Back home: Distress in re-entering cross-cultural missionary workers and the development of a theoretical framework for clinical management

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Roads go ever on
Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone
Turn at last to home afar.
Eyes that fire and sword have seen
And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green
And trees and hills they long have known.

Gandalf looked at him. ‘My dear Bilbo!’ he said. ‘Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were.’ And so they crossed the bridge and passed by the mill by the river and came right back to Bilbo’s own door. ‘Bless me! What’s going on?’ he cried.

(Tolkien, 1999, pp. 276-277)

For my husband, Derrick, with my heartfelt thanks
CONTENTS

CONTENTS.......................................................................................................................... III
LIST OF TABLES.................................................................................................................... XI
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................... XII
ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................... XIII
MANUSCRIPTS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS THESIS .................................................. XV
DECLARATION .................................................................................................................. XVI
Copyright Holders......................................................................................................... XVIII
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS ARISING OUT OF THIS THESIS .......................... XX
AWARDS ARISING OUT OF THIS THESIS ........................................................................ XXII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................... XXIII
STATEMENTS OF AUTHORSHIP ............................................................................... XXVIII


CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THESIS OVERVIEW .......................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 The Re-Entering Cross-cultural Missionary Worker and their General Practitioner .............................................................................................................. 1
1.2 Aims, Research Questions and Approach of This Thesis ............................... 5
1.3 My Role as Researcher .................................................................................. 8
1.4 The Thesis Argument and Outline ............................................................... 10

CHAPTER 2: THE LITERATURE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION: ACCULTURATION AND REACCULTURATION OR RE-ENTRY ADJUSTMENT ... 14
2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................. 14

2.2 Terminology of Cultural Adaptation ........................................................... 15
  2.2.1 Acculturation ................................................................................... 15
  2.2.2 Reacculturation or re-entry adjustment ............................................ 16

2.3 Who Re-enters? ............................................................................................ 17

2.4 Re-entry Adjustment Theories ..................................................................... 19
  2.4.1 Affective theoretical concepts ......................................................... 20
  2.4.2 Behavioural theoretical concepts ..................................................... 21
  2.4.3 Cognitive theoretical concepts ......................................................... 22

2.5 What does the Literature Tell Us about Psychological Distress during Re-entry? ................................................................................................ 24
  2.5.1 What is psychological distress? ....................................................... 25
  2.5.2 Psychological distress associated with migration: acculturation and re-entry adjustment ......................................................... 26
  2.5.3 Loss and grief and re-entry adjustment ............................................ 29
  2.5.4 The loss and grief paradigm ............................................................. 34
  2.5.5 The resilience paradigm ................................................................... 38

2.6 Psychological Care during Re-entry ............................................................ 39
  2.6.1 Group care: re-entry transition programs ......................................... 40
  2.6.2 Individual care: non-clinical and clinical ......................................... 42

2.7 What is missing? .......................................................................................... 48

2.8 Conclusion ................................................................................................... 49

CHAPTER 3: THE STUDY DESIGN ........................................................................ 50
  3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................... 50
  3.2 Following the Research Questions: My Evolving Journey ......................... 51
  3.3 Answering Question 1: Mixed Methods .................................................... 54
    3.3.1 Theoretical basis and rationale ....................................................... 55
    3.3.2 The survey: the less dominant quantitative method ....................... 56
3.3.3 The semi-structured interview: the dominant qualitative method ... 57
3.3.4 Reliability, validity and rigour ......................................................... 60
3.4 Answering Question 2: Developing a Framework for Clinical Use ........ 62
3.5 Ethical Considerations ......................................................................... 62
3.5.1 Beneficence ...................................................................................... 63
3.5.2 Respect for persons .......................................................................... 65
3.6 Overview of Study Design ..................................................................... 67
3.7 Conclusion .......................................................................................... 69

CHAPTER 4: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY ........................................ 70
4.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 70
4.2 Sample ................................................................................................ 70
4.2.1 Rationale ........................................................................................ 71
4.2.2 Inclusion criteria .......................................................................... 71
4.2.3 Recruitment ...................................................................................... 74
4.3 Answering the First Research Question: Development of Data Collection Instruments ................................................................................................... 76
4.3.1 The survey ........................................................................................ 76
4.3.2 The semi-structured interview ......................................................... 86
4.4 Answering the First Research Question: Data Collection ..................... 90
4.4.1 The survey ........................................................................................ 90
4.4.2 The semi-structured interview ......................................................... 91
4.5 Answering the First Research Question: Data Analysis ....................... 92
4.5.1 The survey ........................................................................................ 92
4.5.2 The semi-structured interview ......................................................... 95
4.6 Answering the Second Research Question ........................................... 102
4.7 Conclusion .......................................................................................... 103

CHAPTER 5: BIOGRAPHIES AND THE QUANTITATIVE RESULTS SUMMARY FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS .............................................................................................. 104
5.1 Introduction................................................................................................ 104

5.2 The Study Participants: Their Re-entry Context and Our Interaction ...... 104

5.2.1 Neil........................................................................................................ 105

5.2.2 Jenny .................................................................................................... 107

5.2.4 Pam ...................................................................................................... 108

5.2.5 Joan ..................................................................................................... 109

5.2.6 Chas ..................................................................................................... 111

5.2.7 Greta .................................................................................................... 112

5.2.8 Sam ...................................................................................................... 113

5.2.9 Trudy .................................................................................................... 114

5.2.10 Felicity .............................................................................................. 115

5.2.11 Carrie ............................................................................................... 116

5.2.12 Lily ..................................................................................................... 117

5.2.13 Grant .................................................................................................. 118

5.2.14 Bernie ............................................................................................... 119

5.2.15 Helen ............................................................................................... 119

5.3 Quantitative Results for All Participants from Loss Review (Section A) and Grief Measure (Section B) of RGDI ................................................... 120

5.4 Limitations of the Quantitative Data ......................................................... 121

5.5 Conclusion ................................................................................................. 122

CHAPTER 6: THE QUALITATIVE RESULTS IN THREE ARTICLES .................... 123

6.1 Introduction................................................................................................ 123

6.2 Back Home: A Qualitative Study Exploring Re-entering Cross-cultural Missionary Aid Workers’ Loss and Grief ......................................................... 124

6.3 Resilience in Re-entering Missionaries: Why Do Some Do Well? ........... 145

6.4 Special People? An Exploratory Study into Re-entering Missionaries’ Identity and Resilience ...................................................................................... 169

6.5 Supporting Evidence for the Qualitative Data from the Quantitative Data ................................................................................................................. 188
6.6 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 188

CHAPTER 7: THE STUDY FINDINGS: A NEW APPLICATION FOR THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL ........................................................................................................... 190

7.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 190

7.2 Cross-cultural Re-entry for Missionaries: A New Application for the Dual Process Model ........................................................................................................... 190

7.3 Application of the Dual Process Model Applied to Re-entry in the Australian General Practice Setting ........................................................................... 229

7.4 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 231

CHAPTER 8: THE JOURNEY, THE FINDINGS AND THE FUTURE ........................................... 233

8.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 233

8.2 The Loss and Grief Paradigm for Re-entry ....................................................... 234

8.3 The Role of Resilience in Re-entry ................................................................. 236

8.4 A New Theoretical Framework for Re-entry: The Dual Process Model Adapted for Re-entry (DPMR) ........................................................................... 238

8.5 Limitations of the Study ..................................................................................... 239

8.6 Suggestions for Re-entrants' Communities from the Results of this Study ................................................................. 241

8.6.1 Suggestions for the sending organisation ..................................................... 241

8.6.2 Suggestions for the faith community .......................................................... 242

8.6.3 Suggestions for family and friends ............................................................. 242

8.7 Further Research ............................................................................................... 243

8.8 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 244

GLOSSARY: DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS THESIS .......................................................... 245

APPENDIX 1: SEARCH STRATEGY FOR THE LITERATURE REVIEW IN CHAPTER 2 .......................................................................................................................... 253

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE .... 255

APPENDIX 3: THE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET ......................................... 257

Participant Information Sheet for The Development of a Repatriation Program to Deal with Issues of Grief and Loss in Adult Australian Cross-Cultural Workers ................................................................................................................................. 257
The University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee Document for People who are Subjects in a Research Project .................................................. 260

Contacts for Information on Project and Independent Complaints Procedure .................................................................................................................. 260

APPENDIX 4: Consent Form .............................................................................................................................................................................................. 262

Standard Consent Form for People who are Subjects in the Research Project: The Development of a Repatriation Program to Deal with Issues of Grief and Loss in Adult Australian Cross-Cultural Workers ............... 262

APPENDIX 5: THE SURVEY ............................................................................................................................................................................................ 264

Appendix 5A. The Re-entry Demographics Questionnaire originally known as the *Demographics Questionnaire* ............................................................................... 265

Appendix 5B. The Re-entry Grief Diagnostic Instrument also known as The *Loss and Grief Questionnaire for Re-entry to Australia* ............................................ 270

Appendix 5C. The DASS 21 Questionnaire ........................................................................................................................................................................ 278

APPENDIX 6: LETTER TO MISSION ADMINISTRATOR (DE-IDENTIFIED) ..................................................................................................................... 279

APPENDIX 7: EMAIL INVITATION TO BE SENT BY THE MISSIONARY ORGANISATION TO PARTICIPANTS ................................................................................................. 282

APPENDIX 8: INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS IN SURVEY PACK ............................................................................................................................................ 284

APPENDIX 9: RE-ENTRY DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE: FIRST VERSION .................................................................................................................. 286

APPENDIX 10: THE GRIEF DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT ......................................................................................................................................................... 290

APPENDIX 11: PERMISSION TO USE THE GRIEF DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT .................................................................................................................. 299

APPENDIX 12: THE RE-ENTRY GRIEF DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT: FIRST VERSION ........................................................................................................... 300

APPENDIX 13: THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: FIRST DRAFT ..................................................................................................................... 307


APPENDIX 15: DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS FOR PILOT AND STUDY PARTICIPANTS ........................................................................................................... 315

APPENDIX 16: ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS .................................................................................................................. 317

16.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................................................................................... 317 
16.2 Loss Assessment Results: Survey – RGDI (Section A) and Interview .... 317
   16.2.1 The incidence of loss ................................................................. 318
   16.2.2 Multiples of loss categories ..................................................... 318
   16.2.3 Frequencies of loss categories ................................................ 320
   16.2.4 Validity ................................................................................... 322

16.3 Grief Assessment Results: Survey – RGDI (Section B) and Interview..... 322
   16.3.1 Grief score analysis: survey – RGDI (section B) ....................... 323
   16.3.2 Measurement of disenfranchised grief: interview ..................... 326

16.4 Mental Health Indices: Survey – DASS 21 Questionnaire.................. 326

16.5 Discussion .......................................................................................... 327
   16.5.1 Loss assessment results and grief scores ................................. 327
   16.5.2 Disenfranchised grief ............................................................... 329
   16.5.3 Mental health indices ............................................................... 330

16.6 Conclusion .......................................................................................... 331

APPENDIX 17: RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR
RESILIENT AND FRAGILE PARTICIPANTS .............................................................. 332

17.1 Introduction ....................................................................................... 332

17.2 Loss Assessment Results: Survey – RGDI (Section A) and Interview .... 332
   17.2.1 The incidence of loss ................................................................. 332
   17.2.2 Multiples of loss categories ..................................................... 333
   17.2.3 Frequencies of loss categories ................................................ 333
   17.2.4 Validity ................................................................................... 333

17.3 Grief Measure Results: Survey – (Section B) RGDI and Interview ........ 336
   17.3.1 Survey – grief measure (section B) of RGDI: descriptive
       statistics; incidence of grief; reliability and validity ....................... 336
   17.3.2 Measurement of numbers of participants with disenfranchised
       grief ................................................................................................. 337

17.4 Mental Health Indices: Survey – DASS 21 Questionnaire.................. 338
17.4.1 Descriptive statistics ................................................................. 339
17.4.2 Comparison of loss categories from RGDI (section A) and 
interview with grief scores from RGDI (section B) and 
DASS 21 scores .................................................................................. 339

17.5 Discussion .................................................................................. 340
17.5.1 Loss assessment results and grief scores ............................. 340
17.5.2 Disenfranchised grief ............................................................. 341
17.5.3 Mental health indices ............................................................... 342
17.5.4 Clinical uses of the survey ....................................................... 343

APPENDIX 18: PERMISSION FROM MISSION AGENCIES TO CONDUCT 
RESEARCH (DE-IDENTIFIED) ................................................................. 344

APPENDIX 19: ARTICLE: SELBY, S., JONES, A., CLARK, S., BURGESS, T., & 
THE ROLE OF THE GP. AUSTRALIAN FAMILY PHYSICIAN, 34, 863–864, 878. ....... 348

APPENDIX 20: LIST OF GRIEF PHENOMENA ........................................... 352

APPENDIX 21: CONFIRMATION OF UPCOMING PRINT PUBLICATION: SELBY, S., 
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MISSIONARIES: A NEW APPLICATION FOR THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL. 
OMEGA, 62, 329–351. ................................................................. 356

REFERENCES .................................................................................. 357
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Development of the Re-entry Demographics Questionnaire ........................................78

Table 2. Loss Categories for the Loss Review (Section A) of the Re-entry Grief Diagnostic

Instrument ..................................................................................................................................81

Table 3. Development of the Loss Review (Section A) of the Re-entry Grief Diagnostic

Instrument ..................................................................................................................................82

Table 4. Items from the Grief Measurement (Section B) of the Re-entry Grief Diagnostic

Instrument ..................................................................................................................................83

Table 5. Development of the Semi-structured Interview Schedule ..........................................88

Table 6. Questions in the Final Semi-structured Interview Schedule........................................89

Table 7. Thematic Analysis of the Semi-structured Interview .................................................100

Table 8. Suggested Mapping for the Care of Psychologically Distressed Re-entrants as

Part of the Quality Framework for Australian General Practice (modified from Booth

et al., 2005) ................................................................................................................................232
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Thesis Map .........................................................................................................13
Figure 2. Research Questions ...................................................................................................53
Figure 3. Study Design .............................................................................................................68
Figure 4. The Process of Participant Entry to the Study ...........................................................75
Figure 5. Framework Analysis .................................................................................................101
ABSTRACT

A high proportion of cross cultural aid workers and missionaries who may also be involved in aid work are known to suffer from significant psychological distress on re-entry. In the Australian primary health care system, Australian general practitioners are most often the first point of contact for those with psychological distress. There is, however, little acknowledgement or understanding in the medical literature of the distress of this particular group in Australian society and their management in the general practice setting. This thesis addresses these issues with an analysis of the experiences of 15 returned adult Australian missionaries.

The thesis presents an analysis of evidence and builds theory using predominantly qualitative methods. Firstly, I comprehensively explore the evidence for the nature of the distress suffered by these re-entering missionaries. Through analysis of their accounts of their day-to-day lived experience during the interactive transition of their re-entry, I demonstrate the importance of their loss and grief, particularly their disenfranchised grief, as part of their psychological distress. I describe a new type of disenfranchised grief: self-absorbed disenfranchised grief. Some missionaries appeared to have less distress than others, which has led me to categorise two groups of re-entrants, the resilient and fragile. Further exploration of these missionaries’ psychological distress led me to focus on the nature of their resilience. I demonstrate the psychological, social and spiritual constructs which increase resilience in this group in the context of multiple losses and grief as well as the role of their identity disparities. I also demonstrate a link between resilience and identity disparities.

Secondly, the results of this thesis together with the existing theoretical models for loss and grief enable me to build an evidence-based theoretical framework to address psychological distress during re-entry. I show how the Dual Process Model, which addresses
loss and grief after bereavement, may be modified to address loss and grief during re-entry based on the findings of this study. Within this framework I also demonstrate the facilitators and barriers that affect the missionaries’ psychological distress during re-entry. I offer this model as a framework for dealing with missionaries’ psychological distress during re-entry in the clinical setting.
MANUSCRIPTS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS THESIS

Published


Accepted for publication

DECLARATION

This PhD “by a combination of conventional written narrative presented as typescript and publications that have been published and/or submitted for publication” is consistent with the minimum standards set down in the Academic Program rules outlined in the Adelaide Graduate Centre’s postgraduate program rules (PhD rule 7.1-7.7 and specifications, 2010) and the Faculty of Health Sciences PhD by publication guidelines specific to the School of Population Health and Clinical Practice available at (web link accessed November 26, 2010):


Choice of journals in this portfolio of publications is justified as follows. International peer reviewed journals were chosen as this topic, whilst important in the Australian context, addresses issues which are relevant to the global community.

*Omega – Journal of Death and Dying* is the most advanced and internationally recognised journal on the subject of death and dying and is one of the journals which also address non-death loss and grief, one of the central themes of this thesis and the topic of the first article. It has also devoted an issue (Volume 61, Issue 4, 2010) to the Dual Process Model and appeared to be the most appropriate journal for the fourth article which described another use and adaptation for the Dual Process Model related to re-entry. It is an official ADEC (Association for Death Education Counseling) Affiliated Journal (2009 ISI Impact Factor: 0.554). *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* is a journal which provides an authoritative forum and a single point of reference for the growing number of professionals and academics working in the expanding field of mental health and religion (2009 ISI Impact Factor: unavailable)
which is closely related to the topic of this thesis. *The Journal of Religion and Health* (2009 ISI Impact Factor: 0.358) is a journal which explores the most contemporary modes of religious and spiritual thought with particular emphasis on their relevance to current medical and psychological research. This journal was particularly appropriate for the third article about the relationship between identity disparities and resilience in re-entering missionaries which had not been previously described.

Signed:                           Dated:

Susan Selby 24.01.2011
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Adjunct Assoc Prof Alison Jones
Dr Sheila Clark Dr Nicole Moulding
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(Co-Supervisor)

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Susan Selby and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.
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STATEMENTS OF AUTHORSHIP


*Susan Selby, The University of Adelaide (Candidate)*

Conceived and conceptualised manuscript orientation and structure, developed study design, carried out literature review, undertook familiarisation of data, identification of thematic framework and predetermined concepts as major themes, coded the data, compared data and undertook concept mapping, wrote the manuscript and acted as the corresponding author. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate.

Signed ........ Date ..................

*Nicole Moulding, The University of South Australia*

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Sheila Clark, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved: Supervised development of the work, helped in data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

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My contribution to this paper involved assistance with development of the work and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ........................................... Date 24/01/2011
Justin Beilby, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved assistance with development of the work and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ............... 

...............Date [date]}
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*Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 2009, 12, 701–720.

*Susan Selby, The University of Adelaide (Candidate)*

Conceived and conceptualised manuscript orientation and structure, developed study design, carried out the literature review, analysed the data by the three methods described, wrote the manuscript and acted as the corresponding author. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate.

Signed ...... ......................................Date 11/14/11

*Annette Braunack-Mayer, The University of Adelaide*

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed . ........................................Date 24/01/2011

*Nicole Moulding, The University of South Australia*

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ..... ........................................Date 26/1/11
Alison Jones, Royal Australasian College of Physicians

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Sheila Clark, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved: Supervised development of the work, helped in data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Justin Beilby, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved assistance with development of the work and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed .......... ..................................Date ... \[\frac{1}{2}\]
Special People? An Exploratory Study into Re-entering Missionaries’ Identity and Resilience.

*The Journal of Religion and Health* 2010 [electronic version]

_Susan Selby, The University of Adelaide (Candidate)_

Conceived and conceptualised manuscript orientation and structure, developed study design, carried out the literature review, analysed the data, wrote the manuscript and acted as the corresponding author. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate.

Signed ............. Date 14/1/11

_Annette Braunack-Mayer, The University of Adelaide_

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

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_Alison Jones, Royal Australasian College of Physicians_

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Sheila Clark, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved: Supervised development of the work, helped in data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed .................. Date 22/2/..

Nicole Moulding, The University of South Australia

My contribution to this paper involved: Contribution to data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ........ Date 26/9/..

Justin Beilby, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved assistance with development of the work and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ........ Date 23/11/..
Cross-cultural Re-entry for Missionaries: A New Application for the Dual Process Model.


*Susan Selby, The University of Adelaide (Candidate)*

Conceived and conceptualised manuscript orientation and structure, carried out the literature review, modified the Dual Process Model, applied the study results to the Dual Process Model, wrote the manuscript and acted as the corresponding author. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate.

Signed …….. ………………….. Date ……

*Sheila Clark, The University of Adelaide*

My contribution to this paper involved: helped in data interpretation and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed …….. …………………………….. Date …

*Annette Braunack-Mayer, The University of Adelaide*

My contribution to this paper involved manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ………………………………………………………..Date …

[XXXV]
Alison Jones, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ...... ........................................Date ..........................

Nicole Moulding, The University of South Australia

My contribution to this paper involved manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ...... ........................................Date ..........................

Justin Beilby, The University of Adelaide

My contribution to this paper involved assistance with development of the work and manuscript evaluation. I certify that the statement of contribution is accurate and permission is given for Susan Selby to include this paper in this thesis for examination towards the Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed ......................... ........................................Date ..........................