

# Returning

Reentry to the home culture

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# Introduction

“From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.” (Acts 14:26-28)

# Introduction

Barnabas and Paul were sent by God's Spirit and commended by the church of Antioch. They went back to that community when they finished that work, reporting to them all that God had done. The community welcomed them back and reintegrated them into the fellowship.

# Planned Returns

- Furlough or Home Assignment
- End of commitment
- Finished work
- Educational or Training
- Sabbatical
- Holiday

# Crisis or Emergency Returns

- Health
- Conflict with team or local leadership
- Natural Disaster
- Social / Political
- War / Violence
- Hostage response
- Moral Failure
- Sickness or death back home
- Financial

# Sending: Preparing the Framework and Safety Nets

- [www.vineyardmissions.org](http://www.vineyardmissions.org) > Sending Long-Term Cross-Cultural Workers > Sending: Preparing the Framework and Safety Nets
- Creating a reentry plan is extremely important to the whole project's success.
- Sometimes the LTCCW's visits home will be planned, but other times they may be unplanned. In either case, clear expectations between the LTCCW and the sending structure need to be in place.

# **Sending: Preparing the Framework and Safety Nets**

- Part of creating an effective reentry plan is thinking mercifully about your LTCCW's emotional state. You want your LTCCW's home visit to be revitalizing, not stressful. Vineyard LTCCWs have commented that ongoing emotional support after they return is critical to them ever wanting to go again. Prepare a cultural reorientation strategy that is appropriate for their age and situation in life.

# Create a Reentry Plan

- What details must be considered for planned returns?
- Familiarize with transition models, such as RAFT by David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken (The Third Culture Kid Experience: Growing Up Among Worlds)
- Clarify how often LTCCW returns and who pays for it under which circumstances.

# Create a Reentry Plan

- What is the plan for sudden returns?
- Engage Crisis Management Network
- Consider registering with LTCCW's embassy for early warnings and government evacuations
- What is the cultural reorientation strategy, including age appropriate reorientation for children and youth?
- What are appropriate missionary retreat opportunities?

# Reverse Culture Shock

- I've been changed
- You seem different
- This church seems different
- Where do I fit?

# **A Word About Reverse Culture Shock**

**By John Hervey**

Many workers brace themselves for the culture shock they face in their new host country, but are unprepared for the same kind of thing to happen when after two or three years they return to their country and culture of origin. First of all, there are often significant changes that happen while we are on the field. Children grow taller and more articulate, cities change, styles change, and these changes are usually pretty striking to the person who has not seen the gradual process.

# Sample Return Plan

## Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

1. To rest and refresh body, mind, and spirit of every family member.
2. To reconnect to friends and family.
3. To celebrate and communicate what God has done through the team of goers, and to encourage the senders.
4. To enrich the lives of ministry partners and restore support levels to 100%.
5. To prepare for return to the field, or wherever God is leading you.

# Sample Return Plan

## Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

- Start planning early, 3-6 months in advance, depending on the length of the HMA.
- Plan your time carefully – Many things will compete for it.
- Consider a Retreat especially for cross-cultural workers.
- Send a newsletter in advance to let supporters know when you will be available to visit with them or in some cases why you won't be able to see them. (Remember they have busy lives too.)

# Sample Return Plan

## Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

- Send emails to everyone who needs to know in the States.
- Begin to let your national friends know of your plans so that they can prepare their hearts for your absence.
- Think about what you want to bring back with you to share with family and supporters.

# Sample Return Plan

Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

- **When You Are About to Leave Your Field Assignment...**
- Consider making a list of the most significant friends and acquaintances you have made during your time on the field.
- Make sure you have resolved any 'unfinished business' in relationships before your leave. Do you need to do any peacemaking?

# Sample Return Plan

Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

- **When You Are About to Leave Your Field Assignment...**
- Be aware of your team's policies regarding HMA.
- Start packing early so that you have time at the end for surprise visits and interruptions.
- Make time to journal and write down what God has done in your life while you have lived there.

# Sample Return Plan

Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

- **During Your Home Assignment, Make Sure You Get Time for...**
- Settling in - try not to schedule to speak immediately upon arrival. You need to get settled and get your bearings again.
- Visiting family – it might be best to get time away with them if you expect to have a lot of distractions around you.

# Sample Return Plan

Adapted from Frontiers HMA Plan

- **During Your Home Assignment, Make Sure You Get Time for...**
- Spiritual Renewal & Refreshment – This won't just happen automatically.
- Rest – Don't skip your vacation time.
- Nurturing your relationship with your sending church and supporters.

# Pioneers

## An example of a personal debrief

### Personal Debriefing Questions

From a workshop by Ed Scheuerman of Pioneers (2009)

- In 15 minutes, write down as many thoughts as possible about the trip.
- Pick 3 items from number 1 that have been key to your experience.
- Write down 5 things you really liked about the culture.
- Write down 5 things you really did not like about the culture.

# Pioneers

## An example of a personal debrief

### Personal Debriefing Questions

From a workshop by Ed Scheuerman of Pioneers (2009)

Answer the following questions:

1. Through this experience, what has God said to me about my life in my home country?
2. Through this experience, what has God said to me about my walk with Him?
3. Through this experience, what has God said to me about His heart for the world?
4. Through this experience, what has God said to me about the work in the place I served?

# Standard Debriefing

- Welcoming parties or meetings where they can tell their story
- MTI ([www.mti.org](http://www.mti.org)) DAR (Debriefing and Renewal)

# Crisis Debriefing

- Le Rucher in France
- Mobile Member Care Team West Africa
- Vineyard Mobile Care Team

(see [www.vineyardmissions.org](http://www.vineyardmissions.org) for contact details on these and other resources)

# Third Culture Kids (MK's)

- Narramore Christian Foundation  
[www.ncfliving.org/](http://www.ncfliving.org/)
- Barnabas International [www. barnabas.org](http://www.barnabas.org)

# Retreats

- Pastoral Sabbath
- David Nixon <http://sustainablefaith.com>

# Intensive Care

- Link Care (California) [www.linkcare.org](http://www.linkcare.org)
- Heartstream: Resources for Cross-cultural Workers (Pennsylvania) [www.heartstreamresources.org](http://www.heartstreamresources.org)
- Minnesota Renewal Center (Minnesota) [www.minnesotarenewal.org](http://www.minnesotarenewal.org)
- Healing for the Nations (Georgia) [www.healingforthenations.org](http://www.healingforthenations.org)
- The Well Counseling Center (Chiang Mai, Thailand) <http://thewellcm.com>
- The Cornerstone Counseling Center (Chiang Mai, Thailand) [www.cornerstonecounseling.in.th](http://www.cornerstonecounseling.in.th)

# Health

- Medical
- Dental
- Nutritional

# Education

- Registering for school
- Child assessments
- Continuing Education
- Training

# Resources

- [www.vineyardmissions.org](http://www.vineyardmissions.org)
- Jordan, Peter; Re-Entry, YWAM Publishing
- Knell, Marion; Families on the Move, Monarch Books
- Pirolo, Neil; The Re-Entry Team, Emmas Road International
- Storti, Craig; The Art of Coming Home, Intercultural Press
- Collins, Marjorie A.; Mi\*\*ionaries on Furlough, William Carey Library

# Resources

- [www.vineyardmissions.org](http://www.vineyardmissions.org)
- Pollock, David; Van Reiken, Ruth; The Third Culture Kid Experience: Growing up among worlds. Nicholas Brealey Publishing
- Chinn, Lisa; Reentry Guide for Short Term Mission Leaders, Deeper Roots Publications, 2100 Red Gate Road, Orlando, FL 32818, USA.  
[www.deeperroots.com](http://www.deeperroots.com)