

MK's in FOCUS

Learn to R.E.T.U.R.N.

R = Recognize the MK Experience

E = Embrace the Challenges

T = Trust God in Grief

U = Understand Culture Conflicts

R = Reach Beyond

N = Navigate Christian Identity

An unfortunate truth in the world of missions is that parents , missions organizations , and supporting churches predominantly treat the rigorous challenges of MK life — especially those associated with high mobility , transitions , and repatriation — much like heart disease . If there are no obvious problems on the surface , we just ignore them .

**Most MKs
are also
TCKs**

Ruth Hill Useem [1] outlined it this way : The first culture is the passport (home) culture of the parents . The second culture is the host country (or countries) . The third culture is the new shared culture of the children who grow up with exposure to multiple , competing international cultures . It is the “ culture between cultures . ” A child growing up in this world between cultures is a third culture kid .

[A TCK is] a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents ' culture . The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures , while not having full ownership in any . Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience , the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of the same background (David Pollock , Growing Up Between Worlds 1st ed .) . [2]

Someone invented a name , a name with a thousand meanings and memories . We became third culture kids and we learned that we were not alone , that there were so many like us . We learned it was okay to have a name . It did not label us an infection . It gave credibility to who we were and how we had lived (Marilyn Gardner , *Between Worlds : Essays on Culture and Belonging*) .

LEAVING...

What would it be like if you failed to look ahead and never saw these changes coming until the last minute ?

MKs need help defining and creating a sense of home .
MKs need wisdom to understand that any location can become a home . Without these skills , young adult MKs can find themselves untethered and aimlessly floating through life after leaving the mission field . They can find themselves always feeling like “ home ” is out of reach , both because their family is now divided by thousands of miles and several time zones and because they will never have the opportunity to sit and laugh with their teen friend group once those friends have all left the field and moved away .

Psalm 90:2

Ecclesiastes 3

**For everything there is a season
and a _____**

CULTURE

Culture is a system where those around you assume that you know what they know . They assume that you believe what they believe . They assume that you value what they value . They assume that the things that are important to them are also important to you .

**What are the
greatest challenges
for MKs?**

the two greatest challenges for MKs as they move between cultures and between worlds are simple : misunderstanding and being misunderstood .

CULTURAL IMMERSION

Refers to the depth to which an MK is exposed to the customs, traditions, languages, foods, and people within the host country. Cultural immersion falls on a spectrum.

. Matt's First Law of Cultural Immersion The more your MK identifies with one culture , the less they will identify with the other .

MK-ness is not a condition or disorder that needs to be diagnosed or cured.

MKs desperately need Christ - honoring relationships , but the MK experience is often cluttered with barriers that hinder the creation of those good , healthy relationships . On the surface these barriers might seem insignificant , but they quietly shape the way an MK sees the world , themselves , and others around them .

Barriers...

- Looking and Sounding Different Can Make Life Hard
- Leaving is Inevitable
- MKs are Generally Viewed as Wealthy and Privileged

TRANSITIONS ... LOTS OF THEM.

Five Stages of Transition

(This is a summary of David Pollock's explanation of the transition process.)

. Phase 1 Engaged and Involved This is when life is normal and consistent for an MK . They know their routines , and they know what to say and do in their current culture .

. Phase 2 Leaving As soon as an MK becomes aware of an upcoming change in location , they have entered into the second phase of transition — the Leaving phase .

Phase 3 Transit Your MK enters this phase the moment you get into the car or airplane to move geographically from one place to another . At this point in time , all the normalcy and consistency of life gets thrown out the window and is replaced by chaos and uncertainty .

Phase 4 Entering Once they have landed in the new place , your MK is entering the fourth phase and is looking for ways to fit in and understand their new circumstances .

Phase 5 Re - Engaged When your MK has begun putting down roots , making friends , and learning routines , and they have become active in a local church , they are finally entering the fifth stage of transition . This is where they are getting plugged into life and start feeling like they belong .

WHAT TO DO?

Learn to R.E.T.U.R.N . R = Recognize the MK
Experience E = Embrace the Challenges T = Trust God
in Grief U = Understand Culture Conflicts R = Reach
Beyond N = Navigate Christian Identity

David often followed a specific pattern when he penned his Psalms of sorrow : 1 . Calling out to God 2 . Complaining to God 3 . Making a request to God 4 . Affirming his trust in God's covenant love and faithfulness .



KEY: Navigate Christian Identity

- **Who AM I in Christ?**