

## TCK Interview

Questions:

1. How old are you?
2. How many years did you live outside of your passport country?
3. If you consider more than 1 country to be 'home', is this a good thing or not? Why?
4. Which move was the most difficult for you? (the first move overseas, the move back to your passport culture, a move to a third country, a move before the age of 13, a move as a teen, a move as an adult)
5. What did that move teach you about yourself or others?
6. What has been a hard relationship in your life?
7. What did they teach you about yourself or others?
8. What is the best thing about being an MK?
9. What is the most difficult thing about being an MK?
10. Do you think the benefits outweigh the disadvantages? Why?

Here is the link to the on-line survey which I made available to a wide audience through Facebook and Google+ :  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-lgfQy1oNJJucZ5Pfh31uwYxkdcq4YfQ1T\\_cq0ywuNk/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-lgfQy1oNJJucZ5Pfh31uwYxkdcq4YfQ1T_cq0ywuNk/viewform)

Summary of Survey:

- There were 17 respondents between the ages of 16 and 51 when this summary was written. 15 of these were under 33 years of age. The average age was 25.
- They had all lived between 10 and 31 years with an average of 17 years outside their passport country.
- 12 of 17 respondents considered having more than 1 'home culture' to be a good or great thing. 2 considered it a bad thing, 2 said both good and bad, and 1 was non-committal saying he only considered his current location to be 'home'. Many pointed out the advantages of a multi-cultural understanding, their ability to value relationship over location, or a focus on their 'eternal/heavenly citizenship' that resulted from their transition experiences. The difficulties came in not being able to fit in, not belonging anywhere or just feeling unsettled.
- The easiest move on average was the first move. Only 2 of 17 described this move as 'quite difficult'.
- The most difficult moves were those to a third country and those which took place as a teen. 2 described each of these as the hardest move of all. Only 4 described their teenage transition as 'fairly easy'.
- The moves taught a variety of things: dependence on Jesus, avoiding stereotypes, how to adapt or even 'camouflage' one's self, and to value specific relationships, family upbringing or even their home culture.
- The most difficult relationships tended to be with family members (i.e. wife, brother, grandparents). In most cases this was due to differences in cultural understanding, not living with the same backgrounds or transitions at different points in life. The difficulties of closure and conflict resolution were mentioned by 1 person. Only 4 mentioned specific difficulties with friends. A few referred to the difficulties involved in leaving people behind, which emphasizes the grief process and the potential result of not being able to form deep friendships.
- The benefits of being a TCK fell into 4 categories: knowledge, opportunity, experiences and relationships.
- The difficulties fell into 5 categories: time and distance separation, missing out on aspects of culture or tradition, not being understood by others, lack of stability or feeling restless, and most of all the grief of saying goodbye.
- All respondents felt that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of being a TCK, although some admit that they don't really know any other way of life. Most recognize that these experiences have shaped them into a better person in the long run and many say that this has uniquely prepared them for the purposes of serving God and serving others.

Link to raw data results: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0AvYxeBwEJrS2dGVZandfZXQyenFFLXFBTXo4VnpvZ0E&usp=sharing>

Additional Observations:

TCKs are characterized by significant exposure to a culture group outside their home (or their parents') culture during their early, formative years. This significantly impacts their view of themselves, their view of the world around them and their ability to reintegrate into their home culture. Usually these people can connect more fully with others who have had the same types of experiences in changing cultures than they can with either those of their home culture or their host culture who have not had significant cross-cultural experiences. This gives TCK's some great advantages as well as some potential problems, especially if the adults in their life, most significantly the parents, are not aware of the potential issues that may result from this type of lifestyle.

The stages of change that occur and the understanding that the child develops about himself can usually be managed by adequate preparation, careful observation and occasional debriefing. But the most important aspect of understanding and relating to TCKs is establishing a relationship of love, consistent discipline and trust within the family. This assures the child that the family is the most stable aspect of their lives and they can always depend on their parents (and siblings) to be there for them. This is further supported by consistency in at least one other area of life, language development, educational choice, another significant friendship, the opportunity to develop an area of interest, etc. The family needs to balance their call to serve (or their role in the organization) with their ultimate responsibility as a parent and spouse. This allows parents the freedom to make hard choices to protect their family and its needs while making the necessary sacrifices in other areas for the sake of their calling or professional responsibilities. Without clear communication and understanding in this area between all the people involved, the child may never be able to fully embrace the beauty and incredible advantages of a multi-cultural upbringing.

Compiled and analyzed by Paul Madsen, an adult TCK from the United States with over 27 years of life experiences in cross-cultural settings and currently living near Budapest, Hungary. Contact him through his website: [http://  
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