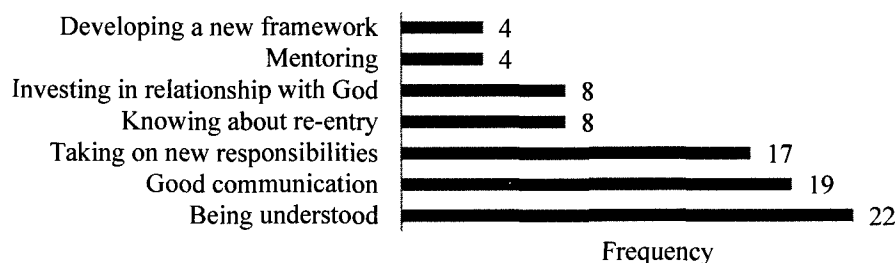
Table A.16.5. Alumni: Most helpful tools: Means and goals

Q.15. Returnees (n=86) said: Most helpful for re-integration was:		
Categories	**Means**	**Goals**
Time (34)		
Students	Silence	Time with God
	Alone	Processing exp.
	Take time off before going back to job or studies	To relax, to re-adjust, to settle down again
	Processing	To grieve, letting go
Ongoing (new) relationships (34)	To meet with and listen to friends, with same intl.exp.	Rebuild relationships, keep one another updated, re-integrate
	Investing in family	Re-building relationships, keeping one another updated
	Keeping in touch with team	Processing
	Investing in spiritual relationships	Spiritual growth
	Sharing life with friends and church members	Community
	Accountable relationships,	Feeling of belonging,

	mentoring	encouragement, structure
	Keeping in touch with program	Investing in new generation, missional understanding
	With God: prayer, reflection, small group	Spiritual growth, taking over responsibility in church
Understanding (22)	Meeting with those who have same experiences	Sharing
	Having time to adjust	No pressure
	Welcome party	Feeling of belonging
	Mutual listening	
	Learning about re-entry symptoms: debriefing time, reading a book	Dealing with re-entry
	Freedom, taking one's time	
	New framework, setting priorities	New role(s), implementing changes
Task assigned (17)	New job, study	Structure
	Involvement in church	Feeling of belonging, dealing with emptiness

Chart A.16.11. Alumni: Biggest challenge

Q.16. Returnees thought the biggest challenge for re-integration was:
(n=86, multiple answers possible)
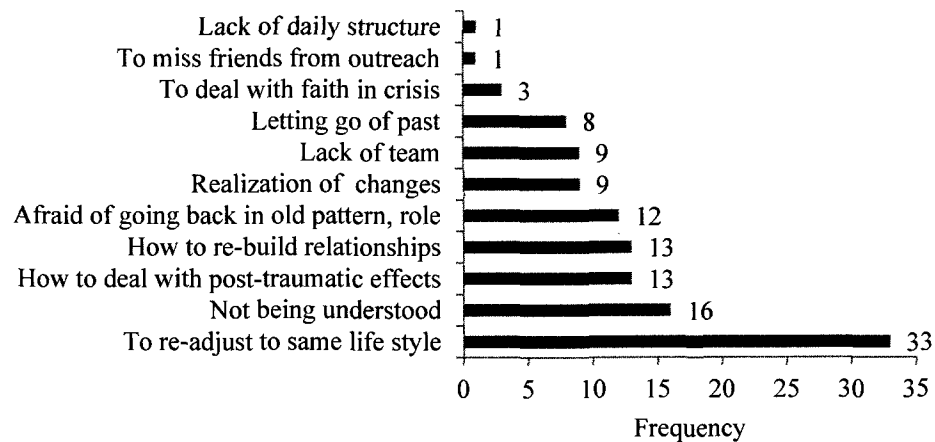
Chart A.16.12. Alumni: Possible improvement in week of debriefing

Q.17 & 18: Returnees (n= 86) thought that the one week of debriefing could be improved:

Category	Frequency
By inspiring student's life perspective	1
By an urban plunge	1
By discussing a possible clash of cultures	2
Family, friends, contact person participate	4
By helping students to find structure	7
When students have more time alone	9
By having a short and intense debriefing	10
By offering mentoring	11
By having more discussions than input	13
When students can evaluate with team	16
Was very helpful, no changes needed	18

Frequency

Chart A.16.13. Alumni: Most helpful in debriefing week

Q.20. Returnees (n=86) think that these topics were most helpful during debriefing time:

Category	Frequency
Time to relax	2
Worship times	5
Having time to process	13
Becoming aware of changes	16
Being able to share	16
Learn about possible re-entry symptoms	34

Frequency
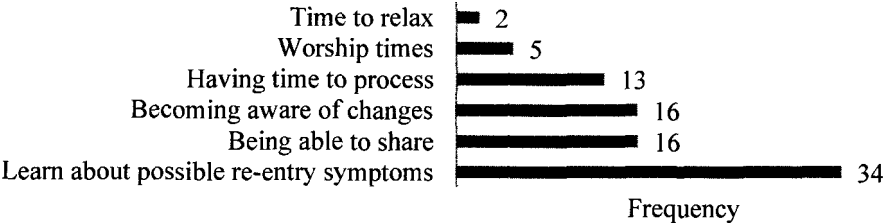
Chart A.16.14. Alumni: How all data groups might do better?

25 a-d. Suggestions made by returnees (n= 86) how all parties involved might do better:

	No response	Sharing	Support/mentoring	Openness	Involve student	Take initiative	Know about re-entry	Bridge gap	Relationship
Programs could do better	66		3			1			8
Contact persons could do better	39		6			12	5	7	6
Returnees could do better	42		1		2	21			
Home churches could do better	46	9	7	3	4				
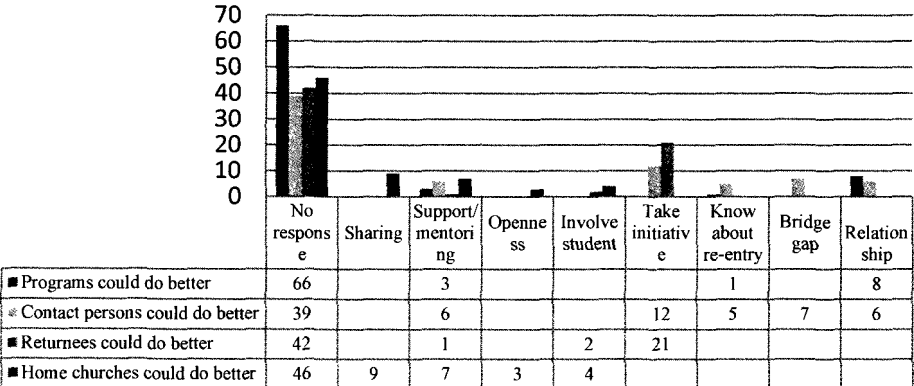
Contact persons answered in questionnaires

Table A.16.6. Contact persons (n= 35): Crucial to deepen change

Some verbal explanatory responses	# of all given responses	Categories	Rank of categories # of	
Being able to share	32	Communication	Communication	32
			Relationships	70
Being mentored	30	Relationships	Spirituality	28
Nurturing spirituality	28	Spirituality	Time	26
Taking time to adjust to normal life again	26	Time	Involvement	24
			Structure	24
Getting involved in church	24	Involvement	Change management	23
			Re-entry symptoms	21
Structuring daily life	24	Structure		
Being aware of changes	23	Change	Led to Chart A.16.15.	
Being interested in others	22	Relationships		
Knowing about re-entry symptoms	21	Re-entry symptoms		
Keeping in touch with alumni	18	Relationships		

Chart A.16.15. Contact persons: Crucial to deepen change

Q.3. Contact persons (n=35) thought that these means were crucial for returnees in deepening the transformation they experienced:
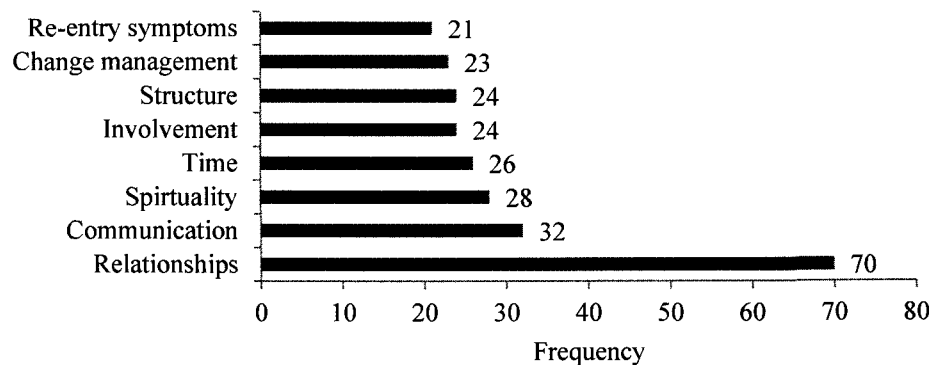
Chart A.16.16. Contact persons: Important aspects for re-integration

Q.5. Contact persons (n=35) felt these aspects were important and crucial
for them to help with reintegration:

Aspect	Frequency
Visiting during training phase	14
Knowing about re-entry stress	14
Having international experience	19
Organizing commissiong	20
Keeping church updated	20
Sharing, encouragement	22
Ongoing communication with student	28
Having strong relationship before outreach	29
Giving prayer support	31

Frequency
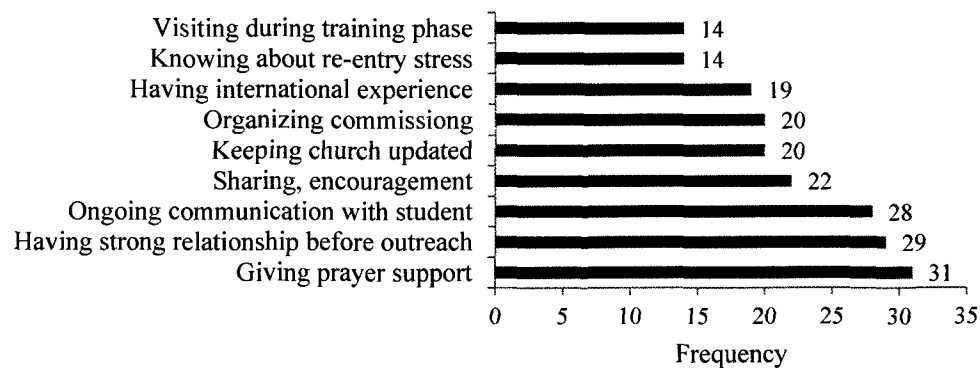
Church leadership answered in questionnaires
Chart A.16.17. Church leadership: Helpful for re-integration

Q.2. Home churches (n=29) felt they were helpful for reintegration of
returnees because of the following reasons:

Reason	Frequency
Student had time to share	1
Church offered a task and place	4
Evaluation (with church leadership, mission team)	5
Relationships (church showed interest, kept in touch, listened)	10
Communication (student reported in church)	17

Frequency
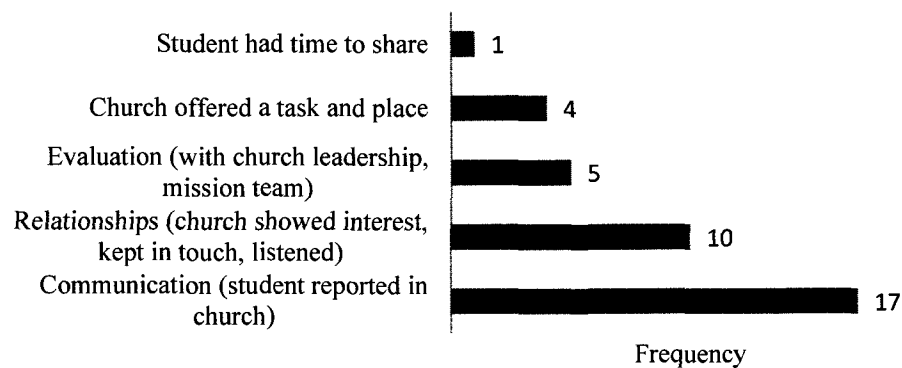
Chart A.16.18. Church leadership: Crucial to find a place again

Q.3. Church leadership thought these things crucial for returnees trying
to find their place in congregation again:

Being mentored	Being able to share	Serving in church	Knowing about re-entry	Nurturing spirituality
25	22	22	18	16

Frequency
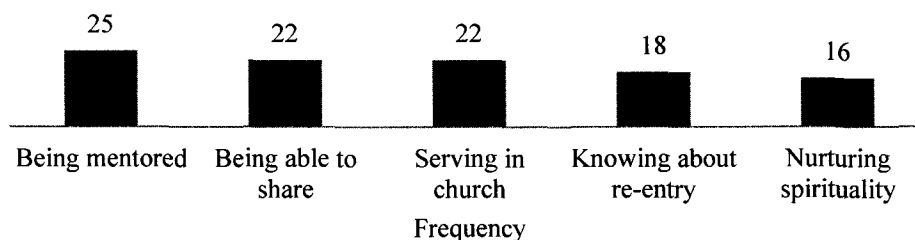
Chart A.16.19. Church leadership: helpful aspects during re-integration

Q.4. Church leadership (n=29) felt the following aspects where helpful for supporting returnees during reintegration:

Aspect	Frequency
Learn about re-entry (symptoms, how to re-integrate)	12
Cooperation (teach church about impact of mission experience, help them to understand, involve those with DTS experience gained)	26
Invest in relationships (give prayer support)	27
Communication (keep church [leadership] updated, visit with team)	36

Frequency
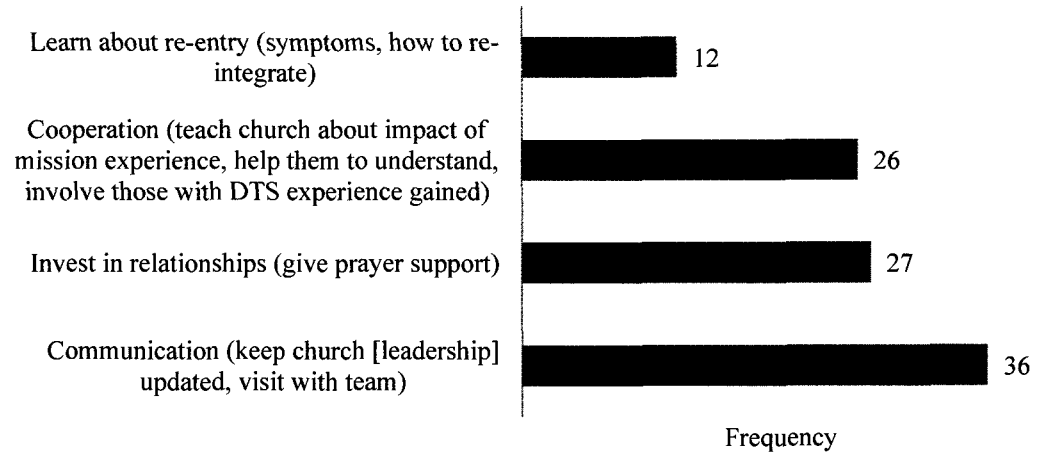
Chart A.16.20. Church leadership: Expectations towards returnees

Q.5. Church leadership (n=29) expected returnees to do these things:

Expectation	Frequency
Take time to adjust	2
Sensibility (understand different opinions)	2
Mature spirituality	2
Initiative (ongoing relationship with God, development of new experiences)	2
Good communication (report of new perspectives gained, experiences made)	6
Accountability (during, after outreach with church)	7
Transfer of new perspective, insights, motivate others, being active in church, bring in gifts)	25

Frequency

Chart A.16.21. Church leadership: Knowing about expectations

Q. 6. Church leadership (n=29) thought that returnees knew about expectations:

Frequency
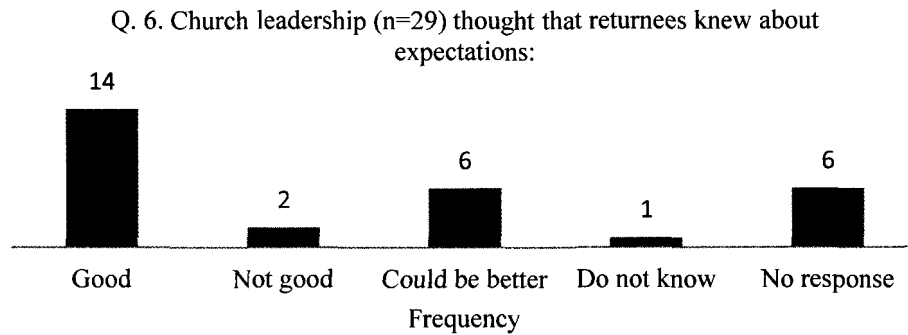
Chart A.16.22. Church leadership: Churches can contribute

Q.7. Church leadership (n=29) thought that home churches might better contribute to a good re-integration when they:

Frequency
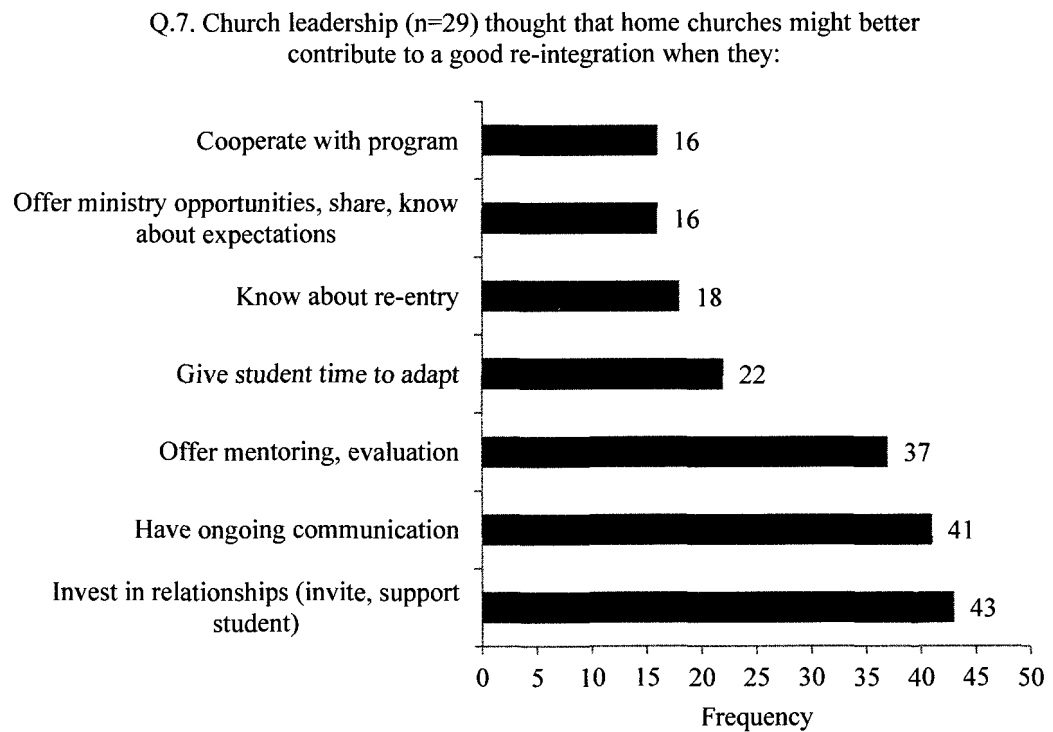
Chart A.16.23. Church leadership: Programs could do better

Q.8. To help returnees to re-integrate, church leadership (n=29)
suggested that programs leadership could:

Category	Frequency
Clarify expectations	1
Invite them for visits	1
Inform about goals, outreach placements, experiences of students	3
Provide them with tools for evaluation	4
No need	4
Keep in touch with church leadership and contact person	5
No responses	11

Frequency
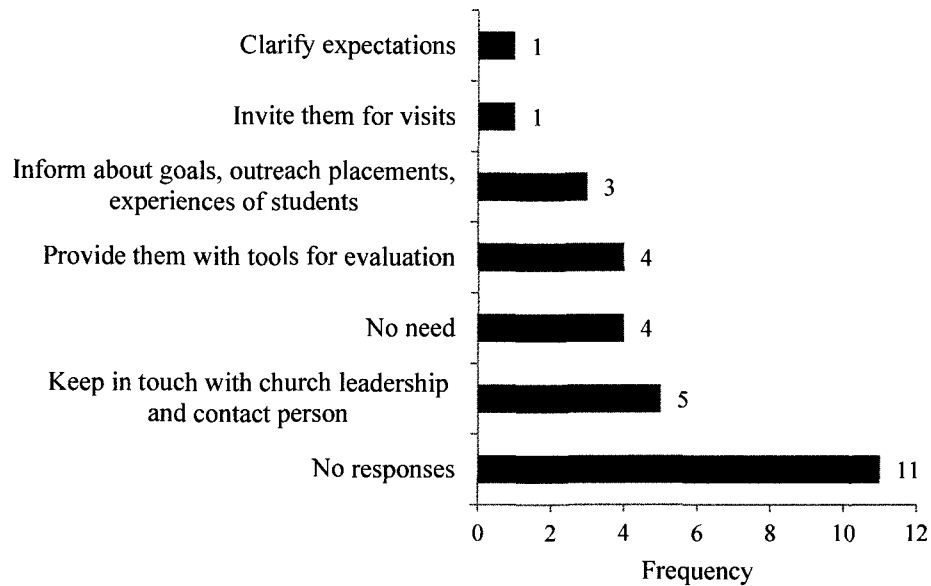
Chart A.16.24. Church leadership: Effectiveness of program

Q.9. Church leadership (n=29) thought the "Get it!" program was effective in
evoking personal transformation in participants in these respects:

Category	Frequency
Nurturing love for church	1
Awareness of gifts, strengths and weaknesses	1
Mentoring	4
Challenging students	4
Development of character traits, faith	5
Support willingness of students	5
International experience (new perspective)	6
No responses	10

Frequency
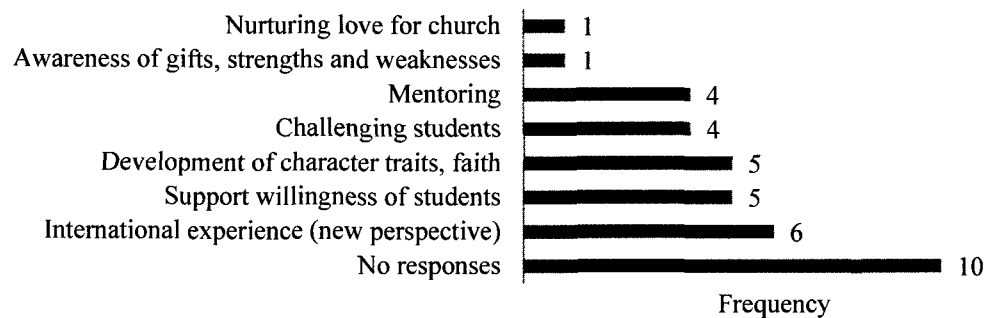
Table A.16.7. Church leadership: Reasons for effectiveness in Europe

Q.10./Q.11. Church leadership	Church leadership (n=29) thought the "Get it!" program could be effective in Europe if:	Church leadership (n=29) thought the "Get it!" program was effective in nurturing transformation and motivating participants to share experiences in their churches when:
No response	10	9
Students stay in church and contribute their gifts, transfer experiences	8	14
Lasting effect (social competencies, new perspectives)	8	
Program nurtures Mennonite identity	4	4
Churches cooperate with programs	4	

Table A.16.8. Church leadership (n=29) thought congregations could contribute to successful reintegration of returnees in these ways

Church invests in relationship	10
Offer students involvement in church	9
Good communication (mutual information, updating)	6
Mentoring (empower students, financial/prayer support)	5
Missional perspective	2

Chart A.16.25. Church leadership: Hindrances

Q.13. Ways in which church leadership (n=29) thought they might hinder re-integration of returnees

—♦—# of responses

| No global experience | No serving attitude | High expectations | Different cultural perspective | No support | Distance from program | No missional perspective |

Frequency
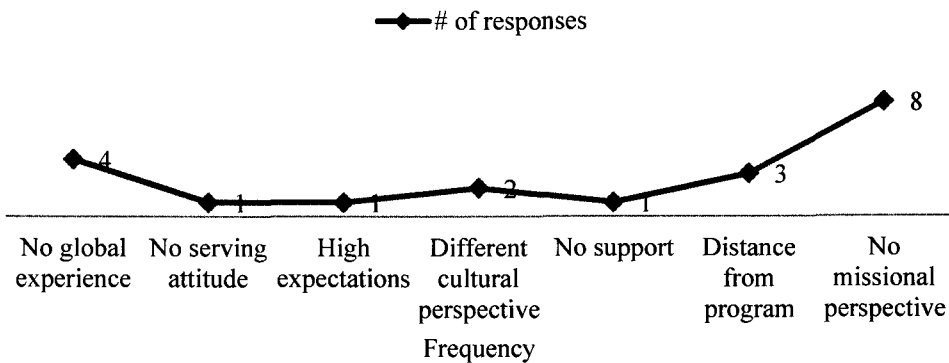
Table A.16.9. Church leadership (n=29) thought the different parties could contribute helpful tools like these

Q.14.	Returnees	Church leadership	Contact person	Program
No response	13	14	21	19
Communication	9	3	5	7
Accept support	2			
Transfer experiences, be involved in church	2			1
Initiative	3		2	
Mentoring		5		
Cooperation		2	1	1
Contact person		4		
Re-entry symptoms				2

Appendix 17
Charts Related to Chapter 5

The following exemplary Charts describe how the different data groups rated the importance of tools for re-integration. Since the questions for the four groups were slightly different, in order to emphasize different nuances and experiences, the researcher looked for similarities and differences. To be able to compare the given answers, the main important responses have been summarized and combined into categories. Respondents were able to give multiple answers, and the summary of given answers sometimes added up to numbers much bigger than n.

Table A.17.1. Questions for data groups

Alumni/returnees answered the following questions:
The following aspects have been important to deepen change + additional comments
• The tools learned during the debrief were helpful
• These were the most efficient tools in helping returnees apply their program experiences to daily life
• Home churches were helpful for re-integration because...
• Feeling a sense of belonging again has been important
• Future participating home churches should focus on...
• Contact persons should focus on...
• What was helpful in preparing for returning while still at the outreach assignment
• Programs should inform those at home about...
• Expectations toward family, friends and church members included...
• Expectations from family, friends and church members included...
• Most helpful for re-integration has been...
• Most difficult for re-integration has been...
• To improve the week of debriefing, I would suggest...
• Helpful during the week of debriefing included...
• Helpful topics during the week of debriefing included...
• Top five ideas for future students
• Programs could do better in this area
• Contact persons could do better in this area
• Returnees could do better in this area
• Home churches could do better in this area

Interviewees answered the following questions:
• Helpful tools for re-integration included...
• Programs could do better by...
• Churches can help returnees re-integrate by....
• Contact person could have done better in this area
• Returnee could have done better in this area
Contact persons answered the following questions:
• The following aspects have been important to deepen change + additional comments
• This was helpful to find a place in the home church again
• This hindered re-integration
• These have been helpful aspects in supporting, mentoring and encouraging a participant during re-integration
• Subsequent contact persons should focus on...
• These are helpful tools a program can offer...
• These are helpful tools a contact person can offer...
• These are helpful tools a returnee could use...
• This area has been difficult for contact persons
• This would be helpful to be a better contact person
• In this area, program should provide more support for contact person
• Suggestions for improvement
Church leadership answered the following questions:
• Reasons why returnees successfully re-integrated in home churches
• Reasons why returnees did not re-integrate in home churches
• Helpful tools for reintegration of returnees were...
• This was crucial for returnees to find re-establish a place in the congregation
• These aspects have been helpful in supporting, mentoring and encouraging a student during reintegration
• These were our expectations towards returnees
• Churches can contribute to re-integration by...
• Program leadership could do better in this area
• The program has been efficient in this area
• Reasons for effectiveness of program
• Possible contributions of churches during re-entry
• What hinders re-integration
• The program's contribution to re-integration is...
• The contact person's contribution to re-integration is...
• The returnee's contribution to re-integration is...

All answers have been assigned to the following categories. These categories have been summarized again and have in turn resulted in the numbers presented in the Charts.

Table A.17.2. Summarized categories

• Integration, transfer
• Processing experiences
• Future, career, goals ⎱ Change management • Changes ⎰
• Awareness, implementation
• Collaboration of all parties
• Re-entry stress (knowing, dealing with)
• Debriefing
• Communication • Listening (being listened to,   listening to others) • Update, flow of information   Communication • Understanding • Sharing • Clarifying expectations
• Team leader
• Spirituality
• Relationships (established, re-build, awareness) • Mentoring • In touch (with team; with those at home;   with church; showing interest)   Relationships • Similar international experience • Visit • Welcome • Involvement (church, family, job)
• Encouragement (follow-ups: gifts,   connect with students) • Support contact person   Encouragement • Financial support • Prayer support
• Structure (daily life, plan ahead)
• Time (to re-adjust, process)
• Own responsibility, initiative
• Missional
• No response

The following Charts compare the answers of all four data groups with reference to the role different aspects play in re-entry.

Chart A.17.1. All four data groups: The role of integration for re-entry

Integration, transfer of experiences (multiple answers)

Category	Value
Lack of integration	2
Program effectively helps with integration	12
Expected from returnees to be able to integrate	25
Returnees could do better with integration	9 / 28
Churches should help with integration	14 / 15
Programs could do better	3
Most efficient tools for application	16 / 9
Important to deepen change	5

Frequency: 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

■ Alumni n=86   ▨ Interviewees n=12

■ Contact persons n=35   ■ Church leadership n=29

Chart A.17.2. All four data groups: The role of processing experiences for re-entry

Processing experiences (multiple answers)

Alumni n=86 Interviewees n=12 Contact persons n=35 Church leadership n=29
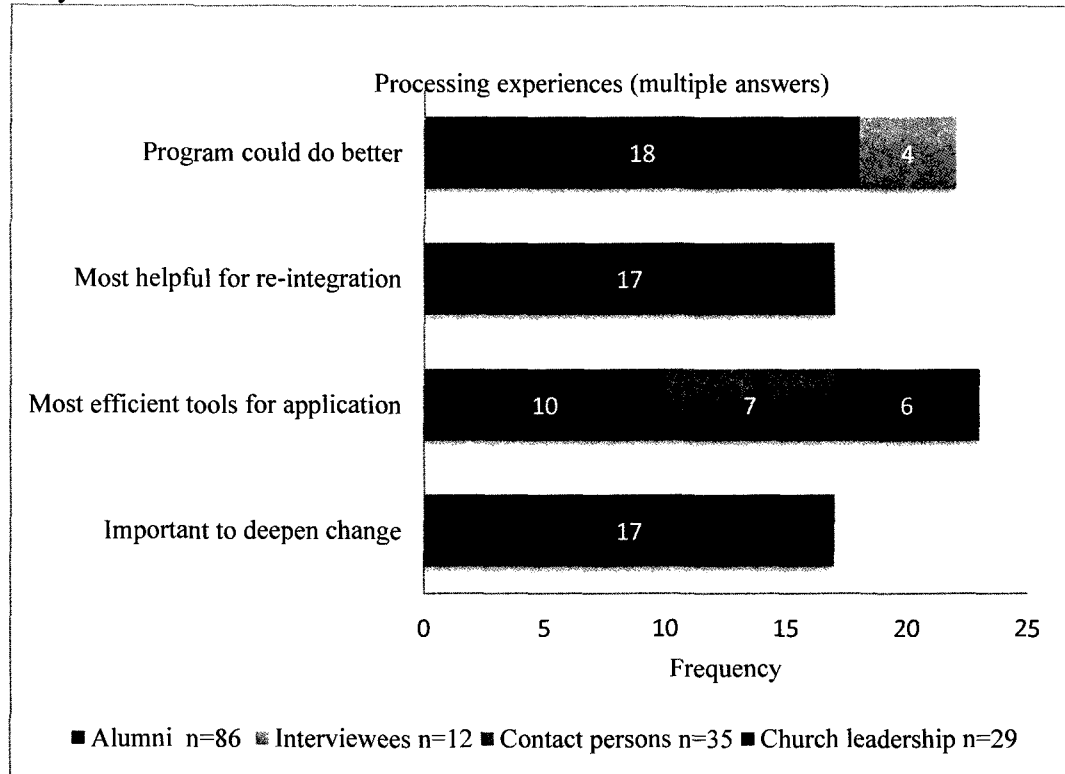
Chart A.17.3. All four data groups: The role of change management for re-entry

Alumni n=86 Interviewees n=12 Contact persons n=35 Church leadership n=29
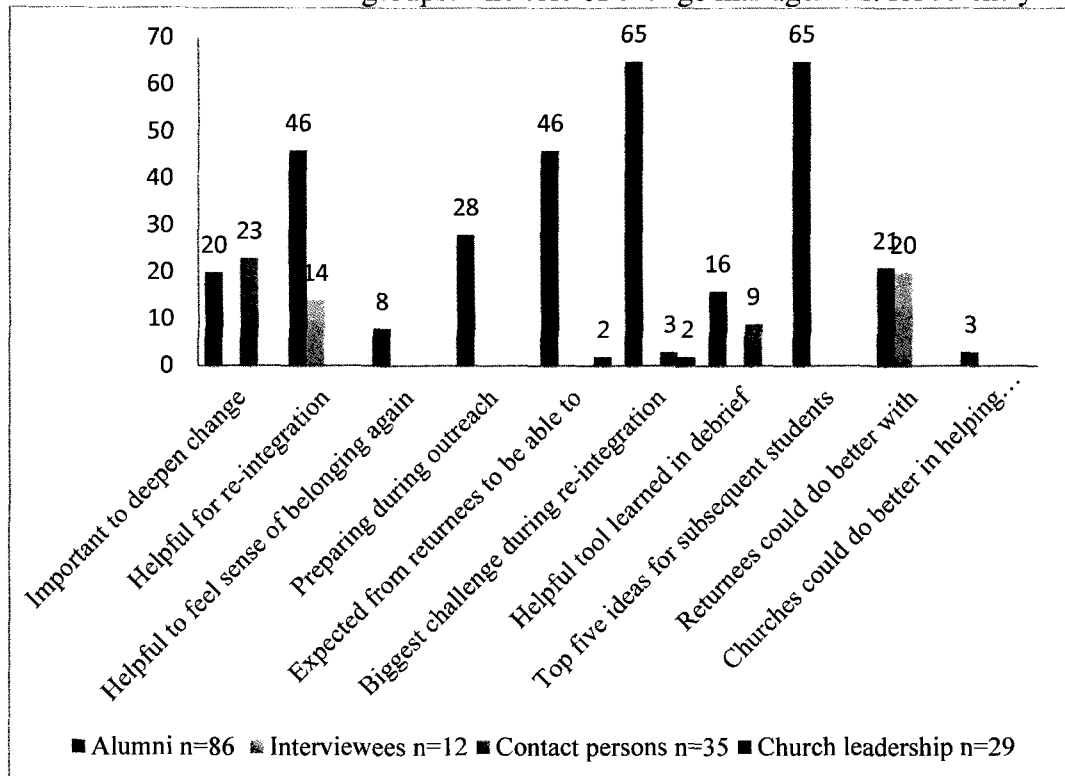
Chart A.17.4. All four data groups: The role of collaboration for re-entry

Collaboration of all parties (multiple answers)

■ Alumni n=86 ▨ Interviewees n=12 ■ Contact persons n=35 ■ Church leadership n=29
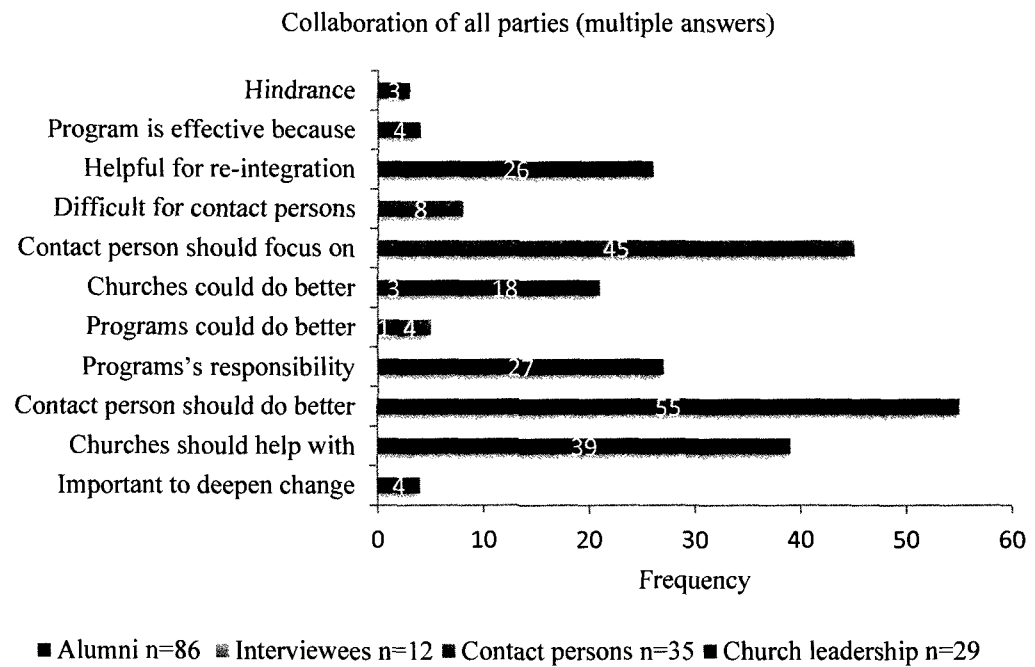
Chart A.17.5. All four data groups: The role of knowledge about possible re-entry symptoms

Knowing about, dealing with re-entry

Category	Value
Improve during debrief	10
Helpful in debrief week	44
Challenge, difficulty	26
Expectations from family	
Expectations toward family, church, friends	33
Programs inform those at home	68
Helpful while still in outreach	52
Helpful in training phase	85
Returnee could do better	10
Program could do better	7
Contact person could do better	55 13 7
Subsequent home churches should focus on	57
When home church knew...they were helpful	44
Important to deepen change	67 21
Efficiency of program because of	13 7
Churches could do better	18
Helpful for re-integration	8 14 12
Crucial to find place	52 18

Frequency: 0 20 40 60 80 100

■ Alumni n = 86   ▩ Interviewees n= 12

■ Contact persons n= 35   ■ Church leadership n= 29

Chart A.17.6. The role of "communication" and "relationships" for re-integration111

Knowing about, dealing with re-entry (multiple answers)

	Improve during debrief	10
	Helpful in debrief week	44
	Challenge, difficulty	26
	Expectations from family	
	Expectations toward family, church, friends	33
	Programs inform those at home	68
	Helpful while still in outreach	52
	Helpful in training phase	85
	Returnee could do better	10
	Program could do better	
	Contact person could do better	55 13 7
	Subsequent home churches should focus on	57
	When home church knew...they were helpful	44
	Important to deepen change	67 21
	Effectiveness of program because of	13
	Churches could do better	
	Helpful for re-integration	8 14
	Crucial to find place	52

Frequency

■ Alumni n=86 ■ Interviewees n=12 ■ Contact persons n=35 ■ Church leadership n=29

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111 The numbers in Chart A.10.6. represent the sum of subcategories of "relationships (mentoring, keeping in touch, friends with international experience, visit, welcome)" and "communication (listening, update of information, understanding, sharing, clarifying expectations)." They refer to Tables 5.2.2.a.–5.2.5.

Chart A.17.7. All four data groups: The role of debriefing for re-entry

Debriefing week

Category	Value
Returnees could do better	3
Top five ideas for subsequent students	32
Helpful during debrief	5
Important to feel sense of belonging again	62
Most efficient tool for re-integration	16
Important to deepen change	47
Effectiveness of program	7
Expectations toward returnee	2
To find place again	16
Improvement	15
Helpful when still in outreach	24
Helpful	3
Improvement	10
Important to feel to belong again	50 18

Frequency

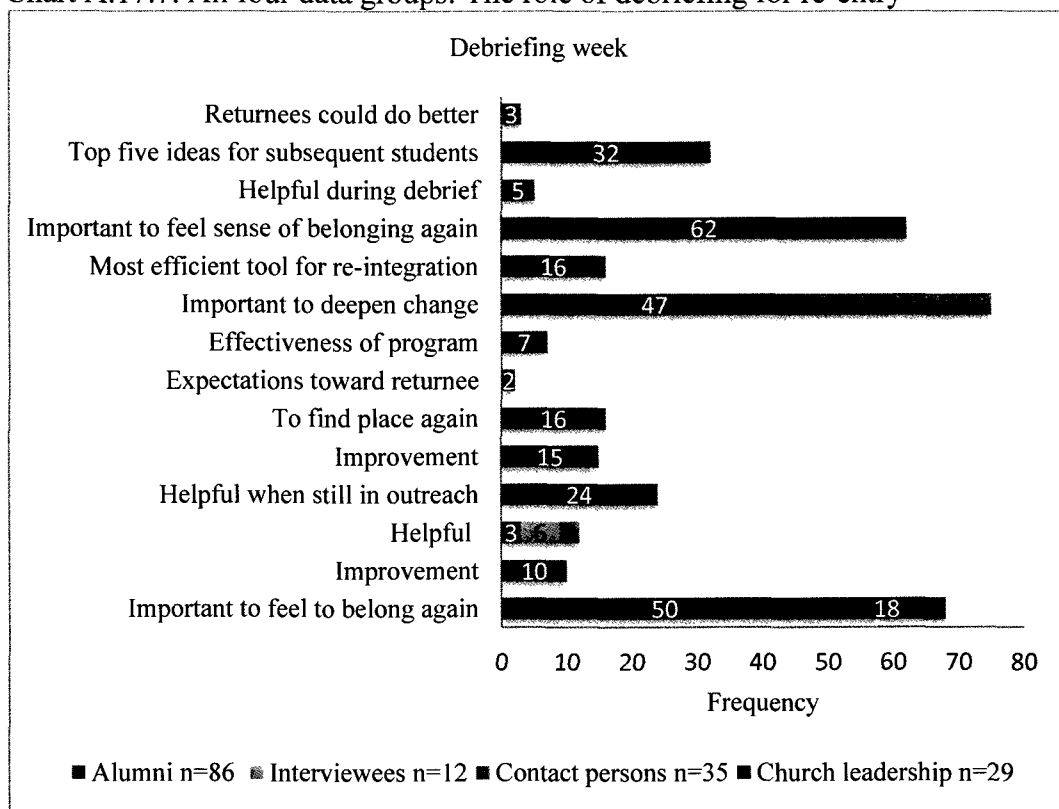■ Alumni n=86 ▪ Interviewees n=12 ■ Contact persons n=35 ■ Church leadership n=29

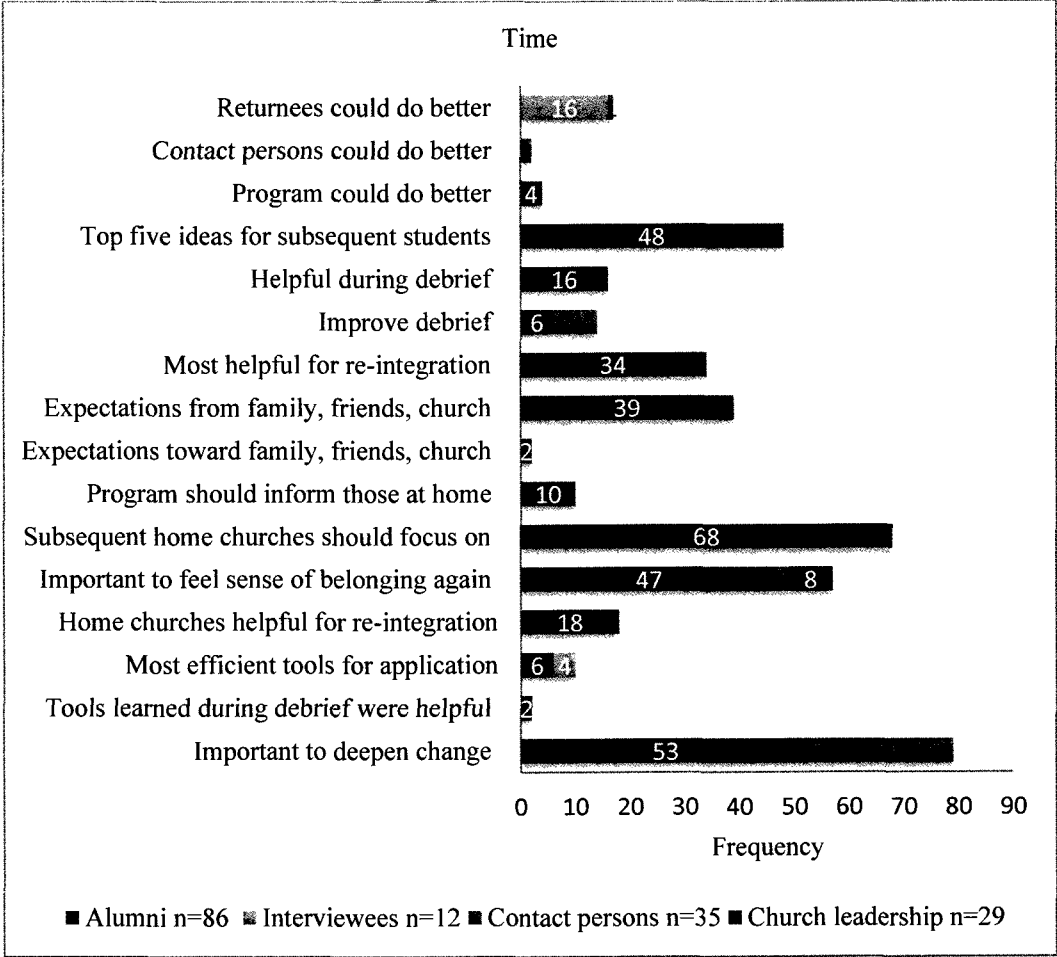Chart A.17.8. All four data groups: The role of encouragement for re-entry[112]

Encouragement, financial, prayer, contact person, follow-up (multiple
answers)

	Frequency
Returnees could do better	
Programs could do better	
Contact persons should focus on	9
Subsequent home churches should focus on	137
Home churches helpful for re-integration because	124 10 58
Most efficient tools for application	6 53 17
Tools learned during debrief were helpful	10

0   50   100   150   200   250
Frequency

■ Alumni n=86 ▨ Interviewees n=12 ■ Contact persons n=35 ■ Church leadership n=29

Chart A.17.9. All four data groups: The role of structure for re-entry

Structure

	Frequency
Returnees could do better	2
	43
Helpful during debrief	11
	7
Helpful to prepare during outreach	35
	41 11
Most efficient tools for application	10
	5
Important to deepen change	49

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80
Frequency

■ Alumni n=86   ▨ Interviewees n=12
■ Contact persons n=35   ■ Church leadership n=29

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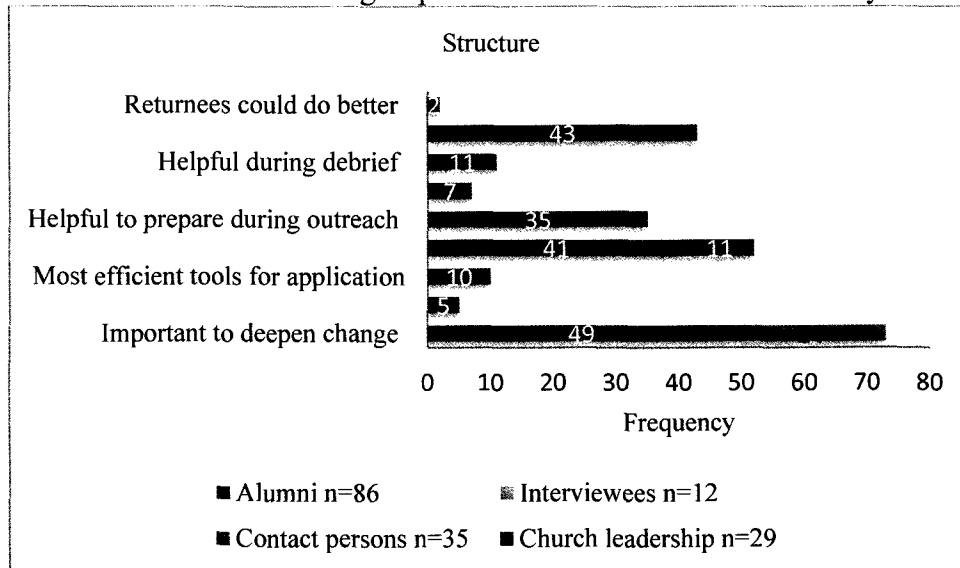
[112] The numbers in Chart A.10.8. represent the sum of the subcategory of
"encouragement (financial, prayer, contact person, follow up)." They refer to Tables Appendix
2.2.a.– .2.5.

Chart A.17.10. All four data groups: The role of time for re-entry

Time

	Frequency
Returnees could do better	16, 1
Contact persons could do better	
Program could do better	4
Top five ideas for subsequent students	48
Helpful during debrief	16
Improve debrief	6
Most helpful for re-integration	34
Expectations from family, friends, church	39
Expectations toward family, friends, church	2
Program should inform those at home	10
Subsequent home churches should focus on	68
Important to feel sense of belonging again	47, 8
Home churches helpful for re-integration	18
Most efficient tools for application	6, 4
Tools learned during debrief were helpful	2
Important to deepen change	53

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90
Frequency

■ Alumni n=86 ▨ Interviewees n=12 ■ Contact persons n=35 ■ Church leadership n=29

Appendix 18
Job Requirement Contact Person

Info Sheet for the Contact Person

Dear ABC!

We are very excited that XYZ from your congregation is participating in the "Get it!" program and that you have agreed to take on a mentoring role during this time. You will function as the link between XYZ and the congregation, but will also provide support and guidance at a time when XYZ is confronted with many new experiences and ideas—a very important role! You will be a "seam" or "bridge" between the familiarity of home, new experiences and changes during the schooling phase and the overseas assignment. We put great value on this "seam/bridge"—that is, the contact between the congregation and the participant—and we would like to encourage you to seek support as you work to carry out your tasks. We are excited that you have chosen you to get involved and invest time into the participant and into the program.

We hope that the contact between you, the congregation and XYZ develops into something helpful and lasting. We hope that we can help XYZ learn to love the church and encourage the students to get involved again upon their return. We believe that exchanging information, communication, prayer support and personal contact are all helpful. Through you, the congregation will be better informed as to what is taking place in the discipleship training school (DTS) and can therefore pass on specific prayer requests, take part in the experience and hopefully process and understand the participant's stories better when he/she returns home. This is also an opportunity for all of you to take part in the experiences and development of XYZ, making his/her return home smoother and helping him/her to find his/her place in the congregation.

Your assistance will also make it easier for the church to reintegrate the participant. The contact with a different point of view, as well as suggestions and broad experiences, are an excellent opportunity for congregation members to deepen their knowledge of what it means to be a global body of Christ.

Participants can be impacted greatly by their participation in a DTS, but they need to undergo adequate preparation and processing in order for their growth to continue in their life beyond the timeframe of the DTS.

Conversation, understanding and patience are also vital to ensure that the participant's new insights, experiences, ideas and thoughts are enriching for the congregation, as well. The church is on a journey as the body of Christ and is the place where discipleship is encouraged, which means that the church ideally offers space for the (sometimes radical) decisions that DTS participants make. Participants often return with challenging new insights and perspectives, especially in the areas of justice, poverty, social activism and a heart aflame for mission.

Because of the aforementioned reasons, we request your involvement and help as a contact/support person. In order that you understand the basics of your assignment and that you can discern your role in supporting the participant, I will describe what a support person (or support group) can/should do. In the end, however, it comes down to the initiative and wishes of the "Get it!" participant.

We will begin the "Get it!" training with a conversation with participants to discuss expectations, good ideas, helpful questions and other items that they can pass on to their support persons for further discussion. The participants will outline several criteria of a helpful relationship. ☺ It is important to clarify mutual possibilities, boundaries and expectations. We encourage participants to make arrangements with their support persons for the time between October and December to decide what is realistic for them. During the Christmas break, they will meet together, evaluate their progress and make new plans for January through June. It is important that the participant and contact person remain in contact and define their relationship for themselves.

As a contact person you should have enough time for the assignment (some participants need more guidance than others). ☺ Everyday activities demand so much time and energy that the contact person needs to be able to plan and take time to follow through with their commitment.

Previous "Get it!" participants have suggested that the responsibility of a contact person can be divided among multiple people. Perhaps the participant's or your small group or other people in the congregation are willing to support you. Previous "Get it!" participants, people with overseas experience or parents of children with overseas experience often have helpful experience and wisdom. Perhaps a group can be formed, dividing the following assignments among its members: keeping contact with the participant (someone who knows him/her well), organizing prayer support, reading up on re-entry symptoms and sharing results with the congregation (we recommend this book by Heike Geist,[113] available only in German), and providing counsel after the participant returns in order to help him/her with processing. You can make the various positions and assignments known to the congregation, and we encourage you to speak with the church leadership about this.

If the distance allows it, it is also good for you and others from the congregation to attend the "Tag der offenen Tür" (visitor's day) during the "Get it!" training (lodging is available but not financially covered). This gives everyone the opportunity to experience what "Get it!" really is, to get to know the other participants and leaders, to hear about possible re-entry symptoms, and to spend time with XYZ. Further information will follow. We will also meet briefly with all the contact persons and church members to hear from their experience thus far. The day is also an excellent opportunity to get to know other support persons and strike up lasting contact with one another that may eventually lead to regional meetings.

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[113] Since May 2010, a new book by Heike Geist is available in German, titled *Wieder zurück?! Was geschieht bei der Rückkehr aus einem (Kurzzeit-) Einsatz im Ausland?* Despite all anticipated difficulties, the re-entry from overseas is often unexpectedly difficult. The time and adjustment to a culture abroad changes people, and the home country is often idealized. Often upon arrival home, returnees recognize only the changes they and their colleagues have undergone. This book gives concrete steps to help the person affected, their family, friends and congregation to make the adjustment easier. Many good books exist about the re-entry process, but most are available only in English. This is a book to meet the needs of a German-speaking readership and is directed at young Christians who have experienced short-term missions overseas in the form of a team-oriented program. The book can be ordered directly at hgeist@bienenberg.ch. The cost is CHF 22,- / Euro 18,- (plus shipping and handling).

We are willing to give you contact information for previous "Get it!" participants, their churches and their support persons so that he/she can ask them for tips and questions about their experience. This can be very helpful and encouraging, but is left up to the individual's initiative.

What are the concrete assignments/conditions of the support person role?

- As stated at the beginning, the support person/group serves as a bridge between the participant and the congregation.

- As a prerequisite, the contact person should have access to email, because it is the most cost-effective form of communication (especially during the participant's time overseas). Letters, however, are certainly welcome.

- It is good for the congregation and you to hold a sending, blessing, or commissioning for XYZ and arrange prayer support (for example, that someone is found for every day of the week, or that the participant has someone to pray with regularly according to time zones).

- You or someone from the support group should keep regular email/letter contact (every fourteen days has proven to work well).

- You (or the support group) should keep the participant informed by (for example) sending them the church newsletter, informing them about current questions, topics and news in the church, possibly giving political and cultural updates, and keeping him/her up to date with news about friends and acquaintances.

- You (or the support group) should give general and personal information about "Get it!" to the congregation/friends/acquaintances regularly. You will receive the team newsletter, as well as personal mail from the participant.

- It is good if general support is organized (including open discussions about finances, which is often an issue that is insufficiently addressed and may include organizing donations and fundraisers).

- Can the congregation help the returnee feel welcome, ask questions and offer them space to share and evaluate experiences gained (keeping in mind

the time for re-entry symptoms and processing)? Further information on this topic is available.

- It is important to plan time for XYZ to share stories and experiences during the weeks after their return. Previous "Get it!" participants have said again and again that guidance (practical as well as spiritual) and space to speak and be heard were extremely important.

"Get it!" will help with:

- Sending information about "Get it!"
- The participants will arrange creative additions for the church newsletter and will keep in regular contact with you (every fourteen days)
- Through you the congregation will receive the monthly team letter during its assignment (to be shared with the congregation, as well)
- Before the participants return, we will inform them and you about possible re-entry symptoms so that their interactions and relationships can be more relaxed. ☺

The meaning and purpose of all these things is to keep the relationship between XYZ and home as strong as possible. Please use everything that you find helpful and useful. We encourage you to invest in your relationship with the participant during the time that they are in "Get it!" program. The most important thing remains, however, to continue to listen to God and to offer prayerful support and guidance.

Many thanks for your participation! We wish you a good experience, motivation and God's blessing!

—The DTS Leadership Team

Appendix 19
Checklist Contact Person for Students

Checklist for Maintaining Contact

During your participation in the "Get it!" program, you will have a support person/group with whom you will have regular contact and who can function as a bridge to your congregation. This will make your re-entry significantly easier. Your support person/group will be a link between you and the church, but will also provide support and guidance as you experience many new things—a very important role! He/she will offer a "seam/bridge" between the familiarity of home and your new experiences and changes during the schooling phase of the program, as well as the overseas assignment. We put great value on this "seam," which is the contact between the congregation and the participant, and we have asked your congregation in a letter to support your support person as he/she works to carry out his/her tasks.

We are very excited that you have found someone who is willing to be involved and to invest time and energy into you. We believe that the mutual information, exchanges, prayer support and personal contact are extremely helpful for everyone involved. Through the support person, your congregation will be better informed as to what is happening in your discipleship training school (DTS) and can therefore provide prayer support, be involved and hopefully understand your stories and experiences better when you return.

Additionally, the contact with a different point of view, as well as suggestions and broad experiences, are an excellent opportunity for the congregation to deepen its knowledge of what it means to be a global body of Christ. Participants can be impacted greatly by their participation in a DTS, but they need to undergo adequate preparation and processing in order for their growth to continue in their life beyond the timeframe of the DTS. Conversation, understanding and patience are also vital to ensure that the participant's new insights, experiences, ideas and thoughts are enriching for the congregation, as well. The church is on a journey as the body of Christ, and is the place where discipleship is encouraged, which means that the church ideally offers space for

the (sometimes radical) decisions that DTS participants make. Participants often return with challenging new insights and perspectives, especially in the areas of justice, poverty, social activism and a heart aflame for mission. This is your challenge and encouragement for the church. ☺

Before or at the beginning of your DTS:

- Find a support person/group and inform them about their assignment (the program leadership will send them a list of contact person job requirements). The support person should be:

- Someone with whom you already have a strong relationship and with whom you can be honest, who gives you good guidance, can hold you accountable, will pray for you, listen to you and encourage you

- Preferably someone with DTS and/or overseas experience

- Be ready to attend a day event at the Bienenberg Theological Seminary and encourage others to come as well

- Not feel like they need to support you alone. Encourage them (or discuss with them) who from your congregation, small group, Bible study, etc., you could bring into the support group. For instance, one person could be in charge of logistics and finances (visas, vaccinations, administrative procedures, etc.); another can be in charge of keeping you up-to-date with your congregation (sending you the newsletter); a third person with pastoral abilities can give you emotional support; a fourth person can periodically update your congregation, inform them about "Get it!" goals and ensure that enough information is available; and a fifth person can gather information about re-entry. ☺

- We will begin the "Get it!" training with a conversation with all participants to discuss expectations, good ideas, helpful questions and other items that you can pass on to your support persons for further discussion. You will outline several criteria of a helpful relationship. ☺ It is important to clarify mutual possibilities, boundaries and expectations. We encourage you to make arrangements with the support persons for the time between October and December to decide what is realistic for both of you. During the

Christmas break, you will meet together, evaluate your progress and make new plans for January through June. It is important that you and your contact person remain in contact and define your relationship for yourselves.

- We are willing to give your support person/group contact information for previous "Get it!" participants, their churches and their support persons so that he/she can ask them for tips and questions about their experiences. This can be very helpful and encouraging, but is left up to the individual's initiative.

During the DTS;

- It is extremely important for you to take initiative. Your support person has received an email from us containing basic information, in which we encouraged him/her to discuss your expectations and limits and to clarify how you would like to conduct your relationship. Everyday activities will continue for your support person, and they will need to consciously take time to keep contact with you. It is therefore important for you to "keep at it." Everyone at home who is praying for you, who listens to you, who asks how things are going, will want brief updates. The relationship to your support person is important in that it will ensure that everyone at home is kept up to date on your experiences and the changes you are going through. Keeping people constantly updated while you are away will also help you immensely when you return home.

- You should email or exchange letters with your support person at least every fourteen days. They can then pass on the information (stories to share, thanks and prayer requests) to your family, friends and acquaintances.

- You should make sure that your support person receives the monthly team letters that you write during your overseas assignment.

- You should write a short contribution to your church newsletter, every now and then (ideally you will write one during the schooling phase, one during the time you are overseas, and a third as a summary and thanks).

- You could set up joint prayer times with your support person/group (make sure to remember time differences and both of your daily schedules)

After the DTS:

- Hug your support person/group

- Inform your friends and acquaintances about your re-entry

- Write a contribution for your church newsletter with a summary and thanks

- Report about your time with the "Get it!" program and your plans for the future at a church function (invite your friends and relatives)

- Stay in contact with people from "Get it!" and encourage others to participate!

Appendix 20
Information Sheet About the Model of a Contact Person

Info Sheet for the Congregation

We are very excited that someone from your congregation/group/etc. is participating in the "Get It!" program and that ABC has agreed to mentor him/her. ABC will fill the role of link to the congregation, as well as provide support and guidance for the participant, who is being confronted with many new things. ABC offers a "seam/bridge" between the familiarity of home and new experiences/changes during the schooling phase, as well as the overseas assignment. We put great value on this "seam/bridge"—that is, the contact between the congregation and the participant—and we would like to thank you for helping and supporting ABC to get involved and invest time into the participant and the program. We hope that the contact between the participant, the congregation and ABC develops into something helpful and lasting.

We hope that we can help the participant learn to love the church and encourage him/her to get involved again upon return. We believe that exchanging information, communication, prayer support and personal contact are helpful for everyone involved. Through ABC, the congregation will be better informed as to what is taking place in the discipleship training school (DTS) and can therefore pass on specific prayer requests, take part in the experience and hopefully process and understand the participant's stories better when he/she returns home. This is an opportunity for all of you to take part in the experiences and development of XYZ, making his/her return home smoother and helping him/her to find a place in the congregation again.

The contact with a different point of view, as well as suggestions and broad experiences, are an excellent opportunity for the congregation to deepen its knowledge of what it means to be a global body of Christ. Participants can be impacted greatly by their participation in a DTS, but they need to undergo adequate preparation and processing in order for their growth to continue in their life beyond the timeframe of the DTS. Conversation, understanding and patience

are also vital to ensure that the participant's new insights, experiences, ideas and thoughts are enriching for the congregation, as well. Ideally, ABC has some experience overseas or with a DTS, so that he/she can better support the participant. The church is on a journey as the body of Christ, and is the place where discipleship is encouraged, which means that the church ideally offers space for the (sometimes radical) decisions that DTS participants make. Participants often return with challenging new insights and perspectives especially in the areas of justice, poverty, social activism and a heart aflame for mission.

For all of these aforementioned points, we ask for your involvement and help.

- We will begin the "Get it!" training with a conversation with the participants to discuss expectations, good ideas, helpful questions and other items that they can pass on to their support persons for further discussion. The participants will outline several criteria of a helpful relationship. The support person can contribute your expectations and offers as a church into that conversation.

- The contact person should have enough time for the assignment—some participants need more guidance than others. ☺ Everyday activities demand so much time and energy that the contact person needs to be able to plan and to take time to follow through with his/her commitment. Experience tells us that a contact person should count on about an hour per week for phone calls, email, or to prepare something to share with the congregation. If the distance permits, it is also good if they can meet us at the "visitor's day." It is important to clarify mutual possibilities, boundaries and expectations. We encourage ABC to make arrangements with the participant for the time between October and December to decide what is realistic for them. During the Christmas break, hopefully they will meet together, evaluate progress and make new plans for January through June. It is important that the participant and contact person remain in contact and define their relationship for themselves.

- Previous "Get it!" participants have suggested that the responsibility of a contact person can be divided among multiple people. Perhaps the participant's small group or other people in the congregation are willing to guide and support ABC. Previous "Get it!" participants, people with overseas experience or parents of children with overseas experience often have helpful experience and wisdom. Perhaps a group can be formed, the members dividing among themselves the following assignments: keeping contact with the participant (someone who knows them well), organizing prayer, reading up on re-entry symptoms and sharing results with the congregation (we recommend this book by Heike Geist, available only in German[114]), and providing counsel after the participant returns in order to help them with processing. You can make the various positions and assignments known to the congregation.

- We would like to invite you to an all-day event at the Bienenberg Theological Seminary and hope that you can come. During training time, we are hosting a "visitor's day" for you to experience what "Get it!" DTS means, to get to know the other participants and leaders, to hear about possible re-entry symptoms and to spend time with your participant. More information will follow. We will also meet briefly with all the contact persons and church members to hear about your experiences thus far and what else you may need from us. The day is also an excellent opportunity to get to know other support persons and strike up lasting contact with one another that may eventually lead to regional meetings.

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[114] Since May 2010, a new book by Heike Geist is available in German, titled *Wieder zurück?! Was geschieht bei der Rückkehr aus einem (Kurzzeit-) Einsatz im Ausland?* Despite all anticipated difficulties, the re-entry from overseas is often unexpectedly difficult. The time and adjustment to a culture abroad changes people, and the home country is often idealized. Often upon arrival home, returnees recognize only the changes they and their colleagues have undergone..This book gives concrete steps to help the person affected, their family, friends and congregation to make the adjustment easier. Many good books exist about the re-entry process, but most are available only in English. This is a book to meet the needs of a German-speaking readership and is directed at young Christians who have experienced short-term missions overseas in the form of a team-oriented program. The book can be ordered directly at hgeist@bienenberg.ch. The cost is CHF 22,- / Euro 18,- (plus shipping and handling).

- We are willing to give ABC contact information for previous "Get it!" participants, their churches and their support persons so that he/she can ask them for tips and questions about their experiences. This can be very helpful and encouraging, but is left up to ABC's own initiative.

What are the assignments/conditions?

- As stated in the beginning, ABC is a link between the participant and the congregation.

- As a prerequisite he/she should have access to email, because it is the most cost-effective form of communication (especially during the participant's time overseas). Letters, however, are certainly welcome.

- It is good if your congregation can hold a commissioning, sending, or blessing for the participant, and arrange prayer support (for example, find someone for every day of the week, or ensure that the participant has someone to pray with regularly).

- ABC should keep regular email/letter contact (every fourteen days has proven to work well).

- ABC should keep the participant informed by (for example) sending them the church newsletter, informing them about current questions, topics and news in the church, eventually giving political and cultural updates, and keeping him/her up to date with news about friends and acquaintances.

- ABC should regularly give general and personal information about "Get it!" to the congregation/friends/acquaintances. You will receive the team newsletter, as well as personal mail from the participant.

- It is nice when general support is organized (including open discussions about finances, which is often an issue that is insufficiently addressed, and may include organizing donations and fundraisers).

- ABC will inform (and invite) the congregation about the "Get it!" program "visitor's day," held during the schooling phase at Bienenberg Theological Seminary (lodging is available but not financially covered).

- Upon the participant's return, the congregation should welcome the participant, ask him/her questions, offer them space to share and to evaluate gifts anticipated. You should count on eventual highs and lows during the re-entry phase (more information is available).

- Please plan time for the participant to share stories and experiences during the weeks after his/her return. Previous "Get it!" participants have said again and again that guidance (practical as well as spiritual) and space to speak and be heard were extremely important.

"Get it!" will help with:

- Sending information about the "Get it!" program

- Keeping in contact with the participant

- The participants will arrange creative additions for the church newsletter and will keep regular contact (every fourteen days) with you through the support person(s)

- ABC will receive the monthly team letter during the assignment (to share with the congregation as well)

- Before the participants return, we will inform them and you about possible re-entry symptoms so that their interactions and relationships can be more relaxed ☺

The meaning and purpose of all these things is to keep the relationship between the participant and home as strong as possible. Please use everything that you find helpful and useful, and view the aforementioned points more as wishes than obligations. We do not want to burden you with a list of requirements, but rather to encourage you and offer helpful suggestions and possibilities to strengthen the relationship with your participant. We encourage you to invest in your relationship with the participant during his/her time in the "Get it!" program. The most important thing remains, however, to continue to listen to God and to offer prayerful support and guidance.

Many thanks for your participation! We wish you a good experience, motivation and God's blessing!

—The DTS Leadership Team

Appendix 21
Information Sheet for Families, Friends and Churches: How to Prepare for When the Student Returns

A student returns. How to prepare?

Thanks so much that you mentored and cared for a "Get it!" participant during the last few months. Your support has been very important for him/her and will certainly help him/her re-integrate into life and society upon returning home. The returnee needs time to re-adjust. He/she will surely enjoy when you invite her/him to share his/her experiences. The following recommendations will help all parties involved to come up with helpful tools and ideas for re-integration. Re-entry is both an end and a beginning:

- An end to a foreign experience, but the beginning of feeling foreign

- An end of a trip, but the beginning of another journey

- An end to being/feeling special, but the beginning of being ordinary with a special heart for God and for people

- An end to being stared at, but the beginning of looking at people and the world through different eyes

- An end to simple living, but the beginning of a different lifestyle

- An end to crowded housing, but the beginning of having more space for God and for people

- An end to eating foreign food, but the beginning of friendships with international students, immigrants, refugees and ethnic minorities

(Lisa Espinelli Chinn. 2011. *Think Home*. Madison, WI: InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. lechinn@aol.com)

"Get it!" alumni made the following recommendations for re-entry:

- Please give us time to process things. Re-establishing relationships requires time. Please invest in our relationship.

- Help us to see and to appreciate the positive effects we have experienced and to develop their impacts.

- Communicate, communicate and communicate.

- It is very helpful to process things with the support offered by an accountable relationship. Are you willing to support us here?

- Please share with us what you have experienced. We want to listen to your stories.

How to deal with possible re-entry stress?

Please learn about re-entry stress and its impacts. We recommend the following book (Geist 2010) to learn about re-entry symptoms:

How can the home church help with re-integration?

- Show a warm welcome to returnees. Invite them to share, and be hospitable.

- Encourage returnees to follow Jesus daily. Strengthen their (Mennonite) identities.

- Provide them with discipleship resources.

- Have patience and understanding. Believers participate in God's kingdom. The church invites its members to live according to kingdom values and to invite others into the kingdom. How can you cooperate in doing so? Can you help identify where returnees might find places and roles in church and community again, and re-integrate them into ministry?

- Strive to be mutual blessings to one another.

Appendix 22
Vision and Structure of the Global Disciple Training Alliance

Burkholder (2001) describes the Global Disciple Training (GDT) Alliance as providing a way for like-minded discipleship-mission training programs around the world to work together and benefit from a broad network of resources.

> The vision of the GDT Alliance is to equip and mobilize tens of thousands of young adults from around the world to be effective co-labourers with Jesus Christ in the mission of the church, through a global alliance of discipleship-mission programs.[115]

In 1995, several leaders of discipleship and mission training programs came together with a shared desire: to respond to church groups worldwide in their need to provide discipleship-mission training for their young people. Early in 1996, these leaders and their programs became charter members of the Global Discipleship Training Alliance. They formed working relationships with groups of churches in Canada, Ethiopia and the United States. They aimed to link new training programs with established ones, so that emerging programs were supported and would become effective. Today, the GDT Alliance relates to emerging and existing programs in more than twenty-five countries, each initiated and operated by a cluster of responsible local churches or their mission organization.

Discipleship-mission programs often begin in a local setting, growing as a response to a specific need. Over time, program leaders become aware of similar ministries and develop informal networks to exchange information, insights and encouragement. This interaction often opens doors for working together on common problems, needs and goals. Globalization affects the communities of our world both positively and negatively. For the church, a benefit of the increased global interconnectedness is the greater potential for working together in making disciples of all peoples.

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[115] The description of the GDT Alliance is a summary from the Alliance's brochure, "Global Disciple Training Alliance" (Burkholder 2001).

GDT programs provide a network of support and encouragement; assist new programs through mentoring, seed funds and staff training; and share knowledge, insight and resources.

The GDT Alliance is structured through several levels of participation. Member Programs are discipleship-mission programs that support the GDT Alliance vision and mentor emerging programs. Candidate Programs are discipleship-mission initiatives that have started a training program consistent with GDT Alliance criteria and have established a relationship with a Member Program. Alliance facilitators help the Candidate Program to identify a Member Program and to build a mentoring relationship. As a member program, "Get it!" assists in program development through mentoring, seed funds and staff training. A mentoring relationship helps leaders of new programs in a variety of ways, including:

- Eliminating the need to "re-invent the wheel" by using procedures, plans and structures that have already been proven effective

- Providing the valuable, practical insight that comes from experience, which helps avoid common mistakes

- Offering the perspective of someone outside another's immediate situation, someone who is available to listen, discuss and respond to questions, problems, or concerns

- Supporting program development efforts with prayer and personal involvement

- Reinforcing healthy patterns of local accountability and program support

Candidate Program status continues for three years before membership is considered. The vision and direction of the Alliance Commitments are initiated and determined by Alliance Members (represented as equals in a Member Council). The GDT Alliance meets in several local settings, and every third year an Annual Meeting is hosted in a different geographic location.

Appendix 23
Groome's Cycle of Understanding (Cochran 2008)

Appendix 24
The Cycle of Understanding in Luke 24, as Developed by the Researcher

Luke tells us the story of the first Easter Sunday, where two of Jesus' followers were returning to Emmaus, a small village about seven miles from Jerusalem. On their way and while discussing openly the events around Jesus' crucifixion, they are joined by the risen Jesus, whom they do not recognize (v. 16, NIV). He enters their conversation, claiming to be ignorant of "the things that have happened there in these days" (v. 18). They then tell the story, their disappointment and their inability to understand what had happened (vv. 20-24). Jesus, in turn, tells them an older and deeper story to combine their experience with "what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (v. 27). Approaching the village, the disciples press him to stay and, when he agrees, blessing and breaking the bread for them, they all at once realize who their companion was (v. 30). Jesus vanishes (v. 31) and the disciples set out for Jerusalem to tell the "Eleven and those with them, assembled together" (v. 33) about the events and their new insight.

The disciples have a shared goal, even when they seem to have forgotten the vision they should follow: the Kingdom of God has come and the Good News must be shared and spread out "to all the earth" (Mt 28:18-20). They participate in God's larger story: to bring reconciliation and peace to all men by sharing the Good News of Jesus (2 Cor 5:14-21). That is why Jesus instructs them, and, "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). He helps them to

understand that the Messiah, "Christ had to suffer these things" (v. 26). It is

necessary for the disciples to be taught so that God's mission and intention will be

obeyed and the Great Commission will be fulfilled. In that cycle of

understanding, Jesus helps the disciples to learn and refocus upon a desired future

state. Jesus is establishing and renewing the relationship with them to give them

new partnership in God's project. The following steps belong to this cycle of

understanding:

1. The disciples experience Jesus' life and death (Luke 24:14-19).

2. They are shocked by these events, disappointed and confused (Luke 24:20-
    24).

3. Jesus joins them on their way to Emmaus. He gives them time to share, to
    process and to grieve by entering into dialogue with them (Luke 24:17, 19).

4. Jesus accompanies them, but they do not recognize Him. He asks them to
    tell the story without giving answers and allows them time so they may
    "come to see" (Luke 24:17, 31).

5. Jesus provides room for them to complain, process and take a risk by
    sharing their feelings and understanding (Luke 24:21). Hospitality seems to
    be an important means in this process (Luke 24:29-30).

6. Jesus then provides them with context and explanation. He paints a larger
    picture and vision, thereby giving them a theoretical framework in which to
    reflect on their experiences (Luke 24:26ff.).

7. Jesus helps them to reflect on their experience and thus they are able to
    grasp the truth of His resurrection. Simply to have an experience is not

enough to develop knowledge and understanding. Reflection creates

understanding and helps to realize and transfer experiences (Luke 24:34).

8. When they share bread, they come to know Him (Luke 24:31). They

    immediately bear witness to what they now know (Luke 24:33-35).

9. The disciples share their insights, and again a cycle of understanding is set

    in motion. The "Eleven and those with them" (v. 33) have doubts and

    misunderstand what they hear (Luke 24:38).

10. Jesus stood in their midst (Luke 24:36). Again he shares time, knowledge

    and bread with them (Luke 24:39-48) and explains Scripture to them.

11. Eventually the disciples are excited and motivated (Luke 24:52). Jesus then

    empowers them and sends them into the world (Luke 24:49ff.), with the

    final empowerment taking place on Pentecost, as the Holy Spirit comes

    down upon them (Acts 2).

One can see how Jesus' attitude as an educator helps the disciples to take

their time in processing their experiences. He is with them, not "above" them, and

he leads them to develop their own inductive learning process.

The disciples in Luke 24 model how to process a re-entry experience.

Following Jesus had inspired high hopes in them; they had believed Him to be the

Messiah. When Jesus was crucified, their hopes were crushed and deep confusion

set in. The risen Jesus invited them into a dialogue with each other and with

Scriptures. The opportunity to share their feelings helped them to value Jesus'

input. In a cycle of understanding, they were able to sort out their experiences and

to deal with the new situation. They applied the knowledge gained to their lives, making the events they had experienced meaningful again.

The "Get it!" program provides returnees with tools that guide them through a similar process as they return home and re-integrate into their daily lives at home. Connective and causal effect questions help returnees to link concepts to their cross-cultural experiences. Introducing them to re-entry theory helps them to compare their understanding and experiences with theory. Teachers often have the tendency to tell students the answer before the students themselves have had the opportunity to develop an answer. Jesus models a different approach, listening and waiting for them to "come to see" (Luke 24:33). He stimulates a climate of learning. They reveal their feelings, whereupon Jesus reveals Scripture for them. He ties things together for and with them, as they become ready for it. Jesus is concerned with transformation and attitude change. Therefore, he tackles their point of view and their reactionary opinions, building a bridge between what is in the disciples' minds and what is in the Scriptures. They become able to add the biblical stories to their knowledge and thus deepen their understanding.

When "Get it!" students return from their cross-cultural experiences, they need help to identify their stereotypes. In a debriefing session that takes place immediately after their return, time is provided to have them share their stories, to provide them with a framework and tools for understanding, and to wait for them to "come to see." The debriefing session is important to help returnees to transfer and apply their experiences gained to other times and places. Cross-cultural

experiences offer valuable outcomes that students need to be aware of. They need to develop tools for discovering and applying principles and concepts. By presenting the theory of re-entry and by giving them time and space to become aware of the possibilities and challenges, the program can help students link learning, thinking and doing. The "Get it!" training phase provides settings for experiential learning, which increases the student's intrinsic interest in further learning. Students require a framework in which supervision and the freedom to make and learn from mistakes exist in balance. Each "Get it!" team has a team leader and local supervisors to help them process their experiences during their outreach assignment. They are supported in their learning situation and are asked to reflect on their experiences. Falk (1995, cited in McKeachie 2002, 248) proposed "a discussion before beginning a service project in which students imagine what the experience will be like and express their feelings." During the three months of training prior to the outreach assignment, students are asked to think about the goals of their experiences. When they return for debriefing, their performance is evaluated. Personality development is facilitated, students become aware of Christian lifestyles in another culture, and during that time they often experience a transformation of their values, worldview, attitudes and relationship to God. Successful learning can help bring about lasting changes and transformation. Giving students the chance to connect topics to their own lives and to link prior knowledge with new information are important steps in the learning process.

In Luke 24, Jesus builds such a framework. The disciples' understanding is enhanced because they are able to contrast and compare their prior knowledge with the new information Jesus has given them. "Get it!" returnees learn to sharpen their awareness and self-reflection so that they can process the experiences they have gained and connect them with new theory, with Scripture and with new attitudes and behaviours. When these processes stimulate intrinsic interest in returnees, they can better apply their knowledge and transformation gained into their home situations. In learning to understand the nature and requirements of that transition, students can develop strategies to implement insights in their daily lives. That stage of learning and understanding should not be overemphasized. The "Get it!" program fosters change in students, but this process needs to be nurtured and supported. Here the involvement of families, friends and home churches is important; all parties must be informed about how the teaching in the program fosters change and about re-entry theory. If they can develop understanding and strategies to help returnees to deal with the demands of re-entry, all parties will benefit.

Providing ways to learn together can bring closeness again. Anabaptist core beliefs offer a wide range of possible experimental learning situations. Anabaptists emphasize the gift of hospitality, which offers space to share stories, to take time to listen to one another and to reflect about God's larger story. When home churches, families, friends and returnees practise listening in the willingness to strengthen one another, so that the best in both positions is realized, they follow Jesus' model in Luke 24. The notion of the "priesthood of all

believers" provides them conceptions of equity, respect and knowing how to complement one another using the gifts God has entrusted to believers that they may reach out to the world. Mennonites have often referred to discipleship as being on a road together. Community is necessary to help and exhort one another to follow Christ with all our heart, mind and soul.[116] Mennonites encourage each other to view their lives as parts of God's broader vision. Believers are called to model Jesus' love, to seek justice and to bring reconciliation and peace. Being on the journey together gives room to share stories and lives, to help one another to sharpen understanding and to be moulded into God's image (Gal 4:19, Rom 12:1-2). Therefore, Mennonite churches should not be shocked and upset by returnees who come back with a different awareness and understandings of poverty, striving for ways to bring about justice, to care for creation and to question the status quo.

Historically, Anabaptists have a certain understanding of alternative lifestyles. Maybe returnees can help to promote awareness and a willingness to discuss such topics again, as Jesus' encounter in Luke 24 changed the worldview of the disciples on their way to Emmaus.

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[116] The Shared Convictions (2006) state: "The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need. We gather regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability." The Mennonite Confession of Faith (1995) explains: "Participation in church life is a participation in Christ. Following Christ in life, a response of faithfulness to the baptismal covenant and to communal loyalty, is a way of knowing Christ. Works of love and service are an extension of Christ's ministry in and through his body, the church. Joining in corporate worship regularly (Heb. 10:25) and sharing in the Lord's Supper are ways of participating in the life of Christ and encouraging each other."

In the Luke 24 parable, it is obvious that the disciples were willing to learn. Jesus makes them curious enough that they do not wish to part from him, but invite him to stay (Luke 24:29). Maybe their motivation was also nurtured by fear ("it is dark" Luke 24:29). Nevertheless, the knowledge they gain is translated into action (v. 33), determined by their skill and will. Willingness can be enhanced by providing feedback to students. In the "Get it!" program, students and their mentors meet regularly. They discuss teachings the students heard in class. The mentors help them to reflect about their efforts and developing skills, and change is fostered. Students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning. A learning process is effective when students set their own goals, stay on target and realize how to transfer successful strategies to future tasks. In Luke 24, we can see such a process being implemented. When the two disciples share their insights with the other disciples (Luke 24:33f.), the risen Jesus joins them again and the cycle of understanding is repeated. In Acts (10–15, 14:24-28), one can see how the disciples apply what they have learned; they always return to the body of Christ to share about their experiences. They then discuss and reflect on the new insights and events. Sometimes they struggle and wrestle with decisions, listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit, study Scripture and finally take decisions mostly in unity and consensus. Mennonites apply the same principle of being a hermeneutic community and thus provide a relevant framework for approaching re-entry experiences.

The "Get it!" program lasts nine months—long enough, hopefully, to set in motion some learning processes. Returnees have new ideas, a changed

worldview and are themselves in the process of transformation. Friesen (2004, iii) showed that "post-trip regression in participants' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors one year after returning from the mission experience was ... significant." Returnees need a setting that nurtures and supports the transformation already underway. Contact persons are willing to mentor the returnees for a long time. They play an important role in helping returnees to transfer and apply their experiences. When they can also engage home churches, family and friends to support the returnees, to help them listen and learn with the returnees, returnees can in turn build up an effective learning process, engaging all parties involved.
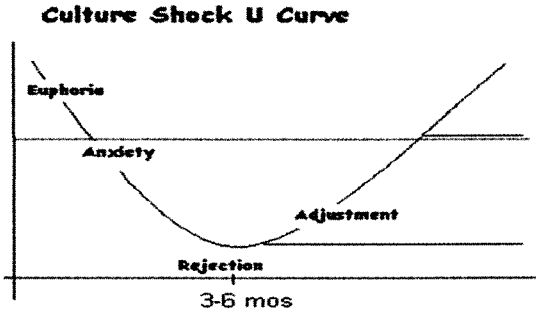
When home churches, family, friends and contact persons help returnees to keep alive the understanding they have gained, to teach them self-monitoring skills and to encourage them to invest in their relationship with God and with the body of Christ, returnees can better develop strategies. Returnees have experienced a transformation in several areas of their lives. A discussion of self-regulated learning can help them to "come to see" that there is a need to alter or transform strategies in different contexts and for different purposes. Strategic learning is an investment in the present and in the future, and enables people to take advantage of learning processes.

It is an Anabaptist core belief that churches should invest in discipleship training,[117] to mentor and support believers in their effort to follow Jesus in their
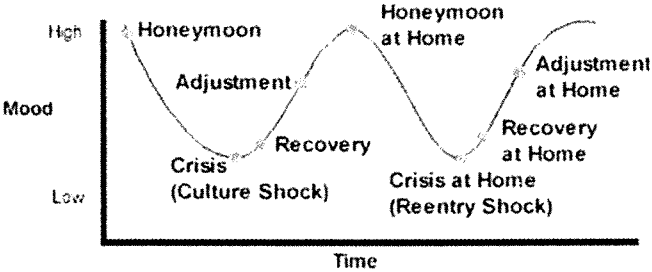
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[117] The Mennonite Confession of Faith (1995) comments: "Discipleship is to be lived out in the context of Christian community. As individuals we are called to follow Jesus, and the church community is also called to a life of discipleship. In the congregation, discipleship is also closely connected with discipline and mutual care. Christ's disciples together learn how to follow Christ more nearly in their love for each other and in their accountability to each other."

daily lives. Church members could share with returnees examples of successful approaches to learning and to following Christ. Listening to one another can help to refine methods and to generate ideas. Praying and serving together can strengthen relationships. Returnees can be encouraged to invest again in their home churches and to participate in God's project together with those churches.

Appendix 25
(Re-)Culture Shock

Culture Shock U Curve

Euphoria

Anxiety

Adjustment

Rejection

3-6 mos

The U-curve of culture shock (Safety Abroad 2010)

High

Mood

Low

Honeymoon

Adjustment

Crisis
(Culture Shock)

Recovery

Honeymoon
at Home

Adjustment
at Home

Recovery
at Home

Crisis at Home
(Reentry Shock)

Time

Based on Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn & Gallahorn (1963)

The W-curve of re-culture shock (Safety Abroad 2010)

Appendix 26
Research Implementation in the "Get it!" Program

The project aims to enhance the program's re-entry procedure and policy. Greater awareness about how and what they can contribute toward successful re-integration of returnees from Mennonite short-term mission programs should be built up in returnees' churches, families and friends. The project also highlights how Mennonite faith and identity can enhance the re-entry process. Findings of the project inform the following key actions.

"Get it!" Training Curriculum

The "Get it!" program aims to empower young people to interact with different cultures and people in a respectful and tolerant way, to develop missional approaches nurtured by biblical wisdom and a deep conviction of God's love for all people, so that believers can contribute to solving the pressing demands of today's world and act as God's agents. A willingness to invest of oneself beyond personal ambition can bring about transformation in the world. If our students can identify with the best of Mennonite tradition, and then find out what is most important to them, they can find a deeper meaning in life for which it is worth taking risks and suffering pain. By introducing students to the Mennonite faith tradition, we can offer them an attractive understanding of the body of Christ and one possible way to follow Jesus today that might also attract "post-modern" people more broadly. The majority of our students belong to an Anabaptist/Mennonite congregation, and we can build up and deepen Mennonite identity in them. Our curriculum is shaped by these objectives. Topics like peace theology, Anabaptist history, biblical study about justice and social action and

internships in social and missional projects can all communicate core beliefs. Students are encouraged to build accountable relationships (i.e., with their contact person) in their home churches so that they may process and transfer experiences gained. Success indicators, here, are accountable relationships, engagement in missional approaches within a church context, identification with Mennonite core beliefs, and a deeper understanding of discipleship.

Dealing with (Re-)Culture Shock

Students should be empowered to deal with culture shock in their in-field experience and with re-culture shock upon returning back home. Within the training course, students learn about culture shock, are introduced to cross-cultural approaches and process learning insights during team meetings. Returnees in the program are given one week of debriefing to complete the course. The results of the project influence the design and input of this week.

We adjusted the debriefing curriculum; students are introduced to tools of re-integration that have been identified as most important by surveyed program alumni. Action research with the present returnees has helped to evaluate the processes that have been adapted according to the findings.

Mobility, flexibility and technologies like the Internet have provided us with a variety of means to stay in touch with "Get it!" participants. We will encourage "Get it!" alumni to network for their mutual encouragement and spiritual growth. They can best help one another in dealing with re-entry shock. A member of the "Get it!" board has taken on the responsibility of installing a network system via Facebook. Feedback from alumni will help refine the idea.

Training of "Get it!" Team Leaders

The "Get it!" team leaders who accompany, mentor and support a team of "Get it!" students in their in-field learning experience are trained so that they can prepare the students for their eventual return home. Alumni recommended that team leaders could introduce their team members to the main possible re-entry symptoms before they return. The researcher has written a German-language book[118] about the re-entry process that benefits from the experiences she gained during the last twelve years in ministry. This book has been published in summer 2010 and became a helpful tool for home churches, family and friends of students, institutions and those returning from short-term mission assignments. Each student is provided with a copy of the book and is encouraged to take it along to his/her outreach assignment. Team leaders now can rely on this tool to introduce their team members to re-entry stress, and important tools can be used by returnees because they are prepared to come home. Feedback from returnees and team leaders will provide important insights for further adjustments.

Training of Contact Persons

As a consequence of project findings, we have developed a clearer job description to introduce contact persons to their responsibilities, together with an information sheet for congregations to foster cooperation and understanding. Students are provided with a checklist to support their cooperation with the contact person and the home church. Feedback from contact persons ensures

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[118] The book was published in 2010 as a tool to introduce home churches, families and friends of returnees to possible re-entry symptoms and to communicate how all parties involved can deal with re-entry stress.

ongoing learning. Feedback from students helped us to discern ideas that were generated by the survey; we plan to invite subsequent contact persons during the first third of the training phase to attend and listen to the students upon their return from an outdoor camp, as this provides a platform for experimental learning. The camp focuses on team formation, social competencies and preparation for the six-months assignment after the training phase.

We had also initially wanted to get contact persons involved during the week of debriefing, when the students return from their six months of outreach assignments. Thus, we had hoped to enhance the contact person's ability to share within his/her community about transformation that has taken place in the returnee's life and help to get people in the home church prepared for the returnees. The findings of the project and an action research done with returnees prompted us to cancel the ideas mentioned above. Returnees strictly argued against such an involvement of contact persons, preferring instead to focus on the return and sharing with other teams.

Fostering Mennonite Identity

The project also aims to motivate Mennonite congregations to educate their young people about Mennonite tradition and to help them consciously identify with Mennonite values, so that their lives become enriched and personal capacities can be set free to answer to the needs of the world. The program leadership contacts the home church and family to introduce them to the goals and models of the program, together with how they might support and cooperate with the program and the contact person. They are invited to an all-day event to

experience what "Get it!" discipleship training is all about, to get to know the other participants and team leaders, to hear about possible re-entry symptoms, and to spend time with their participant. The researcher's above-mentioned book about re-entry stress is recommended to them. By involving congregations on a more strategic level, they may come to realize how much they can contribute to returnees' lives, strengthening Mennonite identity and contributing together to become culturally effective in the world. Success indicators are a better re-integration of students, an enhanced cooperation of all parties involved.

Measurement of Outputs, Evaluation of Outcomes

Outputs are the result of processes, and can only be produced when there is someone who desires them. Returnees desire to re-integrate successfully. Families, friends and home churches desire returnees to re-adjust successfully. Expectations of various parties can be quite different and need to be clarified. An outcome is a level of performance or achievement that shows how performance changes over time. It seems impossible to measure satisfaction in regard to a re-integration process. Returnees may subjectively develop feelings of belonging again. Families might feel content when returnees resume old roles in the family pattern. Churches might be satisfied when a returnee takes over responsibility as a youth group leader. Therefore, project outputs can be measured in some areas where progress is compared against the plan, so that corrective action can be taken.

Quality of Debriefing Week

We intend to improve the design and input of the debriefing week by responding to suggestions alumni made in the project questionnaires. Alumni rated learning about re-entry stress, mentoring and encouragement to invest in relationships, and realizing one's own responsibilities as the top three helpful tools for re-integration. In further suggestions how to improve debriefing, some alumni suggested that they had not been taught to deal with spiritual struggles. Others called for more practical suggestions on how to transfer experiences gained into the daily routine at home.

It emerged that the top proposition was to give returning students more individual and team time to process experiences. As a program, we offer assistance in facing and resolving personal or team issues upon return, and provide teams with time to process issues. We help returnees initiate coaching on a personal level or via telephone with trusted persons at home. We give practical suggestions on how to deal with emotions, thoughts and behaviours during re-integration and we recommend literature to work with. These tools empower returnees to deal with re-culture shock upon returning back home. We also aim to foster the student's self control—to help them set up conditions so that they can develop the experiences that became most important to them. Therefore, we have teams sit together during debriefing and define the goals they individually wish to aim toward, to state a purpose and to draft a plan in regard to what resources and support they need to implement their goals. We can later use our Facebook network to ask these returnees if and why they felt empowered, how they dealt

with re-culture shock and what they might suggest to improve debriefing time for future returnees. We can learn where we need to improve.

Quality of Training of Team Leaders

Alumni suggested that team leaders should help to learn about and deal with re-entry stress, to set a framework to discuss symptoms, to help students let go of the past and to develop plans for the return home, and to share about hopes and anxieties before the team returns. Our program trains team leaders during the training phase and helps them to better understand their tasks and roles. We complement this training with the topics identified by alumni. Future "Get it!" students can evaluate the benefits they derive from these teachings.

Quality of Cooperation with Contact Persons

We assess our models and practices in regard to contact persons by keeping in touch with contact persons, students and home churches throughout the outreach assignment. We evaluate the following areas and can make enhancements to the process immediately:

- Have contact persons and home churches alike understood the model? Do they understand the job requirements?

- How smooth is the flow of information between contact person, home church and student during outreach?

- Is there a need that must be dealt with, and how can the program leadership give support?

Quality of Cooperation with Home Churches

To enhance cooperation with home churches, the program leadership:

- Connects with home churches, informs them about the program's goals, the

  model of having a contact person, and how they might contribute to this model

- Initiates communication with all parties involved in re-entry to clarify

  issues/concepts/factors

- Explains success or failure of cooperation

- Offers support and explains how to keep in touch with students

- Asks what have we done well so far? What do we want to improve in the

  future?

Future students and home churches are encouraged to evaluate their experiences

so that we can learn together and do better.

Appendix 27

Respondents of Questionnaires and their Denominations

"Get it!" alumni	Year of participation in "Get it!" program	Length of stay (months) / Assignment Location	Completed questionnaire?		Denomination
			Yes	No	
MJRTN38	2006-07	5 Paraguay	x		Free Evangelical
PJRTN39	2006-07	5 Canada		x	Free Evangelical
BKFTN40	2000-01	5 Canada		x	Mennonite
HK_TN41	2002-03	12 USA		x	Mennonite
MSBTN42	2003-04	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
RKFTN43	1999-2000	3 Paraguay	x		Mennonite
JKBRTN44	2009-10	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
AKNTN45	2009-10	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
BLITN46	1998-99	3 Tanzania	x		Mennonite
GLLTN47	1998-99, 99-2000	3 Kenya, 3 Paraguay	x		Mennonite
NLTN48	2004-05	5 Canada		x	Free Evangelical
TLMTN49	2002-03	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical
DLCTL11	2000-01	5 Ethiopia	x		Mennonite
ML_TN50	1999-2000	5 Chad	x		Mennonite
MLNTN51	2000-01	5 Ethiopia		x	Mennonite
ELBTN52	1999-2000	5 Chad	x		Mennonite
MLKTN53	2000-01	5 Ethiopia	x		Free Evangelical
PMBTN54	2006-07	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical
ALBTN55	1999-2000	3 Paraguay		x	Anabaptist
AM_TN56	2006-07	5 Canada	x		Free Evangelical
BMWTN57	2000-01	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
SMBTL12	2000-01	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical
MMSTN58	2009-10	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
FMHHTL 13	1998-99	3 USA	x		Mennonite
RNPTL 15	2007-08	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
SNUCOL7	1998	Co-director	x		Mennonite
POPTN59	2004-05	5 Kenya		x	Mennonite
SODTN60	2003-04	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
SODTN61	2002-03, 03-04	5 Kenya, 5 Canada	x		Mennonite
ROITN62	2003-04	5 Canada	x		Free Evangelical
JZ_TN63	2006-07	5 Paraguay	x		Mennonite
HPUTL17	1998-99	3 Kenya	x		Mennonite
TPDTN64	1999-2000	3 Paraguay	x		Mennonite
APLTN65	2002-03	5 Kenya		x	Mennonite
MPPTN66	2009-10	5 Basel	x		Mennonite
CQMTN67	1998-99	3 Tanzania	x		Mennonite
NRWTN68	2006-07	5 Kenya	x		Mennonite
JRHTN69	199899	3 USA	x		Mennonite
ERLTL18	2005-06	5 Indonesia		x	Mennonite Brethren
DRGTN70	2005-06	5 Indonesia	x		Free Evangelical
MRBTN71	2007-08	5 Canada	x		Free Evangelical
ESPTL 19	2009-10	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
FSMTN72	2004-05	5 Kenya	x		Mennonite
SSOTN73	2000-01	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
MSMTN74	2002-03	5 Kenya	x		Mennonite
PSITN75	1998-99	3 Kenya	x		Mennonite
GS_TN76	1998-99	3 Kenya		x	Anabaptist
DSKTN77	2005-06	5 Indonesia	x		Mennonite
ESSTN78	2007-08	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
LSGTN79	1998-99	3 USA		x	Mennonite
MSÖTN80	2004-05	5 Canada		x	Anabaptist
LSPTN81	2009-10	5 Basel	x		Mennonite
BSSTN82	1998-99	3 USA	x		Free Evangelical
CSBTN83	2004-05, 06-07	5 Kenya	x		Anabaptist
STBTN 84	2000-01	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical
HVGZTN85	2006-07	5 Paraguay	x		Free Evangelical
TVG_TN 85	2004-05, 06-07	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical

BWRTN86	2006-07	5 Paraguay		x	Mennonite
JWWTN87	2004-05	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
AWWTN88	2003-04	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
LWETL22,	2005-06	5 Canada		x	Mennonite
SW_TN89	2006-07	5 Kenya		X	Free Evangelical
TWLTN90	2007-08	3 Canada	x		Mennonite
MBZTN92	2004-05	5 Canada	x		Baptist
JBDTL 1	2004-05	5 Canada	x		30 Mennonite
TBHTN 91	1998-99	3 Tanzania		x	Anabaptist
JBLCOL 1	1999	Co-director	x		Mennonite
HBBTN1	2002-03	5 Canada		x	Mennonite
EBLCOL2	2006-07, 09-10	Co-director	x		Free Evangelical
SBATN2	1998-99	3 USA		x	Mennonite
RBOTN3	2006-07	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
EBATN4	2007-08	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
GBSTN5	2005-06	3 Canada		x	Mennonite
MBSTN 6	2006-07	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
FD_TN7	1999-2000	3 Paraguay		x	Anabaptist
DDBTN8	2000-01	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
CDKTN9	2004-05	5 Kenya	x		Anabaptist
SDSTLTN10	2009-10	No outreach assignment	x		Mennonite
GD_TN 11	2006-07	5 Kenya		x	Mennonite
DELCOL3	2004	Co-director	x		Mennonite
TFKTN11	2002-03	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
GFWTN12	2004-05	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
JFWTL3 IFWTL3a	2000-01	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
SFRTN13	2000-01	5 Ethiopia	x		Free Evangelical
MFWTN14	2005-06	5 Canada	x		Anabaptist
CFSTN15	2000-01	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
CGDTN16	2000-01	5 Kenya	x		Mennonite
GFKTN17	2002-03	5 Canada		x	Mennonite
LFSWTN18	1999- 2000	3 Paraguay		x	Mennonite
DFKTN19	2005-06	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
AGSTGTN20	2006-07	5 Canada	x		Free Evangelical
UGRTL5	2002-03, 06-07	5 Canada		x	Mennonite
EGRTL 6	2006-07	5 Kenya, 5 Canada	x		Mennonite
RGTTN22	1998-99	3 Chad	x		Mennonite
AGMTTL7	2009-10	5 Basel	x		Mennonite
JGLTN23	2007-08	5 Canada	x		Free Evangelical
IGBTN24	2002-03	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
EGLTN25	1999-2000	3 Paraguay	x		Free Evangelical
JGBTN 26	2000-01 and co-director, 2004	5 Ethiopia	x		Mennonite
DGBTN27	2000- 2001	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical
MHÄTN 28	2000-01, 02-03	5 Ethiopia, 5 Kenya	x		Reformed/Free Evangelical
SHNTN29	2000- 2001	5 Kenya	x		Free Evangelical
BHRTN30	2005	No outreach assignment		x	Free Evangelical
JHKTN3	2009-10	5 Canada	x		Free Evangelical
AHDTN32	2005-06	5 Indonesia	x		Mennonite
BHDTN34	1998-99	3 USA		x	Mennonite
SHJDTN33	2005-06	5 Indonesia	x		Mennonite
JHPCOL6	2002 Co-director	No outreach assignment	x		Free Evangelical
DHKTN 35	1998-99	5 Kenya	x		Mennonite
JHBTN3	2005-06	5 Canada	x		Mennonite
THHTN37	2009-10	5 Basel	x		Anabaptist
Total: 112		Total: 86 (53 female, 33 male)	26		, 50 are Mennonite; 23 Free Evangelical; 1 Reformed; 11 Anabaptist; 1 Baptist

Contact person	Year as contact person for "Get it!" student	Completed questionnaire ?		Denomination
		Yes	No	
KABL1	2005-06	x		Mennonite
KASN5	2009-10		x	Anabaptist
KAWW6	2004-05	x		Anabaptist
KBHK7	1999-2000		x	Mennonite
KBLS8	2004-05	x		Reformed
KBRW9	2006-07	x		Mennonite
KBSW10	2006-07	x		Mennonite
KCMWPL11	2007-08	x		Mennonite
KCCV14	1998-99, 2001-02	x		Mennonite
KDLR16	2006-07	x		Reformed
KDEL17	2009-10	x		Mennonite
KDEL18	2007-08	x		Mennonite
KDMP19	2009-10	x		Mennonite
KCMBD20	2005-06	x		Mennonite
KEHL22	2003-04	x		Reformed
KGLL25	2005-06	x		Mennonite
KGLB26	2001-02	x		Mennonite
KHSB29	2005-06		x	Mennonite
KHKVÜ30	2001-02		x	Mennonite
KHBB31	2002-03	x		Mennonite
KIHB32	2001-02	x		Anabaptist
KISK33	2009-10	x		Mennonite
KJMW35	2004-05	x		Anabaptist
KJB36	2004-05	x		Mennonite
KKSH38	2001-02	x		Anabaptist
KKHL39	1998-99		x	Mennonite
KWUR40	2001-02, 05-06	x		Mennonite
KLUR41	2001-02, 05-06	x		Mennonite
KLSM42	2006-07	x		Mennonite
KMAS43	2007-08		x	Mennonite
KMRS44	2001-02		x	Mennonite
KMTC46	2006-07	x		Reformed
KMWB47	2007-08		x	Anabaptist
KMHL48	2009-10		x	Anabaptist
KMMB49	2004-05, 06-07	x		Anabaptist
KMRR50	2002-03		x	Charismatic
KMAW52	2006-07	x		Mennonite
KPWB53	1998-99	x		Mennonite
KPSH54	2005-06		x	Mennonite
KRSZ56	2004-05	x		Baptist
KRPP57	2009-10		x	Mennonite
KSZR59	2001-02	x		?
KSDP60	2001-02	x		Mennonite
KSBA61	2001-02		x	Mennonite
KSMM62	2004-05		x	Mennonite
KSSO63	2006-07	x		Mennonite
KSSS64	2004-05		x	Anabaptist
KSWW66	2007-08	x		Mennonite
KTML69	2006-07		x	Brethren
KUHL70	2006-07	x		Mennonite
KYKH71	2009-10		x	Mennonite
KNGT 72	2002-03	x		Mennonite
Total: 52		Total: 35	Total: 19	Of a total of 35, 24 were Mennonites, 5 Anabaptist, 4 Reformed, 1 Baptist, 1 unknown

Home church leadership	Student(s) participated in "Get it!" program in	Denomination	Completed questionnaire?		Student returned to home church?			"Get it!" participants from this church
			Yes	No	Yes	No	For a time	
GMHP1	2004-05, 2007-08	Mennonite	x		x			3
GCSP2	1998-99	Mennonite		x	x			
GENP3	1999-2000, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2006-07	Mennonite	x		x		x	4
GPGE4	2001-02, 2003-04	Mennonite	x		x			
GDKT5a	2009-10	Mennonite	x		x			
GDKT5b	2009-10	Mennonite	x		x			
GALE7	1998-99	Mennonite		x	x			
GAFT8+KAN73	2007-08, 2009-10	Mennonite	x		x		x	3
GTDT9	2001-02	Anabaptist	x		x			
GPWP10	1998-99, 2002-03	Mennonite Brethren	x				x	2
GCYE11	1998-99	Mennonite	x		x		x	2
GGSE12	1998-99, 1999-2000, 2009-10	Mennonite	x				x	3
GDDE13	2005-06, 2007-08	Mennonite	x					3
GHPRE14	1998-99, 2005-06	Mennonite	x		x		x	2
GWLUP15a	1998-99, 2001-02, 2002-03	Mennonite	x		x		x	3
GWLUP15b	1998-99, 2001-02, 2002-03	Mennonite	x		x		x	3
GAZP16	2009-10	Mennonite	x				x	1
GPBE17	2006-07	Mennonite		x			x	
GUHP18	1998-99, 1999-2000, 2006-07	Mennonite	x		x		x	3
GGFE19	2005-06	Mennonite	x		x			
GLHP20	2002-03	Mennonite	x		x			
GMWE21	2005-06	Mennonite	x		x			
GWFP22	2005-06	Anabaptist	x		x			
GDTE23	2001-02, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06	Mennonite	x		x			5
GEBP24	2005-06	Mennonite	x		x			
GRDE25	2001-02	Mennonite	x		x		x	
GJFPTL28	2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06	Anabaptist	x		x			3
GHPP30	2001-02	Mennonite	x		x		x	
GPHP31	2005-06	Mennonite Brethren		x			x	2
GRDP32	2006-07	Mennonite		x			x	
GEBE34	2004-05, 2006-07	Anabaptist		x	x			
GURP35	2001-02, 2006-07	Mennonite	x				x	2
GUASE37	2001-02, 2002-03	Mennonite	x				x	
GEWP39	1999-2000	Anabaptist		x			x	
GFSE40	2006-07	FEG	x		x			
GWKFE	2000-01	Mennonite	x		x		x	1
Total: 37	Of a total of 29, 26 were Mennonites, 4 Anabaptist, 2 Mennonite Brethren, 1 Free Church		Total : 29	Total : 8				

Appendix 28
Notes from the Project Presentation

The research project and its findings were presented at the Ausbildungs-

und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg in Liestal, CH, Switzerland, on December 9,

2011. The 36 participants consisted of:

- Students from the Bachelor of Theology program at Ausbildungs- und

  Tagungszentrum Bienenberg. Some of them had had previous

  international experience

- Faculty members from the Ausbildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bienenberg

- "Get it!" program alumni

- Pastors and church members from Mennonite congregations. Some of

  them participated in the research project and responded to questionnaires

- Other interested persons, some of them with international experience.

  Participants gave comments on various aspects:

Problems and challenges of re-entry stress can happen to all people who

experience changes and who seek ways to transfer and apply these changes into

daily life. All of them need a supportive community around them to deepen and

apply changes. A lot of returnees receive attention and are well cared for in their

home churches. However, all those who stayed at home also undergo changes and

need others who offer change management tools.

Family, friends, and home churches hold certain values and thus often

expect returnees to be unchanged. Conflicts can easily arise when retrunees have

changed worldviews, beliefs and attitude, worship styles or expressions of faith

and are no longer loyal to former perspectives. Churches and returnees alike should become aware of that area of conflict. programs should offer tools how to deal with these challenges.

Mennonite Core Beliefs: Not all of our Mennonite congregations strengthen Mennonite identity, others do not act according to their beliefs they refer to in their theology. The majority of the "Get it!" students belong to Mennonite/Anabaptist congregations- how can short-term programs help to strengthen Mennonite identity? In case the students focus on Mennonite beliefs but their churches do not- how can short-term mission programs help students to react appropriately?

The research shows that churches and families should be more involved to help returnees to successfully reintegrate. However, churches and families often feel overwhelmed to respond to all these tasks. How can programs encourage them in a good way?

Participants gave feedback on various aspects of the project:

Re-entry or Debriefs
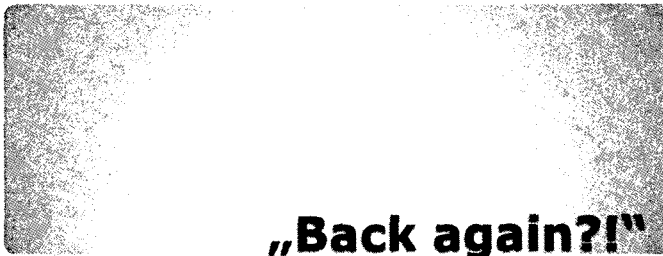
- Program and congregation should offer information on future opportunities and direction in discipleship, mission and service.

Pastoral Care

- Clearly defined expectations and goals help to ensure the best possible re-integration experience when they are understood by both the sending church and the program.

- Programs should encourage churches to establish patterns of regular communication and reporting between the church and participants on assignment.

- Churches need to discuss mutually accepted lines of authority and communication between the participants and church leadership.

- It is helpful to establish patterns for pastoral care and support that all parties understand.

- Churches should offer ongoing opportunities for participant discipleship and relevant involvement in ministry.

- Programs should communicate clear guidelines for financial management to churches and program participants.

Appendix 29
Slides from thesis presentation
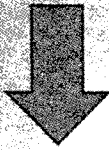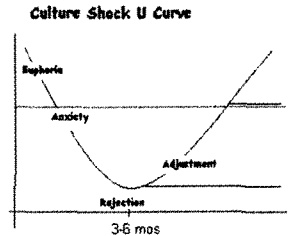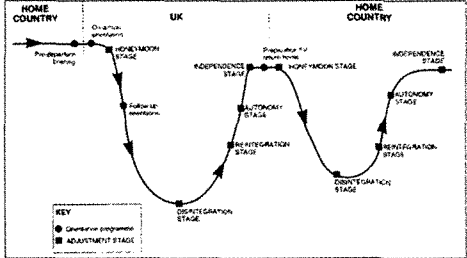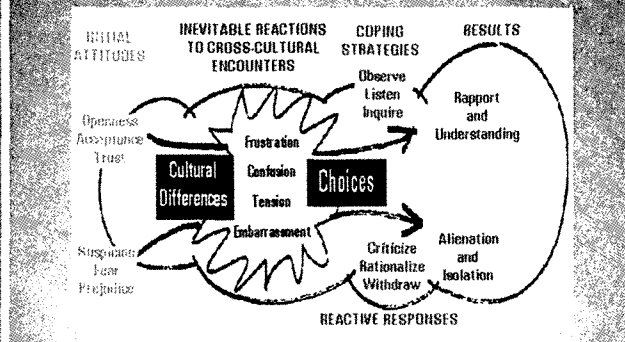
Description of Problem

Re-culture Shock

Process of Cultural Adjustment

„When I came back from a voluntary service in Latinamerica I felt helpless and it seems no one could understand what I had experienced. Nobody had told me that coming back home is so challenging..." (- a returnee)

„These returnees seem to have no interest in us who stayed at home and what we have experienced during their absence. It looks like life had been existing for them only." (- a person from home)

The Way Back Home Can Last Longer

Short-termer's Perspective	Those at home
• The meaning of home has changed	• Joy
• „no words" to tell	• Misunderstandings, Lack of knowlege
• Re-adjustment	• Expectations
• „Who am I?"	• Different experiences
• Career planning	• „Life went on"
• New routines	• Relationships have changed
• Relationships have changed	

295
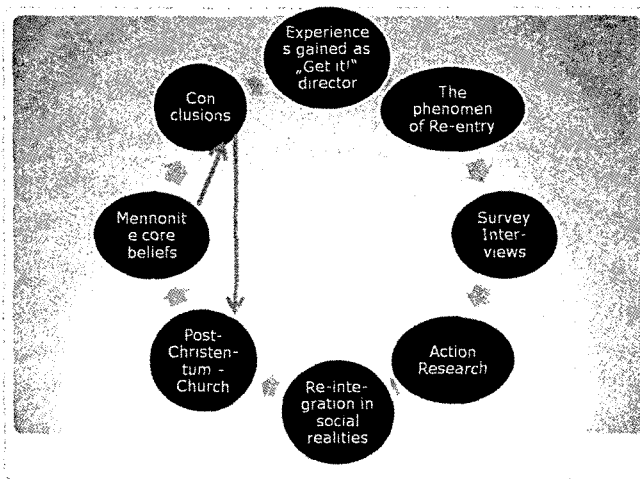
Survey, Interviews

AI values and recognizes the best in program

Strengths and potential of a system

What is God doing amongst us?

What does God want us to do?

Methodology

What was important in deepening your "Get it!" experiences?

Which points were most important in helping you to reintegrate and have a good return experience (in relation to your home church, family, friends)?

What should a home church, contact person, program, family focus on so that it might be more helpful in re-integrating their "Get it!" participant?

What are your top five ideas to share with future ... in regard to their return home?

Examples from Questionnaires

What are helpful tools to successfully re-integrate in a variety of social realties (family, friends, church)?

Role of returnees, program, church, family, friends for re-inetrgation?

How to enhance cooperation between all parties?

Questionnaire

Participants 1998-2010	„Get it!" Participants Total of 86, 33 males, 53 females	From Switzer land	From Germany	Other countries
Mennonites	50			
Anabaptists	11	25	53	8
Other	25			

1998-2010	Contact persons Total of 35	Church leadership Total of 29
Mennonites	24	27
Anabaptists	5	1
Others	6	1

Interviews Participants 1998-2010	Females	Males
12	9	3

Survey Participants

Statements given from alumni such as
- "sharing helps to see and appreciate changes"
- "sharing fosters reflection"
- "take time to talk with friends "
- "clarifying expectations"

led to the category „Communication".

Building of Categories

- Qualitative Analysis/Grounded Theory
  - Searching for themes, patterns, relationships
  - What are the conditions and circumstances connected with re-entry? What about the cultural context?
  - categories=>led to theory

Verbal descriptions	Frequency of terms	Coding and categories	Core category or ranks	Findings

Analysis
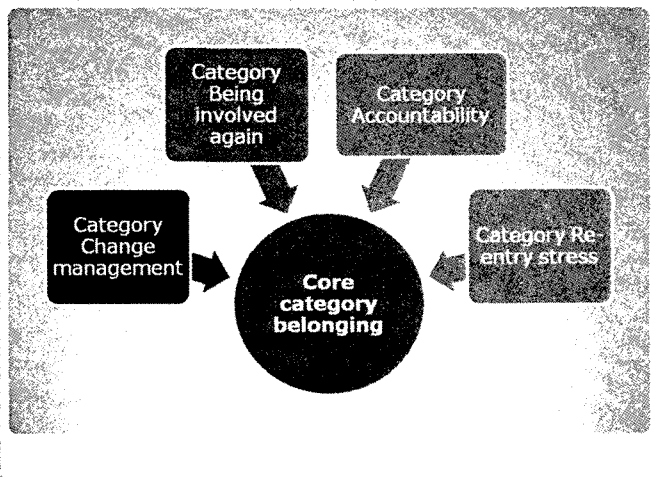
Statements given from alumni such as
• "feeling of being understood"
• "having a strong, established relationship
  with a person before the mission trip "
• "caring for each other"
• "having established and strong relationships
  in church, at home."
led to the category „Relationships".

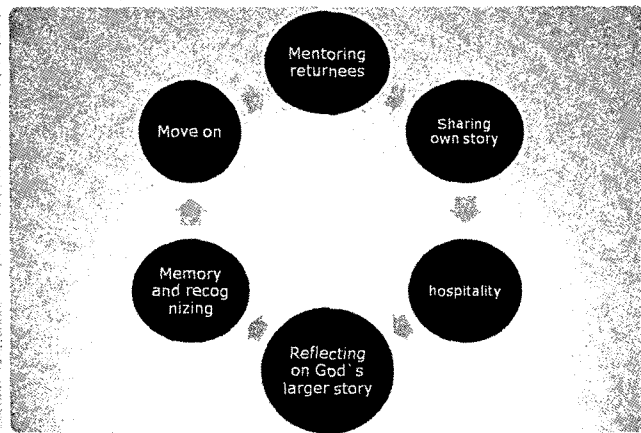These categories led to a new one:

Building of Categories

Communication	Relationships	Category accountability
• Flow of information • Sharing • Expectations	• expectations • Renewing relationships • Mentoring	

"It was so valuable to be able to have someone to whom I was accountable and someone to ask me how I'm doing. When I came home I just needed someone to take me along, even when I didn't feel like it. That's how I found my place again." —program alumnus

Categories

Responsibilities
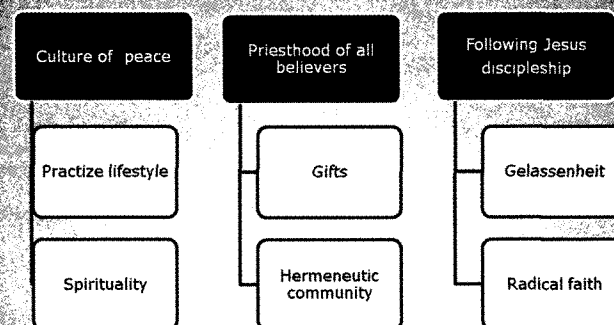
Cycle of Understanding Lk 24: 13-52

- Passionate faith
- Being involved in decision-making processes
- Structure empowers for actions
- Experiencing truth
- Dialogue
- Hermeneutic community
- Community, equality
- Authenticity
- Schnegg (2007, 49-51

Results from Research in Church Planting

- Returning and re-integrating in social reality „Post-Christendom"
- What for a returnee should be enabled?
- Post-Christendom – attractiveness of church?

For nearly 500 years, [Anabaptist tradition] has represented an alternative way of discipleship, church and mission. Having rejected the Christendom shift, Anabaptists have explored different perspectives on all kinds of issues and have experimented with different practices. Though far from perfect, it does offer fresh insights that are far more suitable for post-Christendom than the mainstream traditions we have inherited from Christendom.
Murray Williams (2010)

- Re-entry and re-integration into social reality of „church"
- What can Mennonite core beliefs contribute to successful re-integration?
- Mennonite understanding of the body of Christ
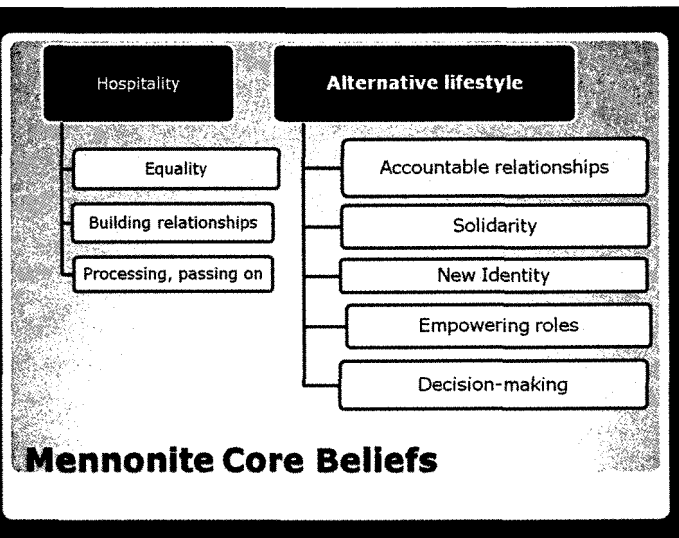
Culture of peace	Priesthood of all believers	Following Jesus discipleship
Practize lifestyle	Gifts	Gelassenheit
Spirituality	Hermeneutic community	Radical faith

Mennonite Core Beliefs

Following Jesus

» Inscribed on the very heart of God`s grace is the rule that we can be its recipients only if we do not resist being made into its agents; what happens to us must be done by us." Mirsolav Volf

(Exclusion and Embrace. 1996. Nashville: Abingdon: 129)

Mennonite Core Belief

Hospitality	Alternative lifestyle
Equality	Accountable relationships
Building relationships	Solidarity
Processing, passing on	New Identity
	Empowering roles
	Decision-making

Mennonite Core Beliefs

» Mennonite core beliefs offer helpful tools for a successful re-integration

  Encouraging and accountable relationships of bleivers who live with a kingdom-mentality

  Discipleship process; every member has a contribution to make

  Hospitality provides a framework for sharing and relationships

» Mennonite identity offers attractive approaches to live as authentic Christians in a post-Christendom society

Conclusions

Re-integration short-termers	Mennonite Core Beliefs	Expectations of Post-Christendom society
Accountability	Discipleship	Passion
Being involved again	community	Participation
Change management	Priesthood of beleivers	Empowering structures
Relationships	Kingdom mentality	Experiencing truth
Re-entry stress	A culture of peace	Dialogue
Church offers identity building	Hermeneutic community	Hermeneutic community
Belonging	Hospitality	community
Accountability	Following Jesus	Authenticity

Mennonites, Culture & Re-integration

What programs can do
- Pre- and post orientation
- relationally focused programs, focus on teaming
- Cooperation with all parties, DTS is only a part in a whole system
- Communication: re-entry stress
- Awareness
- Resources for change management
- Help to re-establish relationships at home
- Encouragement for re-integration
- Discipling in cooperation with church
- Member care
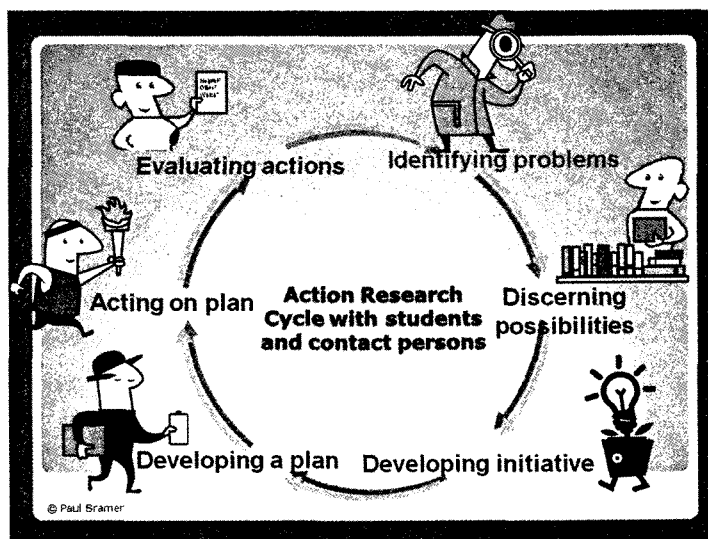
Belonging is Driving Force

What returnees can do
- Developing understanding, realizing chnges
- dealing with re-entry symptoms: realize challenges, loneliness, missing community, using the potential of accountable relationships
- Do not comparmentalize experiences
- Spiritual disciplines
- Communication
- Re-establishing relationships

Conclusions

What returnees can do
- Bringing in what God has entrusted you with
- Expecting and sharing blessing
- Building bridges, be initiative
- Becoming a motivator
- Intercession
- Staying in tocuh with program, mission field
- Passing on what you have learned

Conclusions

Evaluating actions   Identifying problems

Acting on plan   **Action Research Cycle with students and contact persons**   Discerning possibilities

Developing a plan   Developing initiative

© Paul Sramer

What families, friends and churches can do
* Social skills are trained and identity is build here
* Realize your role for ongoing re-integration and discipleship
* Empower disciples (coaching, spiritualitity, Identity)
* Learn about possible re-entry symptoms
* Welcome returnees
* Communication:clarify expectations
* Build accountable relationships

Conclusions

What families, friends and churches can do
* Time
* Allow for changes
* Process and evaluate experiences, find places to bring in gifts
* Offer a framework for changes
* Encouragement
* Offer mentoring: spiritual disciplines, career planning
* Member care: role of community, alternative lifestyle (kingdom-lifestyle)
* Cooperation

Conclusions

Discussion: commentaries, questions, remarks?

* Thanks a lot!!

Feedback

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