Dear Missionaries,

It has been interesting to discover that the Growing Spiritually portion of our curriculum is often rated as the best part of the institutes. Spiritual growth definitely is of primary importance in being a missionary, isn’t it! While you are growing, though, may I encourage you to be patient? As a pastor, I have observed that it is so easy for those who long to grow spiritually to be impatient with others (their children, their fellow church members, their colleagues in ministry), as well as with themselves—and maybe even with God. I want to suggest to you that tolerance and patience are attributes of one who is growing spiritually, and especially important for missionaries to develop! Let me define these attributes.

1) Tolerance does not mean we should tolerate sin. The worst thing we could ever say about God would be that He is “soft” on sin. It is sin that brought so much misery to this world. Forsaking sins, does not mean that we will immediately be sin-free! God has many inherited and cultivated tendencies to change in us. We must lean on Him and be patient with our slow journey to perfection. Praise God, He is!

2) We don’t know where others are in their spiritual journey. Therefore, we have to be patient with them, too. You know, “BPGIFWMY: Be patient, God isn’t finished with me yet.” As Ellen White said: “You would better err, if you err at all, on the side of mercy and forbearance than that of intolerance”(4T 64). Tolerance of sin, NO; tolerance of people, YES!

3) When things in this life are hard to bear and troubles keep coming instead of answered prayer, it takes some godly patience to keep holding on. I once heard a preacher say, “Let God work out all that he intends, but have patience till he has put the last hand to His works and then find fault with it, if you can.” We will understand it better by then, won’t we!

4) The bottom line of “patience” is not a phlegmatic sitting back and saying: “whatever will be, will be.” It is a putting ourselves and others totally in God’s hands and following Him at the speed He leads us. Patience is trusting God and His timing. That is the “patient endurance” of the saints (Rev 14:12 NIV).

I read this prayer somewhere a few years ago; it is a good one for us to pray. “Lord, we are so inclined to run ahead of you, ignoring your commandments, sometimes taking matters into our own hands that would be better left to you. Quiet our racing pulse and restore our jaded spirit as we once again try to put our trust and hope in you.”

INSIDE . . .

Families are important to missionaries. Most missionaries go to the mission field as families, many with children. A substantial number of you leave children and grandchildren behind. And those of you who go single often find that you become part of other’s families. In this issue we are focusing on missionary kids. Missionary kids are a part of the larger Third Culture Kid (TCK) group that includes all those children who are raised cross-culturally because of their parents’ employment. Our center article describes some of the traits they share because of their mobile childhood. Wagner and Giselle Kuhn share their thoughts on raising TCKs, we announce a new forum for TCKs, offer some tips on long-distance grandparenting, and suggest some resources for learning more about TCKs. Missionary kids have a great potential for service and it is our privilege as the adults in their lives to help them reach that potential. No doubt I’m biased!

Four generations of missionary kids in the Doss family
Gorden Doss, Kristi Doss Kiš, Zachary Kiš, Florence Doss
Parenting TCKs (Third Culture Kids)

God gave us the blessing of children and the blessing of being called to serve Him far away from our home country. So how can we combine the two blessings—raise our children to serve God overseas and still continue to be happy though far from home? It is not easy to leave our relatives, close friends, our own culture and traditions and go to a foreign place, with foreign traditions and culture, away from our current support system. However, there is hope. God sends His power to help each one, providing for individual needs. The whole family must understand that God is calling each one to serve Him!

We have found that it takes at least six months to adjust to a new environment. With time, things start getting better. Open communication between family members is very helpful. TCKs are more perceptive than you think and might even surprise you with their willingness to change and adapt in the new environment.

During periods of transition remember to take a few of the children’s personal things with you, like favorite CDs and a portable CD player, some favorite toys, books, and games. TCKs are happy to find familiar things in an unfamiliar environment. Remember to spend quality time with your children and try to maintain certain routines, like family worship, reading time together, traditional dishes, and your native language and music. Children also have minds that desire to be engaged, to be involved in a dialogue that needs to go beyond the routines of the day to day life. They are also interested in the big picture of life, in history, current news, geography, and in the macro-realities of the world, things seen and unseen.

TCKs often enjoy adventures and are ready to try new things. Try to make friends and invite local children to come to your home, so you can observe the way they act and get ideas of how you can help your children adjust and live better with the host culture. Be a good listener and a good friend to your children. Smile, hug, and help your children know that you are there for them, even when life is not so easy, and show confidence and trust in the Lord. Often times one parent is absent from home and this can play negatively on the children. It is important for both parents to understand this issue and plan accordingly so that the absent parent is more involved with the TCKs when home, and communicates more often through phone calls, letters, or e-mails while away from home.

Most of all, pray for your children all the time. God can help TCKs with transition and difficult situations. God can give parents wisdom to raise their children and to understand them. Each child and each parent is different and they all have individual needs but our Heavenly Father understands and provides for them all. May the Lord bless you and your children today and always. Remember, God is close to you every minute of the day, anywhere in the world!

Teen Starts TCK Forum Project

While attending the Institute of World Mission, Daniel Wahlen (a missionary kid from AIIAS in the Philippines), had an idea run through his head. After interacting with other missionary kids during the three weeks of institute classes, he decided to put his thoughts into action. His idea was to start an online forum for all TCK’s around the world, so they can communicate, stay in touch, ask and answer questions, share missionary stories, and much more.

After talking with Lester Merklin and Cheryl Doss (director and associate director of IWM), they enthusiastically agreed to sponsor a TCK on-line forum. The details are currently being worked out, but the goal is to have the forum up and running within a few weeks. You can check at www.tckforum.org, or look at the link on the adventistmission.org website. It should be up very soon!
Terminally unique…

So I guess there is a label
That says that I am typical
A product of the unconventional
Places where I grew
Apparently not unusual
With no option of refusal
To experience this upheaval
In discovering what’s true
The well again is tapped
I find emotion that was trapped
Yet need to keep much of it wrapped
Frustrated I can’t see it through
I’m looking for a space
I can explore my real place
And find a truth I can embrace
Now all I am is in review

Janine Max
Avondale College
Australia

Institute Held at Montemoreles University March 13 to April 1

Participants (Host country): Eduardo & Lilian Basualdo (Mexico); Walter & Helda Britton (Honduras); Carlos, Maria & Daniel Chimpén (Argentina); Michael & Evelyn Collins (South Sudan); Mari Cordido (SAD); Daniel Costa Rodriguez (SAD); Luis & Hulda Grau (Ecuador); William & Rita Green (Jamaica); Paul & Myong Kotanko (Mongolia); Baruc & Sylvia Lagos (Mexico); Carlos & Raquel Mora Gamboa (Chile); Anayansi Nino (IAD); Manuconda & Kamala Rao (Jamaica); Manukonda Viswanadham Rao (Trinidad and Tobago); Faye Reid (IAD); Jorge & Silvia Torreblanca (Mexico); James & Mala Trott (St Vincent); Conrad & Ludmila Vine (Cyprus).

TCKs at Montemoreles

The happy children pictured below attended the 13th Missionary Kid Institute. Since 2001 missionary kids have received training at Mission Institute along with their parents because we believe that when God calls a family, He calls every member of that family to mission.

Daniel & Loida Chimpen; Christian and Samuele Kotanko; Juan, Paola, & Samuel Mora Gamboa; Christiana & David Vine

Long-distance Grandparenting

Many missionary kids are separated by a great distance from their grandparents and many missionaries are separated from their grandchildren in the homeland. The following ideas on long-distance grandparenting are adapted from Charmaine L. Ciardi’s 1995 book The Magic of Grandparenting. Try them yourself or share them with your child’s long-distance grandparents.

♦ Buy an age-appropriate book for your young grandchild. Read it onto a cassette and then send the book and cassette to them so they can listen to Grandma and/or Grandpa reading them stories.

♦ Take advantage of technology: talk on Skype or Google Talk, use webcam for real time pictures, write frequent emails just to the grandkids, share digital pictures and videos of interesting things you’re doing, family you’ve seen, etc.

♦ Buy a book of kid’s jokes and send one in each letter, or send stickers or craft kits or other small “just for fun” gifts.

♦ Send installments of “My Life as a Child.” Include the school subjects you found difficult, the scrapes you got into, stories about your favorite (and not so favorite) relatives, your most embarrassing moments, your heroes— just share the simple pleasure of growing up.

♦ Secretly leave a small box of “dress-ups” for your grandchildren (or include it in the family’s shipment). Send such things a old hats, dresses, fancy pieces of material, old ties, shoes, etc. Include a disposable camera and ask for photos of your grandchildren in their fancy outfits.

For more ideas on long-distance grandparenting sign up for the “Parents of Missionaries” newsletter at www.pomnet.org
**Third Culture Kid Resources**

**Children's Books** (all available at Amazon.com)

Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say: This is the story of the author's grandfather who travels to North America from Japan and raises his family there. He takes his family back to Japan when his daughter is nearly grown. He can't forget California but is not able to make the trip again. Many years later, the author makes the trip.

Tea With Milk by Allen Say: This is the story of the author's mother Masako, or May, as she prefers to be called; who, after graduating from high school in California, unwillingly moves with her parents to their native Japan. She is homesick for her native country and misses American food. This is the story of her transition to a new culture and the difficulties and triumphs she goes through.

When Africa was Home by Karen Lynn Williams: Peter, a white American, is entirely at home in a Malawian village. When he has to go to America with his parents, he feels displaced, and waits patiently until their joyful return to the village, where he is once again at home.

A Country Far Away by Nigel Gray: This book relates the everyday activities in the lives of two ordinary boys. One lives in a rural African village. Each boy’s life, with its small events and momentous occasions is seen within a loving family, which is in turn a unit of the community.

**Websites**

Global Nomad Virtual Village: www.gnvv.org is a virtual village, that provides basically anyone who shares the common bond of growing up in a foreign land... a permanent "place" to keep in touch.

MK Connection: www.mknet.org is a central place for finding things of interest to MKs and TCKs.

TCK World: www.tckworld.com has many resources for TCKs including articles on TCK issues, interviews with trainers, authors, and others who are working to help TCKs and suggested readings.

**Magazines**

Among Worlds: Each edition tackles a particular issue that is relevant to adult TCKs in a head-on approach that will encourage and empower you as you travel through life as an adult TCK. To order contact them at amongworlds@interactionintl.org. 1 year subscription is $25.00 for overseas.

Interact: Discusses important issues in MK/TCK education and care. It includes well-written, insightful, challenging articles from a Christian perspective as well as provides practical help and highlights excellent resources. To order contact them at interact@interactionintl.org. 1 year subscription is $22.95 for overseas.

You Know You’re an MK When... You went to grade school on one continent, high school on another, and college on a third.

**BIBLE TCK WORD SEARCH**

In the Bible there are many stories of people who grew up in cultures other than their parents’ culture. Today we would call these people Third Culture Kids. Many of them could also be called Missionary Kids because their parents were called to work for God. Usually Bible TCKs lived and worked in places where people did not know God. Many times they were called upon to do extraordinary things for God. Just like Missionary Kids today, they were taken to live in strange places but God was always with them. Just like Third Culture Kids today, they traveled and learned much about the world. Just like all God’s people, they witnessed for Him everywhere God placed them. See if you can find all of names of Bible TCKs in the word search.

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What is a T.C.K.?

Adapted by Pat Gustin from TCK News, Volume 1

A Third Culture Kid . . . a what?

You may or may not be familiar with the term, but you are about to learn more about its true meaning! The term “Third Culture Kid” was first used by Ruth Hill Useem in the 1960’s during her anthropological study of expatriates in India. It has been defined and copyrighted by Dave Pollock, Executive Director of Interaction.

“A TCK (Third Culture Kid) is an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents’ culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationships to others of similar experience.”

Aha, you are saying to yourself, it has nothing to do with the “third world” as some people seem to think. Another common term used to describe TCKs is “Global Nomads,” and it is used to describe the children of internationally mobile families—whether they are with government, the U.N., business, the military or a church, as well as children of cross-cultural marriages.

Most people are born and brought up in one country, so they have had a very different experience from children born and/or raised in one (or several) countries. Their sense of identity, nationality, and belonging is therefore probably not exactly the same as TCKs. Growing up as TCKs do has made their lives very different than it would have been if they had grown up in their parent’s “home” country, not worse—just different. And it will almost certainly affect their future. Some research was carried out in 1996 that tracked the lives of a number of TCKs over a twenty year period. 82% of those respondents still have international aspects to their lives. 42% are living in a country other than their passport country.

So, what is a TCK like? Dave Pollock has been studying and describing the TCK profile for nearly twenty years. What is the TCK Profile? Read on and maybe you’ll recognize yourself or someone you know!

Mobility
If one moved around a lot as a child, a mobile lifestyle may become the habit of a lifetime. People tend to repeat their upbringing and may have a migratory instinct as adults which started during their childhood. This can be a positive factor because it represents a confidence and ability to cope with change. However, it can mean an inability to make a long-term commitment to anyone to anything.

Language
Not surprisingly, TCKs tend to be good at languages. They have been exposed to languages at an early age, and this ability to speak several languages often plays a key role in career choice.

Belonging
Sense of belonging is a key issue. Where do TCK’s feel that they belong? “Where do you come from?” “Where is home?” These are some of the hardest questions TCKs have to answer. Sometimes they end up feeling at home everywhere and have the ability to move and settle in anywhere; or else home is nowhere—always somewhere else, and they are constantly tempted to move and search for that elusive somewhere that will be “home” so they can settle down.
Personality Traits
TCKs are usually extremely friendly and good at making friends quickly because they have been exposed to far more people than their monocultural counterparts. However, being able to initiate relationships they also have to know how to end them, because an expatriate community is characterized by frequent good-byes.

They may have very good closure skills because of lots of practice; but at the same time they may feel some unresolved grief, which is one of the key issues which TCKs have to deal with. When an internationally mobile family moves, the kids experience the simultaneous loss of home, friends, school, loved places and things. This pattern may be repeated many times and can have long-term consequences if they never have an opportunity to grieve properly.

Expanded World View
Because TCK’s have been exposed to more than one country, they have a global perspective. In some ways they may seem more mature and worldly wise than their peers in their passport country. They haven’t just seen countries and people on TV or in a geography book, they’ve actually been there and experienced things first-hand. They’re probably much more interested in travel and the rest of the world than most monocultural kids are.

Cross-Cultural Skills
TCK’s have a natural ability to act like chameleons because they have grown up knowing that one changes their behavior, language, or customs to suit the situation. No one sat down to teach them that, it was something they learned “by osmosis”. As a result, they grew up more culturally sensitive, more aware, more interested in people from other countries and cultures and generally with cross-culturally skills that many adults never acquire who have not traveled overseas until they are adults.

Implications
If it has not occurred to you yet, just think about it—adults took a long time to learn the language and the customs. But TCK’s learned them pretty effortlessly and experienced a bonding with the country that was their childhood home. They have local friends, and are at ease with the place and the people. What incredible potential TCK’s have. If they choose in the future, they could do a similar work to their parents (as a missionary), or they may have a totally different “vision” they will want to follow. There are many options open to them. Think of the TCKs in the Bible and all that they were able to accomplish—Joseph, Daniel, and Esther are pretty impressive examples of what a TCK can become!

Where to from here?
The purpose of this article is to help you think about the incredible potential the TCK’s you know have. They can reach out to people of other cultures and nationalities because their interest, sensitivity, and language skills are already “in place.”

Another purpose is to help you deal with some attitudes you may encounter in TCK’s. When they return to their passport country, some TCK’s spend a lot of time trying to be exactly like everyone else and wondering why they feel more comfortable as a foreigner in a foreign land than they do in their own country feeling different from people there. In fact, they often discover that they “click” with other people who have lived overseas better than they do with their own “countrymen.” They just seem to have a natural bond with them. That’s okay, and it can really be a blessing to everyone.

Being a TCK will be a helpful thing for the future. They have some unique and useful skills to offer to a very culturally diverse world! Ted Ward, formerly of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School called TCK’s the “prototype citizen of the 21st century.”

So, remember: with God’s blessing, the sky’s the limit.

For more on Third Culture Kids, see Third Culture Kids by David C. Pollock and Ruth Van Reken, available at Amazon.com

Global Connections
For Your Files
July 2006