

# LEAVING REGENT WORKBOOK



*At every turn in the road a new illumining is needed to find the way and a new kindling is needed to follow the way. (John S. Dunne)*

***“While the biblical concept of ‘leaving and cleaving’ is always used in the context of marriage, there is much truth lurking in this notion that can be applied beyond the marital context. Leaving involves loss and grief, sadness and numbness, and, at times, joy and exhilaration. Cleaving is about a shift in loyalty and inevitably that involves joy and exhilaration, as well as sadness and numbness and loss and grief. Any of us who have gone through significant changes know that leaving and cleaving are often two sides of the same coin.” (Rod Wilson, November 2003)***

Transitions can be times that heal us, empower us, transform us. They can also leave us drained, hurt and depressed. Learning to leave well, to work through the transitions that inevitably occur in our lives is important. Through the Leaving Regent workshop and through this workbook we hope to raise your awareness of issues related to this time of transition. We hope to give you an opportunity to reflect on your time at the College and what it means for you to leave it. We want you to experience good closure to your time here so that you will be better able to enter into your new place.

This workbook provides you with resources and practical suggestions to help you once you leave this place. It includes worksheets, letters from former alums and practical suggestions for you when you encounter difficult times. We trust you will find it helpful.





## **PRAYER OF ONE WHO IS MOVING ON**

**Image:** a suitcase

(Place your suitcase in a position where you can see it during this prayer time.)

**Read and Pray:** Ps. 121

Yahweh guards you from harm,  
he guards your lives.  
He guards your leaving, coming back,  
now and for always (Ps. 121:7, 8).

**Prayer**

Guardian, guide, no pillar of cloud by day nor fire by night,  
Yet I sense your presence with me, God of the journey.  
You are walking with me into a new land.  
You are guarding me in my vulnerable moment.  
You are dwelling within me as I depart from here.  
You are promising to be my peace as I face the struggles  
of distance from friends and security,  
the planting of feet and heart in a strange place.

Renew in me a deep trust in you. Calm my anxiousness.  
As I reflect on my life I can clearly see  
how you have been there in all of my leavings,  
You have been there in all of my comings.  
You will always be with me in everything.  
I do not know how I am being resettled,  
but I place my life into the welcoming arms of your love.

Encircle my heart with your peace.  
May your powerful presence run like a strong thread  
through the fibers of my being. Amen.

**Suitcase reflection**

1. What are some of the fresh perspectives you have gained while at Regent and that you want to take with you? (from classes, conversations, relationships). Thank God for these. Thank God for the gift to carry these blessings with you in your heart as you move on.
2. What are the things you want to leave behind? Perhaps an attitude, a relationship, a hurt. Pray for the grace to let them go.
3. What kinds of things are you most in need of as you continue your journey? Pray that God will supply your need.

If you wrote your blessings on paper, place these lists in your suitcase as a prayerful sign of your trust in God.

***Closing Prayer***

(This litany is based on the four aspects of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, petition.)

***I give you praise, God of my journey,***

for the power of love, the discovery of friends, the truth of beauty  
for the wonder of growth, the kindling of fidelity, the taste of transformation  
for the miracle of life, the seed of my soul, the gift of becoming  
for the taste of the little dyings which have strengthened me for this moment  
for the mystery of journey, the bends in the road, the pauses that refresh  
for the faith that lies deep enough to permeate discouragement and anxiety

***I give you thanks, God of my journey***

for all I have learned from the life of Jesus of how to say goodbye  
for those who have always stood near me and given me spiritual energy  
for your strength on which I can lean and your grace by which I can grow  
for the desire to continue on, for believing that your power works through me  
for being able to love so deeply, so tenderly, so truly  
for feeling my poorness, my emptiness, my powerlessness  
for believing that you will care for me in my vulnerability

***I ask forgiveness, God of my journey,***

for holding on too tightly  
for refusing to be open to new life  
for fighting off the dying that's essential for growing  
for insisting that I must be secure and serene  
for ignoring your voice when you urged me to let go  
for taking in all the goodness but being reluctant to share it  
for doubting my inner beauty  
for resisting the truth of my journey home to you

***I beg assistance, God of my journey,***

to accept that all of life is only on loan to me  
to believe beyond this moment  
to accept your courage when mine fails  
to recognize the pilgrim part of my heart  
to hold all of life in open hands  
to treasure all that is gift and blessing  
to look at the painful parts of my life and to grow through them  
to allow your love to embrace me on the empty and lonely days  
to receive the truth of your presence  
to trust in the place of "forever hello"

Joyce Rupp, Praying our Goodbyes.

## **LEAVING REGENT ALUMNI PERSPECTIVES**

### **... writing the next chapters**

*Here are some excerpts from a few alums describing how the 'writing' process is going in their life-after-Regent. For some of these and other alumni reflections, check out the ALUMNI MOSAIC web-newsletter at [www.regent-college.edu](http://www.regent-college.edu)*

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I found the notes on re-entry preparation very practical and comprehensive. I wish I had attended a workshop like this before I left! However, no matter how much literature one has read, how many workshops one has attended, when the real shock comes, it still knocks you off your feet. For instance, you may have read dozens of books on baby care and parenthood, but when the newborn arrives, things just don't work out the way they should! **It's important that we approach returning home as a new experience, and as every one of us is a unique person every experience is unique too. In my experience it is the foremost test on what you have learned/benefited from Regent. Regard the process as a continuation of your Regent education. You never really leave Regent behind as much as you bring Regent along into your life journey.**

Patricia Chiu  
Hong Kong

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**We remind Regent students that they have changed and that the environment they go back to has changed while they've been gone. Not always so. I was amazed that even after 3 ½ years away, my home church had hardly moved an inch.** One couple had a new car, another a baby, another person had left, someone else had gone overseas, but essentially the church was still grappling with the same issues about the evening service, the same pastor was still dry in his sermons, we didn't have enough musicians or the community around us was changing and we were still behind to evangelize effectively.

**Then I realized that I hadn't changed. Back came the attitudes, the fears, the family misunderstandings ... and after Regent I have been better equipped to deal with them,** knowing more of myself to see the way I handle situations and ever more humbled by grace and the process of sanctification in me.

Alum  
New Zealand

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Finally employed on the faculty of a Christian university—a dream come true—yet finding myself struggling with a lack of self-confidence. Prior to Regent I'd earned a DVM, and a PhD, and had worked for years in my field of veterinary science. **But now after earning a ThM at Regent, I was wrestling with the thought of not being able to successfully make the transition back into working life. My self-confidence had been eroded to the point that I no longer felt capable of doing what I wanted to do. Once again, I felt some frustration at what had happened to me at Regent—I had been 'transformed' to the point where I felt unemployable!**

One of the best things about leaving Regent was experiencing the way God continues to work with us in places outside of Regent College. At the recommendation of friends I attended a seminar and finally experienced the healing and resulting confidence it brings that I never found during my Regent years. Work became meaningful for me when, among other things, I found that teaching and sharing my life with others is part of my purpose. It was a marvelous reminder to me that Regent does not have all the answers, that there is much, much more to be learned, and that even though Regent is part of the picture, it is far from the end of the story. **There is something sacred about what happens at Regent. But there is also great joy in discovering that God is not through with us once we leave.**

Wayne Corpi  
USA

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**In one sense, Regent breeds Christian misfits. If our time at Regent has been meaningful for us at all then we have been transformed. Like any one who has experienced a life-changing event, we soon find that it only makes sense to people who have experienced a similar event.** Whether we return to professional ministry, volunteer ministry, the marketplace, or even the cloister, we struggle to translate into ordinary life—into the world—the good things that we have learned, and the glimmer of possibility that we have seen at Regent. We become frustrated with the effort of communicating the beauty that we have known. We seek out like-minded people but find that they are few and far between. Our church fellowship, where we look for understanding and appreciation, may find us inaccessible or just a little shrill, or both, or worse.

**It has been said of adapting to a foreign culture (or living abroad) that it is like growing a third arm: initially it makes one rather awkward and self-conscious but in the long run it is a tremendous asset. This seems an apt metaphor for life after Regent, but the extent to which our *third arm* becomes either an asset or an embarrassing burden, depends mostly on us.** God leads each of us on to new and difficult challenges after we leave Regent; judging from what one finds in the Alumni newsletters. He leads us into challenges that matter very much to him. But let us be circumspect in our expectations. What matters is not how special we are, or the quality of our gifts, but the capacity to recognize the sacred spark in the context in which God has placed us. *What makes this place and these people special, in some way, beloved of God?* It is not the attitude with which most of us come to Regent, it is the attitude that most of us develop as we begin to uncover Regent's hidden depths.

If our *third arm* serves only to feed us, as individuals, then it ought to embarrass us. But if it reaches out, if it touches and enlivens the image of God in others, if it brings a measure of peace to

the created world, even if it is simply raised in grateful worship to God, then it will be more than an asset – it will be a blessing.

**Steve Early**  
**Africa/USA/Australia**

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The real bright spot since moving back home has been our Adult Bible Fellowship class at church. Shortly before I left Vancouver, I took a Community & Counseling course from Rod Wilson and he said something that really stuck with me. We were planning to move (and did move) back to my wife's hometown, and I was nervous about becoming a member at her childhood church. I love her family, and already knew the church very well, but after Regent I didn't know if I could readjust to a Midwestern/southern nondenominational church. **I asked Rod about 'choosing' a church and finding a community to join. He responded that I would find the process much easier if I went in with the mindset of *facilitating* community, rather than finding it.**

So that's exactly what we did. There was an enormous gaping hole in our church's ministry – zero opportunities for people in their 20s to 30s to build Christian friendships or grow spiritually. One of our ministers connected us with another couple with the same vision, and three years ago we started 'Faith and Fellowship'. It's grown to a community of about thirty people and a few of our members have even split off to start another class with a focus on slightly younger singles. It's been amazing to see God raise up leaders in virtually every area of need: social activities, service projects, administration, and prayer.

**Michael Hickerson**  
**USA**

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**If a tree survives being transplanted, it generally takes time to recover, and adjust to its new surroundings – such as the directions of the sun and wind, how often it gets watered, the nutrients in the soil, etcetera – before it will begin to grow new foliage and bear fruit. When I left Regent a little over two years ago after completing an MCS, I felt a bit like a bare-rooted tree being transplanted into foreign soil again, surviving and adjusting, even though I was returning to the city of my birth, and to work that I'd previously been competent in. Leaving behind close community and established rhythms of life will do that to a person.**

Three years out of my usual profession (architecture) to study theology full time was just long enough for me to lose some of the professional confidence and momentum that I had gained prior to Regent. Some re-adjustment to my workplace surroundings was needed upon re-entry. While studying, I had not kept up with developments in building materials, technology, regulations, standards and practices that occurred in those three years. Consequently, I returned to architecture feeling technically "rusty." It was like trying to remember a language that I'd spoken as a child, but could now only grasp after phrases to express myself. Needless to say, it was frustrating trying to use my professional instincts in faltering ways. Though I had grown verbally and linguistically,

gaining an expanded theological vocabulary at Regent, I had also lost practice in some of my math skills and spatial sensibilities that are useful in architecture—“Take the other left!” (By the way, I’ve noticed the reverse process happening since returning to architecture on a daily basis.)

At Regent I undertook a marketplace immersion, assisted by R. Paul Stevens and Janet Anderson who coached me as I began to examine work, in particular architecture, through a theological grid. I came to understand a number of things through this process: Firstly, our work matters to God, because He is the Ultimate Worker, and as His image-bearers we imitate Him in our creativity and problem-solving just as a child imitates her parent. Secondly, mission and ministry are not limited to work in fields associated with the church or para-church organizations. Neither are they limited to evangelistic or pastoral work. And thirdly, architecture can be a vehicle for responsible stewardship in Creation, for creating humane spaces in which to build, sustain and renew healthy communities, and for celebrating the particularities of people, place and story. Through my reading, I began to value the missiological significance of all this—I was actually participating in God’s enterprise. It dawned on me that practicing architecture this way was somehow connected to God’s kingdom architecture. I have been able to return to my profession with this at the heart of my work.

**Vicki Leo**  
**Australia**

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My time at Regent had a marketplace focus, and I particularly enjoyed the personal interaction with business people and lecturers. **I came away from Regent with a real burden to be a good steward of the time I spent in Canada, and wanted to continue to see the time at Regent shape me and be really applicable to my working life—indeed all of life.**

I have now consciously tried to involve God in all aspects of my life, and in particular during my working week. I have discovered afresh that God is indeed interested in the details of my life, not just the grand and infrequent events in life that stand out in my memory. In fact, I believe that as a Christian I am closest to God when I enjoy relationship with him through the seemingly ordinary, unimportant and trivial aspects of life—involving him all the time—giving him QUANTITY TIME.

As a dad of three young boys, I have heard a lot of parenting advice over the years about spending QUALITY TIME with the kids. I have discovered that quality time is not something that you can prepare for and plan in advance to have with your kids – sometimes they just aren’t interested in a deep and meaningful experience with Dad. Rather, quality time is more often a product of the quantity time spent with the kids. I think our relationship with God is like this too. When we share all our life with God, we become more aware of and more open to experience the quality times.

**David Bartlett**  
**Australia**

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After five months of joblessness, I accepted a job as a designer for a large florist in Birmingham. It came as something of a shock, since it’s not at all what I was looking for. It hardly pays the bills and involves a long commute each way. But it’s still enjoyable. And on the very day that I

accepted the job, Cynthia and I put an offer on a little bungalow (near my in-laws) needing masses of work.

And what of senior citizens? That's exactly what I was asking God, too. We wondered if perhaps God was saying that our relationship with Cynthia's parents would be 'all' the senior 'ministry' he wanted us to experience for the time being. As the months go by that seems to be confirmed.

**From the outset we did not move here to become their caregivers, but to simply be present in their lives. In our relationship with them I am observing the realization of many theories of senior ministry that I developed at Regent.**

**For example, I don't see ministry as something we – the young and healthy ones – are performing on behalf of the elderly and infirm. We made the big decision to move here, but now that we are here, our lives overlap and there is no one party performing ministry exclusively to the other. We share life and care for each other.**

A couple of days ago at work, I was interviewing a bride and her mother, when we were sidetracked by my story of our move from Regent to Alabama. They were gazing at me like I was some Henri Nouwen in the flesh as I told them about our discernment process and spiritual development of moving to be near Cynthia's parents. The story did sound marvelously faithful and spiritual.

Then I phoned home and Cynthia told me about the 'wiping and bathing' she had to do for her mother because her father's arthritis was so bad that he couldn't grip a washcloth. In contrast to the saintly story I'd just shared with the customer, our life with our aging parents just seemed so base and menial. And yet, this is life. This is where our character is formed and we continue to feel secure in our decision to move here.

**Eric Stelle**  
**USA**

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Our re-integration into our old church has been interesting. Not terribly difficult as there are many in this group who love to think about biblical studies, personal and corporate spirituality, and generally anything that causes them to re-evaluate their faith or assumptions. Though at moments there are great difficulties and I often find myself in the position of having to re-explain the nuances of what I mean over against what they may have understood. Nevertheless, the transition has been good (though tremendously taxing) and God has done great things to make a home for us here once again.

**David Kushner**  
**USA**

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Since I returned home I have been slowly adjusting to my life here. I feel that it has been a process of rebuilding for something new. God has brought guests from Vancouver to Japan, and those occasions have helped me to not become too homesick for Canada. I'm working as a part-time English language instructor for corporate training programs, teaching beginner and intermediate level business English to Japanese engineers and office workers. And I've been worshipping the Lord at a small local church in Tokyo. The pastor of this church took Regent summer school courses, so we sometimes have interesting conversations over meals and coffee, discussing faith and art. This past Christmas, some of us decorated our sanctuary using many different materials from all over the world to express Christ's incarnation for all peoples of the earth.

**Fumiko Kirara**  
**Japan**

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I have not been able to exercise a lot of my Regent training here, as this is not a 'Christian' school. It is a multi-faith environment. And although there certainly are other Christians here, the culture is not unlike Vancouver: largely a-religious. When religion is brought up it's a-given that "all" religions are equally valid.

So while I can't overtly exegete, preach, and teach the way I'd sometimes like to, I have been able to challenge some of our high school students' preconceptions, ask people to consider what their authorities are in life, e.g. divine, governmental, self-centered, etc. And on my good days, I've been able to smile at people and try to demonstrate that the God I believe in (whether they know it or not) invites them to be with him at all times, in all situations, and regardless of all considerations.

**Michael Moffitt**  
**USA**

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***Frequently people are caught off guard by situations which they are not anticipating. Here are a few common situations and suggestions adapted from International Resources of Campus Crusade for Christ.***

	A	B	C
1	<b>Students Returning Home</b>	<b>Response/Reaction</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
2	Did not expect to arrive feeling so physically and emotionally drained.	Tiredness, lethargy	Schedule in several transition days of rest and relaxation between departure and home arrival. Do not over schedule your time upon return.
3	Did not expect to feel so "foreign" upon return.	Confusion, disorientation	Reduce feeling of "foreignness" by making yourself aware of changes at home and within yourself before returning.
4	Did not expect a "let down" feeling after arrival.	Disappointment, unfulfillment	Be prepared for a possible "let down" - realize that you have probably been operating on an "emotional high" prior to return and shortly after.
5	Did not expect readjustment to take so long (more than a few days.)	Discouragement	Readjustment can be expected to take some time—more for some than for others. This is only natural.
6	Did not expect to be a "3 <sup>rd</sup> culture person" upon return—unable to re-identify fully with one's own culture.	Unsettled feeling, confused	Realize that you have absorbed some of the host culture, and that you never will be able to return fully to the past way of life. See this as a positive benefit.
7	Did not expect so many adjustments in returning from a simple to a more complex life-style.	Anxiety, frustration	It is not easy to be transferred suddenly from one type of culture to another. Expect to take some time to readjust. Focus on the "best" parts of each culture—not the negative aspects.
8	Did not expect it to be as difficult fitting back into the flow of things at home or at work.	Insecurity, anxiety	Do not expect to adjust right away—especially if you have been away any length of time. Getting readjusted takes time. Relax and enjoy the challenge.
9	Expected things to be pretty much the same back home.	Unsettled feeling, insecurity	Actively look for changes instead of allowing them to take you by surprise.
10	Did not expect changes in social custom, etiquette, dress, styles, music, morals, etc.	Insecurity, disappointment	Keep informed of national and local news. Have your parents or friend send you current newspaper and magazines prior to departure.
11	Did not expect to be so out of touch with current issues at home (political, economic, educational, etc.)	Embarrassment, feeling of 'out of it'	Plan ahead with a bit of reading to bring you up to date.
12	Did not expect changes in cost of living; inflation's effect on housing, food, clothing, auto, etc	Discouragement	Plan out a tentative budget prior to return based on cost of living data gathered from current ads and classified section of the newspaper.
13	Did not expect your own personal values to have changed so much.	Uncertainty, confusion	The extent of change can only be truly measured against the standard of being back in one's own culture. Attempt to define the changes which have taken place.
14	Did not expect so much change of pace; difficulty readjusting to schedules.	Confusion, tiredness	Physically, you may not be up to a faster pace for a while. Mentally, it may take a while to readjust to a different style of scheduling.
15	Did not expect to feel so uncertain in interpersonal relationships.	Insecurity, withdrawal	You will need to relearn certain cultural basis for relationships—different levels of commitment, etc.
16	Did not expect to have to readjust to verbal/non-verbal mannerisms of home country.	Uncertainty, embarrassment	Relearn social cues—eye contact, gestures, proper etiquette, etc. This takes some time but deliberate observation speeds the process.
17	Did not expect others to see or understand things in a different way than you do.	Frustration, discouragement	Remember it is your perspective which has changed—not theirs.
18	Did not expect others to show such a lack of interest in hearing about your experiences.	Discouragement, withdrawal, resentment	Take it as fact that others are usually not able to relate to your experiences as you would wish. Some are just not interested.
19	Did not expect to be so appalled at the values of society	Disappointment, discouragement	Be prepared for the possibility of a greater gap between your moral values and those of your own culture.
20	Did not expect people to ask so many superficial questions.	Irritation	Be prepared to face these questions. Work on ways to make transitions into what you really want to communicate.
21	Did not expect family to be so possessive after initial return.	Impatience, discouragement	Be sure to affirm your parents and family. Assure them that you are not "lost" to them and that you love them. Avoid coming on too heavy about your experience at Regent.
22	Did not expect colleagues back home to seem so insensitive to materialism/wastefulness.	Irritation, disappointment, contempt	Do not allow yourself to slip into feelings of resentment, anger or other responses which appear judgmental.
23	Did not expect to see so much apathy and unconcern for the needs of the world	Anger, discouragement	This may rightly disturb you, but do not become self-righteous or indignant over another's response or lack of response. Lovingly try to inform of world needs.

## **RE-ENTRY**

Re-entry is a leaving and consequent return to a place of origin having been immersed in another cultural context for a period of time.<sup>1</sup> During this period of time, much change can have transpired, not just in you, but also in your home situation.

The rate of social change occurring in three years in the late 1990's may have taken more like ten years in the 1950's. Just trying to catch up let alone adjust, can seem overwhelming at times. Your place of origin doesn't seem so familiar after all. Consequently "more and more [returnee's] are describing themselves as victims of reverse culture shock. The phenomenon is real, there's no question about it."<sup>2</sup> This re-entry shock "occurs when the experience of returning home does not match one's expectations".<sup>3</sup>

### **RE-ENTRY SHOCK/REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK**

***"Culture shock is the expected confrontation with the unfamiliar. Re-entry is the unexpected confrontation with the familiar".<sup>4</sup>***

Re-entry shock, is essentially culture shock in reverse i.e. you are experiencing culture shock on your return to your own home situation. Although difficult to define, it has been said that "Culture shock... summarizes sojourner's reactions after they lose the security of the familiar".<sup>5</sup>

Some symptoms of culture shock are:

- Somatic preoccupation
- Extreme 'homesickness'
- Physical complaints
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Boredom
- Fatigue<sup>6</sup>

### **RE-ENTRY ADJUSTMENT PROCESS**

The cumulative feeling called re-entry shock is part of a re-entry adjustment process. There are a number of stages involved in the readjustment process.<sup>7</sup> The initial excitement of being home tends

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<sup>1</sup>Westwood, Marvin J., Lawrence W. Scott, Paul, David, "Preparing for Re-entry; A Program for the Sojourning Student", International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 9 (1986), p.221-230, p. 223

<sup>2</sup> Ward, Ted, *Living Overseas – A Book of Preparations*, New York: The Free Press, Macmillan, 1984, p. 282

<sup>3</sup> Greenwood, Allan, W., *Returning Home*, Revised Ed., Canadian Bureau for International Education, 1991

<sup>4</sup> Greenwood, *Returning Home*, p. 4, quoting Paige, 1984

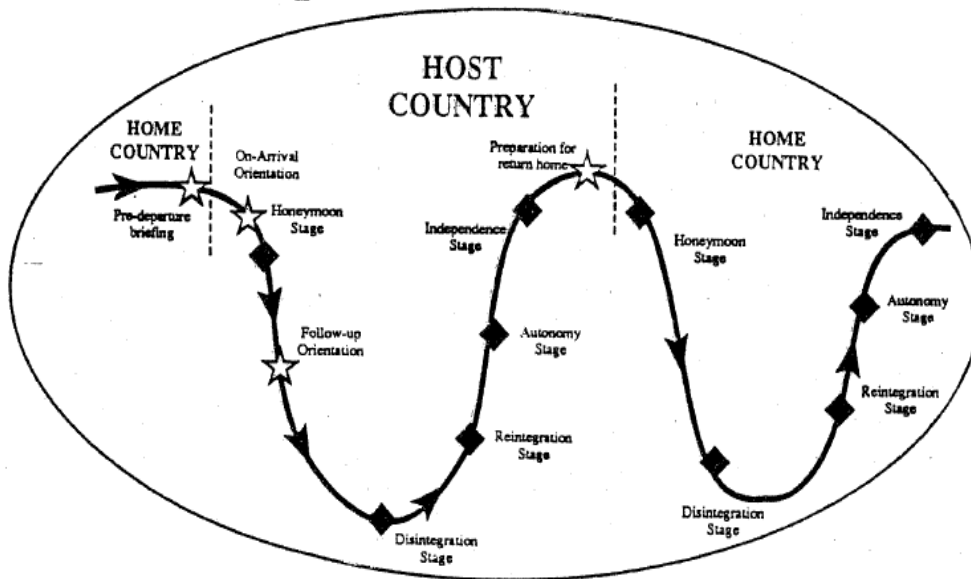
<sup>5</sup> Ward, *Living Overseas*, p. 103 quoting Brislin, Cross Cultural Encounters p.155

<sup>6</sup> Delaney, Jean and Gooding, Marjory (Project Directors), *NAFSA's International Student Handbook* Washington:NAFSA, 1996, p. 86

to be very short, quickly followed by a period of disillusionment as reverse culture shock sets in and possibly generates irritability, impatience and hostility toward the home culture. After two or three months, some returnees start to gradually adjust and adapt. But others “continue to feel alienated, even though they put on the outward appearance of doing well. Underneath, resentment, loneliness, disorientation and even a sense of helplessness may pervade.”<sup>8</sup>

Some researchers have described the cultural adjustment pattern, from the time you leave your home situation to the time you return and re-adjust, as a W-curve, wherein “your ‘cultural comfort level’ will vary over time as you move in and out of your home culture”.<sup>9</sup>

The roller coaster ride is a natural pattern of valley and peaks, where excitement and interest are succeeded by depression, disorientation or frustration. The intensity of the ups and downs depends upon the individual, as does the length of time an individual experiences each stage. It is important to realize that this process is both natural and necessary for the sojourner’s optimum adjustment to the transition from culture to culture.



<sup>7</sup> Adler, Nancy J., “Re-Entry: Managing Cross-Cultural Transitions”, *Group and Organizational Studies*, 6(3), September 1981, p.341-356, p. 344; *Survival Kit*, p. 75

<sup>8</sup> *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, p. 76

<sup>9</sup> Delaney, *NAFSA’s International Student Handbook*, 1996, p. 85

## FACTORS

A range of personal, social, and situational factors affect the degree of re-entry culture shock you will experience and the speed of your re-adjustment. Westwood, Lawrence and Paul of the University of British Columbia list the following eight factors.<sup>10</sup>

1. Personality of the individual involved.
2. Length of stay in the host culture.
3. Quality of the sojourn experience.
4. Degree of similarity between the two cultures.
5. Degree to which the sojourners new ideas are incongruent with the cultural norms.
6. Nature of the job placement upon return.
7. Number of sojourning experiences
8. Nature and degree of preparation for return home.

Additional factors are:

- Your frequency of contact with people and aspects of your home culture while you have been away
- The degree to which you have assimilated into this host culture<sup>11</sup>
- Disagreement within your family regarding the move
- Your motivation for moving on
- Changes in the environmental stimuli you experience<sup>12</sup>

The re-entry shock can result in:

- Emotional anxiety
- Disorientation
- Discomfort
- An overwhelming sense of incompetency<sup>13</sup>

Which in turn can impact:

- Work effectiveness
- Relationships
- A sense of one's own identity

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<sup>10</sup> Westwood et al, *Preparing for Re-Entry*, p.226

<sup>11</sup> Locke, Susan A., Feinsod, Fred M., "Psychological Preparations for Young Adults Traveling Abroad", *Adolescence*, Vol. XVII No. 68, Winter 1982, p. 815-819, p. 815.

<sup>12</sup> Hertz, Dan G., "Psychological and Psychiatric Aspects of Remigration", *Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci*, Vol. 2 No.1 (1984) p.57-68, p.61

<sup>13</sup> Ward, *Living Overseas*, p.105

## **PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ‘LEAVING REGENT’**

### **Before you leave:**

1. Educate yourself about possible transition problems. Educate yourself about stages of adjustment and the feelings you could have.
2. Lower your expectations about people's welcome:  
Your friends, family and colleagues have been able to get along without you.  
You are more interested in your life in Vancouver and Regent than anyone else will be.
3. Realize that your interests and concerns are different from your family, friends, and colleagues back home. Realize also that what is now important to you may be hard to put into words.
4. Realize how much you have changed and how much your old home has changed.
5. Approach returning home as a new experience, discovering a new place; rediscover the pleasures of home.
6. Try to read a newspaper from home to educate yourself about the issues that are at the forefront. Prepare yourself for “topics of conversation” on your return.
7. Allow yourself enough time here to say goodbye to friends, close off business, get medical records, buy gifts and souvenirs.
8. Talk to your kids about what will be different from Vancouver: schools, food, transport, language...
9. Get out family pictures so the faces of Grandma and Grandpa, Aunts, Uncles and Cousins will be familiar.
10. Pack things that will give the kids and yourself a sense of stability: photos of the Vancouver beach, hockey posters, candlesticks, flora and fauna... Let your children have a backpack of what they want to bring with them even though the treasures may seem ridiculous to you.
11. Make a photo album of everyday life in Vancouver for each person in the family. Include photos of the house, garden, friends, church, school, etc. Make a different photo album of the moving process, especially if you are travelling on your way to your new home.
12. Break in any new port-a-cribs that are going with you so that the baby is used to the crib before you travel. If you are throwing out toys do it way in advance of your departure.
13. If your diet will change drastically from Vancouver to your new home, begin to feed the kids some of the new foods so they are not strange.
14. Include the children and especially teenagers in any commissioning prayers or goodbye parties that take place. Have a goodbye party at a friend's place.
15. Check out written resources from the bibliography. Some books are available in the Regent library. Some articles are in short-term loan binder entitled “Leaving Regent”.
16. Write a letter to a pre-Regent friend and introduce yourself the way you want to be known now with the changes that have taken place in your life.

17. List and pray your anxieties.

18. Think through a theology of suffering, poverty and injustice in wealth distribution.

19. Make use of the special book sale for graduates and stock up on books from your favourite professors or books you never had time to read. When you are “Regent-sick” the books may comfort you and refresh your thoughts on topics studied here.

### **After you arrive:**

1. Realize that what you are feeling is common. Try to recognize what stage of transition you are going through.

2. Seek out other people who have “returned” fellowship with them and discuss your reactions and feelings. Try to find other Regent Alumni.

3. Seek to retain what you have gained of value here and try to recreate it in your new home. This could be:

- \* Family time or husband/wife time
- \* Casual hospitality at a coffee bar
- \* Reading time
- \* Time in nature to fellowship with God

4. Use Regent resources:

- \* Educational Initiatives
- \* Regent Bookstore: order tapes and books
- \* Regent Alumni Office (Sharon Forsyth)  
There are lists of Alumni by region; some email addresses are available

5. A few storytelling hints (so your friends stay interested in what you are saying):

- \* Make the story simple. Extra details can confuse the hearer.
- \* Get to the point before your hearer’s attention wanders.
- \* Keep the cast of characters small. Nothing confuses the hearer more than a string of names of unknown people.
- \* Use names rather than pronouns especially if there is more than one person of each gender in the story.
- \* Don’t follow one story with another. Let the hearer ask for more or wait until another time.

6. Be kind to yourself and give yourself time to re-adjust. Do not try to force re-adjustment but try to deal with issues as they appear.

7. Bring examples of school work so the new teacher will realize where your child fits in or needs help catching up.

8. Keep a familiar routine for small children.

9. Be aware that Grandma may be familiar to you but not to your toddler. Try to limit the number of strangers your kids have to deal with at one time.

10. Be prepared for changes in family dynamics: the student spouse may go from readily available if there is problem to unaccessible. You may move from a team approach to marriage to a different approach due to time and environmental constraints.

11. Help teenagers blend in with their peers. Have someone familiar with teen fashions go shopping with your teen.

12. Have a good sense of humour. Keep talking through the experience with a spouse or other “returnees”.

13. Find someone (preferably a non-family neutral person) who can give you a briefing on the country, community, church, friends, fashion, economic state, politics, employer, etc.

14. Seek counselling.

15. Make a commitment with a Regent friend to dialogue about the transition via email or letters. Pick a friend who is moving as well so you can understand each other and encourage each other. Or pick a friend who is staying since some friends in transition may not have an email or postal address for a while.

16. Learn to let go of old relationships, including those at home and at Regent. This does not mean that you give up on those relationships but just relate in a different way. Things will never be the same.

17. If you are from a non-western country, realize that you may have become “westernized” in values and life-style and that this may conflict with the old values and life-style.

18. Let re-entry work for you: it is a growing process to discover more about yourself. It can stimulate a learning approach to life. Facing cultural differences can make you think through your reactions and why you do something the way you do it.

**19. Keep a clear perspective and remember that God is with you!**

The above suggestions come from life as well as Living Overseas by Ted Ward, Re.Entry by Peter Jordan, Returning Home by Allan Greenwood, and Think Home by Lisa Espineli-Chinn.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR ENTERING THE LOCAL CHURCH:**

1. Have a servant heart

2. Realize that we are all pilgrims along the way, all learning.

3. Remember that God can teach many lessons in spirituality without Regent or the spirituality faculty! Even though some people can never come to Regent, God can teach them many of the same things in their own context.

4. Pray for your new local church and the leaders.

5. You may be perceived as a threat. Your Christianity may be suspect.

6. Go and listen to where people are (many need a listening ear), to serve, to appreciate what God is doing, and see how to move people along.

7. We are blessed to be a blessing, not blessed to be proud or lord it over people. Take the gift received at Regent and reshape it to share with others.

8. The level of preaching and teaching may not be what you have received here. Respond with patience. Do not try to build a select group that will get deeper teaching. Rather stick with the ship, stay with a positive attitude. Try to be in a position to make choices.

9. Simplify the theology. Jesus simplified also when teaching.

10. Pick your battles well and do so in a loving way.
11. You may not be the ones to institute change. Recognize that the church is God's. Pray and be loving to see if you can be part of the solution.
12. You may need to change churches rather than be disruptive. You may have changed too much to fit your old denomination. Do not decide to change too quickly.
13. Don't introduce issues and ideas that are not of concern or importance. Deal with felt needs.
14. Don't introduce programs and projects that depend upon outside (alien) resources. Make use of resources, materials, personnel and concepts in the local setting.
15. Translate any Regent teaching/material into the language and worldview of the local culture. (Example: most North American jokes & illustrations would be meaningless.)
16. Don't try to change too much too fast. People resent and resist too many new ideas all at once.

*These suggestions were gathered from the Regent community and Regent alumni.*

## **BIBLICAL TEXTS TO LOOK AT:**

(suggested by Howard and Bonnie Lisech, Fishers of Men)

### **Saying Goodbye**

John 19:25 –27

Luke 24: 50-53

Acts 1:9

### **Remembering God's Mighty Deeds**

Psalm 77, particularly vs. 3, 5a

John 5:17

### **The Lord will sustain you**

Psalm 55:22

1 Peter 5:7

Psalm 37: 23-24

Psalm 147:5

2 Chronicles 16:9a

Matthew 19:26

Romans 4: 21

Philippians 4:6

### **Fret Not**

Psalm 37: 1-17

# STAYING CONNECTED

## A few suggestions from our Alumni Office

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### PRAY FOR REGENT

And encourage others to be in prayer for the College as well. Not only for the students that follow you, but also for Regent's Board, Faculty, and Staff that continue to serve.

### STAY CONNECTED

If you move, try to remember to let us know and we'll update your contact information on your Regent record. You must specifically advise the ALUMNI OFFICE. Don't assume that the information has trickled down even if you've mentioned it to faculty or staff friends. And if you have your own "sending list" simply ADD the Alumni Office e-address to the list, and then we'll get your advisories and your latest news. (see below)

### ALUMNI WEBPAGES

Get familiar with them. Check out the benefits & services! Find or post a job, find alums who've published – who're blogging – or who may be hosting a Regent gathering. And view the latest in the alum web-newsletter called the **Alumni Mosaic**. You'll need the secret password! (Contact Sharon at [alumni@regent-college.edu](mailto:alumni@regent-college.edu))

### ALUMNI FRIENDS

Get familiar with alums in your new or returning area. If you don't know who they are, ask me, and I'll send you a contact list with their e-mail addresses.

### TELL OTHERS

You have a lot of influence. Consider ways that you may advocate for Regent:

- become a financial partner – contact the Development Office
- organize informal alumni gatherings – contact the Alumni Office
- refer interested friends as potential students – contact the Admissions Office

### IDEAS & SUGGESTIONS

Got an idea or suggestion? We love to hear them, so let us know. A few years back alum, Geordie Ziegler, suggested we offer grads a discount on continuing to attend classes – when the credits are important. The 50% OFF *Seat Sale* for graduates was born!

### WRITE TO US

Receiving mail/e-mail from alums is a daily highlight! We're here to provide an open door for alums to stay connected with Regent, and with each other. One suggestion: be a little persistent >> we get a lot of mail ☺

**Sharon Forsyth**  
Director, Alumni Relations  
[alumni@regent-college.edu](mailto:alumni@regent-college.edu)  
[www.regent-college.edu](http://www.regent-college.edu)

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