

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Understanding Third Culture Kids' Perceptions of the Teenage
Sunday School Classes in Two Urban African Churches*

BY

GRACE KOGI WILLIAMS

*Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Christian Education*

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2005

JULY 2005

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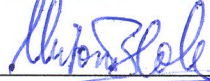
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July, 2005

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

UNDERSTANDING THIRD CULTURE KIDS' PERCEPTION OF THE TEENAGE
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES IN TWO URBAN AFRICAN CHURCHES

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college
or university for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the examiners.

(Signed)



Grace Kogi-Williams

July, 2005

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand and explain the experiences of Third Culture Kids in Sunday school in two urban African Churches and identify ways of helping them adjust to a different culture.

Data collected was by means of interviews and e-mails for the sake of TCKs that live far away. The research findings revealed some significant results:

- TCKs are kids who have no choice on the movements they have made from location to location.
- TCKs have had diverse cultural adjustment issues to cope with in the course of moving from place to place. Their experiences though diverse yet valuable.
- TCKs desire friendship from Sunday School teachers in order to receive support as they seek to adjust to various cultural situations they find themselves in.
- TCKs react to changes according to how they perceive them, but need to be understood in the sense that if they display any negative reactions to situations, it is not deliberate.

For a long time, the attitudes of TCKs in Sunday School classes has been a concern to the church especially in relation to the Western Missionary TCKs, however this study has opened a small window into some of the reasons for the attitudes of TCKs in Sunday School classes. I hope that the church will have solutions for the issue at hand and do better in handling the issues for the benefit of TCKs and the church.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all below who believed in me and supported me in various ways as I embarked on this study.

Dr. Starcher for his tremendous support and many hours of giving directions. I would not have made it without his help.

Mrs. Marcia Starcher and Mrs. Arlene Newell for proofreading my work.

Mr. John Jusu for your constructive criticism.

Professor Cole for taking the time to read through it.

All the TCKs who contributed immensely to this study.

DEDICATION

To all TCKs,

You are all very special and your experiences are precious. These experiences add lots
of favor to the lives of many

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time there lived a young Nigerian woman named Sarah who had lots of experience working with Nigerian teens both in church and in school. She was asked to teach a group of teens at a mission's conference. The first problem seemed to be that some of the teens were not happy to see a Nigerian. The lesson began and worksheets were passed out. Sarah gave one of the teens his own worksheet but he didn't want to receive it from her. Eventually, the teen stretched his hand and used his two fingers to receive his worksheet from Sarah, as though he was taking an item not good enough for him to take. Sarah was outraged and confronted him right there. The lesson did not go very well, even though everyone else cooperated.

What made this teen behave the way he did? Was it just a joke or did it reveal some more serious issues or problems that could have been handled differently? What might have helped Sarah better understand and handle the incident?

Since the inception of missionary activities on the African continent, missionary children have needed to adapt to new environments. Initially, missionaries took the responsibility of teaching their children in Sunday school classes and church services, but in many contexts today missionary children are encouraged to attend Sunday school classes with African children.

Missionary children, of course, are not the only ones who need to adapt to new environments. All children raised in a cultural setting must learn to adapt. TCKs (Third Culture Kids) are those who live in different cultural worlds as they travel back

and forth between their passport country and their host cultures, have certain characteristics that are neither African nor Western.

It is important to understand TCKs' experiences when they have to live in places where the nationals are exposed to only one culture. One of the reasons for this study is to explore and understand TCKs' experiences and discover how they or those dealing with them can be helped to adjust in such situations.

Problem Statement

In African churches where there is a mixture of TCKs and national children in one class, teachers often struggle to manage their classrooms effectively. TCKs also struggle to participate appropriately in the class programs. Teachers often view TCKs' in Sunday school or Junior Church as disrespectful and disruptive, and hence fail to provide adequate assistance. The existent literature reveals no clear understanding of the phenomenon of TCKs' integration into African Sunday school classes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand and explain the experiences of Third Culture Kids in Sunday school classes in two urban African churches. Specifically, the study will focus on the Nairobi Chapel in Nairobi, Kenya, and the ECWA Good News Church in Miango, Jos, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of Third Culture Kids in their Sunday school classes?
2. How do TCKs describe their experiences in Sunday school classes?

3. How do TCKs describe their relationships with their teachers, African children and peers?
4. Has the length of time in the Sunday school classes changed TCKs' perception?
5. What activities contribute to positive experiences for TCKs?
6. What activities contribute to negative experiences for TCKs?
7. How did TCKs cope with their experiences?
8. What was the TCKs' perceptions of parents' roles in their Sunday school experience?

Definitions

1. Third Culture Kids (TCKs): children, whether African, Western or Eastern, who grew up in a country other than their passport country.
2. Passport country: The original country from which a third culture kid comes.
3. ECWA: Evangelical Church of West Africa.
4. Global Nomads: People who move relatively often and internationally depending on their needs.
5. Hidden Immigrants: Those who have adopted various cultural characteristics and are accepted in various cultures outside of their own.
6. Transcultural Internationally Mobile Children: Children who have moved from culture to culture in different nations.
7. Missionary Kids: Children of Christian missionaries.
8. Culture: The way of life of a people, including the ideas, customs and art of a particular society.
9. Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs): TCKs who are now adults.

10. Cultural Chameleons: Observers who take note of verbal and non-verbal cues and readjust to their surroundings, taking enough coloration of the social surroundings and gain acceptance while maintaining some vestige of identity as a different animal, an “other” (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, 91).

Delimitation

This study is limited to Sunday school classes attended by Third Culture Kids. The study will not concentrate on all church programs, but will confine itself to interviewing teenage TCKs who are still in Sunday school or who attended when they were teenagers.

Limitation

The study focuses on two urban African churches: Nairobi Chapel in Nairobi, Kenya and ECWA Good News Church Miango, Jos, Nigeria. Financial and time constraints limited the interviews to 15 TCKs. Some of the TCKs had relocated; therefore, interviews were conducted through electronic mail.

Significance

The study could help Sunday school teachers better understand and meet the needs of TCKs. It also could help teachers identify ways of helping TCKs adjust to different cultural settings. Further, it reveals creative ways to reach out to TCKs, not only missionary kids, but also TCKs of various cultural and educational backgrounds. It also informs church policies with regard to the selection of teachers of TCKs. Finally, the findings add to the body of knowledge related to classroom learning adjustments required when children move from one culture to another.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

People's cultural background affects their reaction to others and to the environment. Hofstede wrote, "culture could be defined as the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment" (Hofstede 1984, 21).

Third Culture Kids reside outside of their passport country for varied periods of time. They move from one country to another before coming back to their passport country for a rotation (2-4 years), to resettle, or to attend university. There are exceptions to this pattern. Third Culture Kids can be found all over the world. They have various characteristics that make them act differently from kids who have been raised in a single cultural setting.

The desire to understand the experiences of the Third Culture Kids (TCKs) especially the Western/Eastern Missionary kids grew out of experiences with TCKs similar to the one described above. Solutions have not been fully and specifically discovered relative to the needs of these Western/Eastern Missionary kids. Reaching out to TCKs is a big challenge especially in Sunday School classes here in Africa. Questions arise concerning their adjustment needs and the role parent and teachers can play in helping them adjust. What, specifically, is the root cause of the struggles Western missionary kids experience in Sunday School classes here in Africa? The importance of understanding this group of kids (teenagers especially) is important as one attempt to meet their needs.

In order to reach and understand TCK teenagers, one must know their needs. Emotionally, they need love and acceptance, appreciation, security, variety, meaningful communication and independence. Chamberlain (1985, 21-22) said that just like all persons, teenagers are individuals with the same basic needs like other people.

Mobility is a normal experience for TCKs. Even when they are not coming and going, others around them keep coming and going. (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, 22) This experience affects the way TCKs learn and relate with various people, Sunday school teachers and classroom peers inclusive.

TCKs are influenced by all the cultures in which they have lived, while not having full ownership of any or them. While TCKs assimilate elements from each culture, they relate best with other TCKs. (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, 26-31). The first question that TCKs tend to ask is where their real home may be. If a family that lived in the United States moved to Liberia, but to flee the war, moved to Nigeria, all these different cultures would have been adopted by the TCKs. In order to have a good picture of who TCKs are, certain background information is needed. Since this study focuses on missionary TCKs, the cultural adjustments of missionaries, in general, should be considered.

Cultural Adjustments of Missionaries

The ability to take a step of faith to move to a different cultural setting is commendable. There has to be a strong conviction despite the circumstances that surround a person. A missionary is one who has been entrusted with a task to accomplish regardless of location.

The term missionary is not a New Testament word. Etymologically, however, it is closely related to "apostle." Both words carry the idea of one who is sent forth to accomplish a task. The emphasis in the New Testament is more on the

task to be performed than on the place to which the man is to be sent. The task was that of proclaiming the gospel and planting churches or aiding those who were doing so (Hesselgrave 1987, 138).

Missionaries are selected, called and sent by God the Holy Spirit. Usually, these missionaries demonstrate their ability to serve in their home churches or other Christian organizations in their home countries. God used and still uses human beings to play a role in the call. When one is called, others take part by confirming and sending the person out. We see this demonstrated in the Bible when the church sent Barnabas to Antioch. On some occasions God uses others to acknowledge the call of a person. They speak to the person about it, in case there is no clarity in the mind and heart of the one who is called.

When God calls a married man, the whole family is included. This means that as the call is being considered prayerfully, other issues relating to every member of the family will be committed carefully to prayer.

It is God's intention that the world be evangelized. No one is exempted from this mandate. Hence, missionary work is not limited to where the missionary is, but should be taking place everywhere.

Missionary kids are raised up in cultural settings of their own. They are familiar with the lifestyle, language, means of communication and customs they are brought up in. Moving to another culture, which could be described as leaving a comfort zone to go to the unknown, comes with its challenges. As missionaries are confronted with various changes, adjustments must be made. Whether they are singles, couples, with or without children, they have to make adjustments in various areas in order to cope.

People generally are faced with adjustment challenges when they change locations. Missionaries are human beings, but their adjustments may be greater

because they are messengers. They do not choose where to go, but are sent by God himself. Obedience is absolute, no matter where they are sent. God gives them the courage to go through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Even if they do not feel courageous enough to go, they must go or else they will not be happy where they are.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is referred to as “the reactions experienced by an exchanging of a familiar culture for an unfamiliar one” (Foyle 1987, 100). Some culture shock is due to the lifestyle of the people. Cultural stress is unavoidable. Recognizing this will help the worker to learn to deal with the changes as they emerge. The cultural adjustment not only affects adults or parents but also children. Children most of the time do not have a clear idea of God’s call on the parents. They are only followers.

Chew points out certain unavoidable cultural adjustments like communication/ language barriers and a different lifestyle. He said that communication is the art of transmitting a message from one individual to another so that the message is received at a reasonable level of accuracy. Without the appropriate language skills, missionaries are limited. They feel handicapped and there is a possibility of being “stressed out.” “A person without the language constantly feels helpless. He repeatedly makes mistakes and is like a little child. In certain fields, even after weeks of language study, communication is limited” (Chew 1990, 161). The worker has no choice but to learn the language because it is also part of the culture. Knowing the language bridges the communication gap. For an effective ministry, it is important to be able to communicate with the people. “Some degree of language ability opens the door to making good national relationships” (Foyle 1987, 102).

Language learning often engenders anxiety. This anxiety, to some extent, affects relationships in and outside of the home, but is an unavoidable challenge.

Coming from a society that is fairly “civilized” to a less civilized one exposes a worker/missionary to lifestyles that can be unbelievable. A nurse who came to a rural area in Kenya and was told that she would be sharing a bed with four big people was shocked. The same nurse received a tiny premature girl, made efforts to feed her and left instructions for the local nurses on how to care for the baby. The nurse returned to discover that the baby was not being fed. Eventually, the reason for not feeding the baby was discovered. The locals believed that God did not want the premature baby to live (Mackinnon 1988,75-76).

What the people value may be totally different from what the worker values. In adjusting to these changes, the worker is stressed. Some of these values relate to matters such as personal privacy, use of time, money and cleanliness (Chew 1990). Some culture shock can be easily overcome within a short period of time. Others take very long. Those that may take longer are discussed below:

Personal privacy

The privacy of one’s home may be denied, because people are always coming for one reason or another. There is no way of keeping them away, especially if you need to reach them with the gospel. The only way out may be to figure out other ways of having private times away from home.

Concept of time and efficiency

In many African countries and other countries outside of Africa, time is not an issue. People are not always in a hurry to be where they are expected. People may be punctual at some occasions and late at others.

Money and amenities

Some people regard some things, as luxuries while a worker who is from a developed country may not. The way one spends money will make the locals either consider one as responsible or irresponsible.

Environment and health

Leaving the environment unkempt may not be the desire of the people. It does not necessarily mean that it is part of the culture but could be for the sake of apathy or just sheer laziness. The worker is stressed in an effort to correct this problem immediately. Homes may be dirty, water not boiled, and hands not washed; yet the worker is invited to share a meal. This is a big challenge. The worker is divided between eating and not eating what is offered. Also, if the offer is rejected, it affects relationships.

The issue of clothes is another challenge. If a worker is used to a certain way of dressing and is among people with a different form of dressing, the worker is left with a choice to either stick to his own way of dressing or use clothes that are not offensive to the people.

These adjustments affect the life of the worker in all aspects. The children may not be able to attend schools that meet their needs, so an alternative must be introduced. Everyone in the family has to adapt to the customs and expectations of the

culture. If not, the possibility of reaching the people effectively with the gospel may be hindered.

Third Culture Kids (TCKs)

Other terms that have been used for these children are global nomads, hidden immigrants, transnational, trans-cultural, internationally mobile children, and missionary kids (Kidd and Lankenau 2004, 1). Most of these children are from missionary, diplomatic or military families. It is likely that some of the families thought that they would live for a short while overseas, but these days with businesses and other interests, families end up staying longer than planned. Therefore, the children adopt new cultural traits without necessarily shedding those of their home culture. This makes them unique because “they integrate elements of those cultures where they live with their own birth culture into a third, different and distinct culture” (ibid.).

When TCKs grow up, they acquire a new designation: Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs). Many TCKs grow up and become successful in their endeavors because of the exposure to different cultures. Yet some suffer from identity confusion.

Characteristics of TCKs

TCKs generally feel more at home with other TCKs because of the unique culture that they have developed. Pollock and Van Reken divided the characteristics of TCKs into two categories: the benefits and the challenges.

The benefits of this upbringing need to be underscored. In an era when global vision is an imperative when skills in intercultural communication linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy and the management of diversity are critical. Global nomads are better equipped in these areas by the age of eighteen than are many adults. These intercultural and linguistics skills are the marking of the cultural chameleon – the young participant – observer who takes note

of verbal and non-verbal cues and readjusts accordingly, taking on enough of the coloration of the social surroundings gain acceptance while maintaining some vestige of identity as a different animal, an “other” (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, 91).

The challenges that TCKs face can be used for the benefits of others. The advantage is that TCKs can be of great use in many places, creating awareness for other TCKs coming behind by using their knowledge of different cultural exposures.

The characteristics of TCKs are given in table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of TCKs

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<p>Adaptability TCKs can easily switch language, style of relating, appearance and cultural practices to take on the characteristics needed to blend in every situation. They are so used to being part of different cultural situations that they have no difficulty in making changes when needed.</p>	<p>Lack of true cultural balance Although TCKs are able to blend, the challenge is that they constantly check themselves to see if they are doing the right thing. Constant changes between various behavioral patterns could result in difficulty on the part of the TCK to determine their value systems.</p>
<p>Hidden immigrants TCKs are able to hide their identity. Unless they choose to reveal their identity, no one really knows where they are from. If they are kids of those who live separately from the nationals, much will not be expected from them. They can easily get away with certain unacceptable behaviors because of who they are.</p>	<p>Defining the differences In an effort to have an identity, TCKs are likely to form an “anti identity.” They may want to depict what their true identity is and the result will be that they will be cut off from the friendship of those around them.</p>
<p>Less prejudice There is a tendency for TCKs to know and relate well with people from diverse backgrounds. They have the ability to enjoy this diversity without feeling out of place. Also, they are able through their experiences to understand the reason behind the behavior of others and accommodate them.</p>	<p>More prejudice A few TCKs, whose parents are among the elite of the society, are generally treated differently and attend special schools. The separation from the culture and people of that society may hinder them from having a true picture of the wealth in the culture they live in. There is a tendency for them to pick up negative information if that is all they hear at home.</p>
Table 1 Continued.	
<p>Decisiveness: The Importance of Now TCKs, knowing that they may not have opportunities to do certain things tend to try whatever they can immediately. They want to achieve anything as soon as possible in case they have to move from where they are.</p>	<p>The illusion of choice Offers may be made for TCKs to be involved in certain things but because of the possibility of moving, they are not able to take the offer. Sometimes they don't see the need of getting involved. This could affect their ability to</p>

	make decisions in future, because they got used to waiting. This could also affect their relationship with God. They may feel like, what they really want to do isn't what God wants, so don't acknowledge to themselves, others and God, what they really want to do
<p>Appreciative of authority Relationships with adults expose them to learning many things and the possibility of having positive and nurturing experiences. They don't experience some of the struggles of many, but enjoy special outings and various things for being with adults in an organized system.</p>	<p>Mistrust of authority Some TCKs however, will feel differently about authority. They will blame every misfortune on their parents, teachers, decision-makers who seemed to make decisions without considering the needs of the TCKs. Sometimes they may just begin to settle down when they will be asked to move. Their school programs are affected. In the end, they may live unhappy lives, because others made all the decisions for them without considering their needs.</p>
<p>Perceived arrogance Real: The wealth of experiences and knowledge of TCKs which helps them view situations from many perspectives can also cause them to be impatient and arrogant with others, especially those who see things from only one perspective; that of their culture. The cross-cultural lifestyle is so normal to TCKs that they do not realize how much it has shaped their worldview. They forget that it is their life experiences that make them different from others. This is a negative attitude towards their blessing though.</p>	<p>Real arrogance Sometimes patience or 'judgementalism' is used as a point of identity with other TCKs. They tend to "gang-up" against non-TCKs. They treat others the way they do not want to be treated by trying to make others feel inferior or inadequate. The attitude of being better than others because of their vast experiences could be used as a defense mechanism to protect against insecurity or inferiority</p>

TCKs acquire various skills that can be of great use to society. They generally acquire these skills unconsciously. They have learned to be aware of the diverse cultural settings in different societies. Sometimes TCKs are used by a society because of their acquired skills. Unfortunately, at other times, society ignores TCKs' helpful skills. A TCK, Andrew Atkins, once expressed how he felt about how TCKs are ignored. "One day I poured out my bitter complaints to a senior missionary. I could not understand why the mission imported thirty Canadian and U.S. young people to

do famine work, when not one of the more than fifteen resident MKs (Missionary Kids) – experienced in language and culture – had been asked to help. He told me to quit complaining and sign on. I did” (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, 107).

TCKs are assets to society and should not be ignored when it comes to the issue of understanding diverse cultures and languages. They not only have relational linguistic skills but also observational and social skills.

Because of their past, TCKs are usually careful about using skills attained. In addition, they may also be so fearful of failing that they end up not achieving certain goals.

Teaching Teenagers

In order to be able to teach TCKs, the knowledge about teaching teenagers is necessary. The facilitator needs an understanding of teenagers’ nature.

Teenagers are children in transition. They are not young adults. Their needs, including their emotional needs, are those of children. One of the most common mistakes parents, teachers and others make regarding adolescents is to consider them junior adults. Many people in authority overlook their childlike needs for feeling love and acceptance, for being taken care of, and for knowing that someone really cares for them (Campbell 1981, 9).

Adolescence is a stage in life during which children experience many changes. These changes are emotional, physical and mental. It is also a time in life in which social life is crucial. Their feelings about their own self-perception are unstable. They often feel worthless, hopeless, and helpless and have poor self-esteem. They are constantly striving to be free of these feelings. If they are not adequately helped, they may give in to depression, violence and rebellion, in an effort to cope with their feelings. It is during this time of a child’s life that he may become involved in secretive activities like sex, drugs, and robbery or join gangs.

On the one hand, most teenagers spend more time in school, with peers, with neighbors, or in front of the television than with their parents. Spending time and learning from these other sources makes it difficult for parents to reach out to them. On the other hand, it is believed that the influence that parents have on their teenagers has a great impact on how teenagers handle relationships and other life issues. Their self-confidence and ability to cope with all sorts of pressure will help them sail through this stage in life with success.

In any case, teachers with the responsibility of conducting a teenage Sunday school class have to know that teenagers have a culture of their own. Their culture includes not only language and dress, but also their values, interests and .entire worldview. The teacher's worldview is radically different from the teenager's. The characteristics of teenagers, which include fashion, solidarity/loyalty to others and hero-worship, affect their worldview. Despite differences of characteristics and culture between the teacher and the students, the Christian educator has the task of leading teenagers from where they are to a point where Christ is the focus. It has been observed that, when teaching and working with teenagers in the context of culture, we struggle with the tension that exists between our Christian faith and the broader culture. This tension between the Christian faith and the broader culture cannot be ignored. Third Culture Kids are likely to experience this tense situation more than others because of their exposure to diverse cultures in life.

The culture of teenagers today leads them to value whatever is useful for now. Their decisions are focused on now; decisions are made spontaneously, at the spur of the moment. Lawrence Richards saw this spur of the moment decision making as a lifestyle that is not anti-Christian. This desire to see things "here and now" could be compared positively with James 4:13-15 where God encourages Christians to focus

on the present, which promotes dependence on God. However, the spontaneous decision-making of teenagers is an issue that Christian educators must deal with in order to help teenagers avoid making major mistakes. The consequences of all decisions have to be evaluated through loving guidance as the teenagers are also allowed to do the evaluation of values themselves. They must be helped to understand that daily decisions affect their value system. They cannot be left to make decisions without considering the cultural forces pressurizing them. Therefore, Christian education must give attention to:

- Extending youths' references points for decisions beyond now.
- Relating value ideas to a Christian understanding of God and his purposes.
- Guiding youth to discover the reality of the Christian faith by personal experience.
- Guiding youth to consciously evaluate values expressed in their decisions (Richards 1972, 30).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design and Rationale

“Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participants to conduct the research. Qualitative researchers look for the involvement of their participants in data collection and seek to build rapport and credibility in the individuals in the study” (Creswell 2003, 181).

This qualitative study explores the perceptions of Sunday School of Western missionary’s teenage TCKs from two urban African churches. It uses grounded theory methods to explain how these particular groups of TCKs relate to their teachers and other students in their class. Data were collected using past site observations, semi-structured interviews, archival documents (as available) and emails.

Using a qualitative research design is advantageous because information emerges as discussions occur. “Several aspects emerge during a qualitative study” (Creswell 2003, 181). As these aspects emerge, research questions may change. The researcher learns what to ask. Also, if a site, (which in this case refers to the locations used in interviewing participants) is not suitable, the researcher can move to an alternative site. Grounded theory procedures allow the researcher to depend less on literature and more on data gathered as inquiries are made and participants make contributions.

Data Collection

In a grounded theory study, data can be collected from a variety of sources: site observations, interviews, archival documents (which include newspapers, journals, emails, diaries and letters) and other materials. This researcher used interviews and emails for the purpose of gathering first hand data. The participants shared their own personal experiences.

“Sampling in a grounded theory study is directed by the logic and aim of the three basic types of coding procedures ... open coding, axial coding and selective coding” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 205). Open coding develops categories of information while axial coding connects the categories. During sampling, participants are selected according to their ability to contribute to an emerging theory. Selective coding seeks to formulate a unified theory that explains all emergent categories. Hence, sampling is not narrowly structured according to time, persons or place. “Open sampling requires a researcher who knows how to probe (e.g. “ Tell me more about that”) without putting respondents on the defensive, or worse, unconsciously signaling them to reply or to act in expected ways” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 207).

This study’s participants were contacted face-to-face or via emails, and according to their availability. The use of email bridged the geographical gap, allowing participants to provide information at a distance. Another advantage of email was it permitted TCKs to express freely how they felt while attending Sunday School. X participants were interviewed face-to-face and Y via email. Face-to-face interviews lasted from x to y minutes.

Data Recording Procedures

Interviews were conducted using an interview guide rather than a fixed set of questions. “This protocol includes a heading, instruction to the interviewer (opening statement), the key research questions, probes to follow key questions, transition messages for the interviewer, space for recording the interviewer’s comments, and space in which the researcher records reflective notes” (Creswell 2003,190). Face-to-face interviews with this study’s participants were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Grounded theory data analysis is a continuous process. As open-ended data are analyzed, and as questions arise, more detailed analyses are developed from the information given by the participants. This approach “has systematic steps. These involve generating categories of information (open-coding), selecting one of the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial coding) and then explicating a story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding)” (Creswell 2003, 191). The data collected from the 15 participants in this study were analyzed using the above-described grounded theory methods.

Validation and Verification Strategies

Two data validation strategies were employed in this study: triangulation and members checks. In triangulation, information from different sources is put together to shed light on the central theme of the study. In member checks, the researcher solicits participant’s views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations. Creswell considered this latter strategy as the “most critical technique for establishing credibility” (Creswell 1998, 202).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study ventured into the world of teenage Third Culture Kids (TCKs), particularly Western Missionary TCKs. Its focus was primarily their perception of their Sunday School classes. In order to have a proper understanding of TCKs' perception of Sunday School, it is imperative to consider their cultural background and other influences they encountered as they moved from one culture to another.

Understanding TCKs and their varying needs with regard to Sunday School required more than just experience as a Sunday School teacher or an academic degree. TCKs are highly complex. This study revealed that cultural adjustments experienced by teenaged TCKs greatly influenced their attitudes toward Sunday School classes. Appropriate handling of and giving adequate attention to the fundamental issues facing TCKs could improve their attitude toward Sunday school.

Elements Affecting Attitudes toward Sunday School

The TCKs studied were not disabled in any way. They were just kids with special needs stemming from their cultural experiences. The necessary cultural adjustments affected their participation in Sunday school. The key issues they struggled with were exposure to: 1) a new and different culture, 2) different cultural expectations, 3) different relationships with Sunday school teachers and African students, and 4) a different classroom environment.

A New and Different Culture

TCKs generally share certain common experiences and struggles. When they have opportunities to meet, they often share the same thoughts. They expressed that, though they were different, yet share a similar worldview. They were torn between two cultures. While those born in Africa desired to return when on furlough, those who came to Africa as teens or in their pre-teenage years were torn between two or more cultures. They desired their pets and lifestyle back in the United States of America or some other home country. They also expressed that they feel forced by circumstances to be in a different culture, and have to make extra effort in order to be accepted here in Africa.

Cultural change did not always have negative effects. There were other sides to it, although the negative tended to dominate. These changes affected not only adjustment into the society, in general and into Sunday School classes, in particular

Cultures affect the way people behave. One TCK said,

We used to think that the West was best, but our perception is different now, we see the good things here in Africa despite the lack as in development. In America, people are not as friendly. All we are asked by other kids is if we fight wild animals, live in forests, as if there is no form of civilization in Africa. However, here, the kids are more welcoming, friendly and accept us more than in the States.”

TCKs expressed that they had a better worldview than non-TCKs. One participant said they saw life more realistically outside of their passport countries. He added that in Africa people are valued over time. Probably that is why they take longer times to teach in class. One TCK, Margie, said,

I was very lonely when I came to Nigeria. Though I had a few Nigerian friends, they didn't quite understand where I was coming from. Their lifestyle was different from mine. They already had their friends, but I didn't. Many times they did things together with their best friends and I was left out. If you were in my shoes, how would you feel? My mom didn't do any better. She always had her friends around and took them out. I felt like she didn't have

time for me. She didn't care! So I became sad and angry, which made me fight a lot.

She thought attending Sunday School would solve her problem, but it didn't. She continued narrating her ordeal by adding that, "because my mom was friendlier with Nigerians than other missionaries, we hardly attended functions with other missionaries. It enlarged the gap between me and other Western kids."

Margie concluded she would never enjoy the Sunday School class because she had no friends. The class was mainly Nigerian kids and the teacher was not what she expected. She needed a teacher who would be there for her, though the class was large. Margie wondered why her mom subjected her to that kind of suffering. She looked forward to turning 18, when she would go back to the United States and never return.

Shannon said that when she attended Sunday School, the teacher and other teens, who were mainly Kenyans, expected that she should answer all the questions being asked. She said, "That was so embarrassing!" The fact that her parents were missionaries did not mean that she knew the Bible well enough to respond adequately to all questions.

Different Cultural Expectations

For TCKs, coming from different cultural backgrounds took its toll. They were faced with general adjustment issues in order to settle into the new environment (in which they found themselves). Some of these issues were:

Emotional Adjustments

Coping with emotional struggles affects the life of a TCK generally and it can lead to major problems. Megan narrated her experience and how she finally got out of it. She said,

I came to Africa when I was 12 years. Leaving my friends and pet affected me. On coming here, I had no one to talk to and began drifting into depression. The only people who talked to me were from the States, through emails. They didn't have much to say since they didn't know my situation here. Finally, I sat one day and wrote a very long email about how I was feeling and it helped me. My parents didn't understand what I was going through. I didn't attend Sunday school. But after the letter, I talked more with my parents and it helped. I got depressed because of the age I was (12) when we moved. We didn't have a car for about a year and had to rely on others. I felt so much anger, which led to the depression. I felt like there was no one to talk with. But when I began to talk about my worries and concerns I began to see things objectively and accept my situation. The thought of going back to America now, after spending 4 years in Africa, makes me nervous.

The above experience initially made her not to even want to hear the suggestion about Sunday School, much less attending it. Leaving a familiar territory with all the best friends, pets, familiar places, relatives and the rest already put a heavy weight on TCKs, compounded when they are confronted with adjustment issues in their various locations with diverse cultural requirements. As TCKs faced adjustments, they acknowledged that they never came completely out of emotional struggles. They were sensitive to so many things initially but with time, they toughened up and are able to handle situations better.

Language

The difference in languages affected, to some extent, the participation of TCKs in Sunday School classes. They expressed the fact that it was difficult for them to comprehend some of the ideas taught, due to the difference in language.

Sometimes, words in the local language are added in the speech. Not knowing what these words meant was a bit frustrating. But, with time, they knew the meaning of the words and could even use them.

Along with the accents of some teachers, which were a bit hard to understand at first, songs were sung in African languages. The Africans would enjoy singing, while TCKs just looked on and they felt like they didn't matter.

Clothing

In the West, wearing trousers all the time was not an issue to even think twice about. "But here in Africa," related one female TCK, "we were shocked to hear that we could not. That was a big problem to me! But we had to comply because of where we lived."

Children's Reactions towards Westerners

TCKs expressed that Africans reacted towards them in ways that TCKs despised initially. Several participants said they felt people always staring at them, even in class.

It is as if people are waiting for you to scare them by saying 'boo!' to them. At first, reactions of Africans toward us were scary, and for the most part, annoying. As soon as we show up, they want to touch our skin and hair, and hear us talk, not to them as such; they just want to hear us talk. This actually is common among younger kids. However, we got used to it and it doesn't bother us anymore. We lived in the village, so not close to other kids our age. We had many small kids who come to play with us.

Then Margie narrated a somewhat scary experience. "I remember a situation where I had my hair in a 'bun' and it began to drop, so I let it down completely. It was very long. A child of about 2 ½ years old saw it, began crying and screaming. He got

scared of my hair. Efforts to stop him failed. I was confused and wondered what the child's parents would think I did to their child.”

Family Ties

Grant noticed that in Africa, family ties seem stronger than it is in America. He said that families are not so close in America, (as here). Families in the States make an effort to be together, mostly during Christmas or Thanksgiving. However, here in Africa, they visit all the time. Extended family members are well known, and they don't feel like they are distant relatives. Being in Africa helped Grant appreciate family ties and Africans more.

Choice of Friends

Generally, TCKs who were born in Africa got along better with Africans. They felt more like Africans than Westerners. Interestingly, the other groups of people they felt closely related to were South Americans, South Koreans and some Europeans. All of these seemed to experience adjustment issues, but, due to their exposures to other cultures, they related better. North Americans, according to TCKs, felt more superior to others, so TCKs felt at home with other TCKs who are not North American. TCKs also wished that Africans focused more on them as individuals rather than on their color. Although they felt weird at first, but they got used to this, and realized that Africans did this out of curiosity, not because of a negative motive.

Time Consciousness

TCKs noticed that generally, Africans were not always in a hurry to meet up with time. TCKs came from cultures according to them, where people are so time

conscious that they sometimes ‘felt like machines.’ A TCK reiterated the above saying,

We were used to having things done on time, there’s orderliness, but not here. It is as if no one is in a hurry. Longer hours are spent at church, Sunday School, and other gatherings. The attention span of Americans is very short. If a talk or any form of teaching, lecture or gathering takes long, they begin to move, cough and do all sorts movements to show that they cannot stay longer.

TCKs realized that cross-cultural experience was a rich experience that they would not trade for something else. They also realized that their own priorities were different from those of non-TCKs. They believed that they were able to make better decisions on life issues than non-TCKs.

Schools

The system of education was very different from what TCKs were familiar with. They had to either attend schools specially established with systems familiar to them or attend those with unfamiliar systems and learned how the systems function. Some TCKs, who lived far from schools with systems they are used to and who could not attend others, were home-schooled. They said this affected their relationships with their peers. Also, the boarding school system here in Africa limited them to friendships with their African peers at holiday times only.

Different Relationships with Teachers and Peers

Some TCKs valued the relationship they had with their teachers, while others had experiences that they did not want to share with anyone. I wondered how bad the unshared experiences may have been.

One TCK said that his relationship with the teacher was interesting; interesting in the sense that the teachers were down to earth, friendly and caring. Relationships with teachers, specifically in Sunday School were two sided. Below are different expressions by different TCKs:

Peter said, “The teachers’ accents are very different, hard to understand what they said. It got worse when the teacher was soft spoken. But with time, we began to understand the accents. We were also able to differentiate between Kenyan English, Kikuyu English, and the adulterated Nairobi English. At first we didn’t know the difference.”

Greg stated, “My teacher was a college student, who used the time to lecture us. He was making it hard for us to be interested in what he was teaching and to understand.”

Megan related,

Some teachers did not seem to have a schedule they followed. They were unorganized. This was seen from the way they moved from one thing to the other and you do not see any connections. Some of the teachers in Sunday school were “more adult” and did not seem to know our problems. Those we regarded as bad teachers were those who were more concerned about our misbehaviors than the good behavior. But the good teachers were fun. They talked about issues we were concerned about. They listened to us, dressed like us, talked like us and did the things we do.

Another TCK felt the teachers looked stern and serious, as if they had already been told that,

We were bad, so they came fully armed to either attack us or defend themselves. Meanwhile, all we needed was friendship. Others looked too young; one in particular was small in size. Of course, as teenagers we felt bigger, but she was trying so hard to impress us, when what we needed was her friendship, confidence and not making herself look more important than we were.

I got curious, and asked, how this teacher portrayed greater importance and superiority. The TCK just said that she tried to always ask them to listen, behave themselves, and they didn't quite "dig that."

Angie had a different opinion about her Sunday school teachers and experience. She said,

Overall, I enjoyed my Sunday school experience at Nairobi Chapel as a teenager. There were other MKs (Missionary Kids) in the class as well, and several of them were rather rude and disrespectful to the teachers (I'm sorry to say), which bothered me. I, however, greatly valued the experience and, looking back, am glad I had the opportunity to attend the Sunday school of another culture. I even attended a couple of events outside of, (getting together at a teacher's house), and, while I was the only white person present, I had a good time and felt very accepted. My teachers were very friendly and I think rather young, though that may have just been my perception. They had trouble controlling the other MKs I mentioned above, I think because, in general, Kenyan teens tend to be much more respectful and attentive. However, they certainly did their best, and I enjoyed going to Sunday school. There were also a couple of MKs in the class who were well behaved and we became friends because of having met there. ... They actually attended a different school than I did, so I would not have met them otherwise.

From the above narration, I saw that TCKs were different and perceived experiences differently. Angie enjoyed the class, noticed that other TCKs were being rude and disrespectful, while the Kenyans were not. She appreciated the cultural diversity. Her teachers, she concluded, were very friendly. Some other TCKs saw their teachers in a different perspective, "different strokes." Could the major difference in perception be connected to difference in personality, cultural background/exposure or parental upbringing? Whatever the reason, certain facts were clearly stated.

Dan, a TCK in Nigeria, enjoyed his time so much that he wished his parents allowed him to interact more with other Nigerian teenagers while living there. He

wanted to know more about the lifestyle, the language, and other places besides Sunday School.

Tim's case was not what his teachers did nor didn't do. He was worried about his dad - who was always away. As if that wasn't enough, his brother left to go to school in the States. That was like adding salt to an open sore. This affected his desire for Sunday School. He was disrespectful to his Kenyan teacher and just hoped that he would not have to attend Sunday School anymore.

A Different Classroom Environment

The classroom environment will either be welcoming or will be the cause of discomfort for all learners. TCKs, who had been used to well-ventilated, well set-up classrooms, with lots of creative ideas on the walls and lots of supplies available for Bible activities, suddenly found themselves in different kinds of rooms. One described his Sunday School room as too small and congested. The class was made up of about 30 kids, which did not facilitate close contact with the teachers. In America, according to him, there are only about twelve to fifteen kids in a given class. He said, "the size makes it possible for the teacher to know us personally, and we participate more."

TCKs prefer small groups, providing the possibility of having one-on-one discussion or conversations with teachers. They expressed that this makes them more relaxed and confident.

TCKs appreciated learning activities other than lectures. They particularly enjoyed activities outside the classroom. Activities mentioned by TCKs included:

- Camping, which provided opportunity to go out, have some adventures, spend time with friends, and make new ones

- Skits and Dramas, particularly during special seasons like Easter, and which parents came to watch. A TCK said, “It felt nice being patted on the back for doing something nice; feels cool!”
- Bible vocabularies, a game in which one person describes, using only one word, a character or object in the Bible, and another person guesses is the character or object
- Hangman, a guessing game in which participants spell out words, receiving a part of a sketched hanging stickman for every wrong guess

Even though they enjoyed activities, TCKs expressed that in Sunday School, some of the activities they were involved in were not well organized. One said, “We noticed that the soccer game was not always well organized. We think that it is because of the large number of kids. In comparison to the way we played games in the United States, we were a bit shocked. In the States, the class is smaller; there are instructions to follow as we played games. You do not go out of your place when you play. It is more relaxing and less stressful than what happens in our class here in Africa.

Coping with Experiences

TCKs somehow were able to cope with their experiences. Earlier I mentioned Margie who was slipping into depression and decided to write down how she was feeling and felt relief afterward. Some of them chose not to go for Sunday School anymore, saying that it was not helping their situation anyway. However, TCKs’ parents helped in enabling TCKs cope with Sunday school and life generally. Below are some of the means the parents used:

- Arrangements were made for TCKs to visit with each other.

- Families went on interesting trips together.
- Home schooling, for some, gave them some kind of stability. They felt like it was the only thing that did not change. They were being home schooled before they moved to Africa.
- At home, some parents allowed TCKs to design their rooms the way they wanted.
- Pets were acquired, since they are considered as part of the family, but mainly so TCKs will feel at home since they were used to having pets before coming to Africa.
- TCKs were encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities like learning musical instruments of their choice, being part of a press-club, or reading club or sports club.
- Parents made an effort to listen to the frustrations and anxieties TCKs were experiencing. Parents showed understanding when TCKs went wrong. Parents talked to TCKs about issues they (the TCKs) didn't understand, and helped TCKs understand some of the cultural differences and changes around them.
- Parents helped teach Sunday School once in a while.

Summary of Findings

TCKs generally expressed the fact that they face various struggles; they were kids like all others and did not want to be treated differently. Sunday School could be a good means of helping them talk about issues of concern and finding solutions from their teachers. TCKs did not mind if their teachers were Africans, they just wished

more teachers had listening ears and more support as they tried to adjust. They made the following statements suggesting ways that teachers could help them adjust better.

- If only they are helped with the struggle of being alone.
- TCKs felt that they did not fit anywhere and that they were in their own world.

They appreciated having a taste of two worlds, but wished that help were given to them to understand more and enjoy this privilege.

- Help on how to handle being stared at, which they felt was offensive.
- They felt hostility at times from Africans and believed some saw them as invaders, so are treated badly. They feel that their parents came to help, so should be treated well always. This, of course, was unrealistic. Hence, TCKs needed someone – their teachers – to help them understand the reality on the ground.

Despite their concerns, TCKs realized that many missionary families and individuals were supportive. These groups encouraged them, talked with them, asked how they were doing, and gave them advice.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to give the researcher and others a better understanding of the needs of Third Culture Kids in Sunday School classes here in Africa. In addition, the study provided African Sunday School teachers insights into the lives of Western TCKs, so that they can better help TCKs learn about God and receive valuable teachings on how to handle issues they struggle with on coming to Africa.

This chapter gives a summary of the findings that could enhance an understanding of TCKs, their basic needs and way they could be helped in church Sunday School classes. Further, the chapter relates the study's findings to pertinent literature on the subject and makes recommendations for their application.

Summary of Findings

Third Culture Kids are mobile and have integrated certain elements of various cultures where they have lived with cultures they were born into. They feel more at home with other TCKs, despite their diverse nationalities. They often feel marginalized but generally use their differences to cope with cultural issues in creative and constructive ways.

Some of the challenges they encountered involved a sense of not owning any culture, of not identifying with their passport country and of being unique and misunderstood. These challenges led them to behave in certain ways, which others did not clearly understand.

In a class including TCK teens, TCKs represent a pivotal audience. The teacher must be aware of their characteristics and needs. However, knowing that teenage TCKs look up to others as models, the teacher is responsible to teach by example. “Teaching teenagers to think clearly is difficult, time-consuming, and tedious. But if you do not clarify issues . . . attitudes (seen in other places) will subtly influence your teenagers” (Campbell 1981, 105). Teaching teenagers about issues that affect them now is crucial. The level of consistency by the teacher will affect the students either positively or negatively.

The relationship between adults and teenagers affects how effective the teaching/learning process goes. Teenage TCKs long to feel good about themselves. Hence loving them strengthens their minds and influences their decision-making. The feeling of being loved and affirmed for doing well enhances their self-esteem. Richards suggested ways of building healthy relationships between the Sunday School teacher and the teenager.

- Encourage questioning. Life experiences and the Christian faith must be tested. Show you have nothing to hide. They need to know Christian principles so that their faith will be shaped.
- Direct experiences. Giving teenagers a good dose of real life experiences gives them a taste of human life and existence.
- Build teaching the students on lived moments. Give teenagers the opportunities to relate experiences and how they handled them (Richards 1972, 32-35).

Teaching TCKs

TCKs have their own uniqueness due to the diverse cultural exposures they have experienced. These exposures make teaching them a challenge because the teacher has to show that he has a good knowledge about issues. Teachers have to be willing to face the challenge. Some aspects to consider in teaching are:

The Reason for Relocation

TCK teens, like all teens, need to know God personally. The home situation determines how they are introduced to the things of God. TCKs whose parents are missionaries need to know the facts and understand the purpose for which their parents left their passport country. TCKs have a tendency to get bitter and resentful when they have to leave the country in which they are living and adjust to multiple cultures. This can lead to rebellion against their parents and the society in general. Therefore, teachers have the task of first building a relationship with the TCKs and then leading them to God. Having a relationship with God is a lead to clarify the reason why the family is relocating.

Teens' Developmental Stage

Usually, it is much easier to tell a small child what to do than it is to tell a teenager. Whereas a child readily accepts “the attitudes, biases, beliefs of his parents,” (Dobson 1974, 54), teenagers examine, question, and critically analyze issues before either accepting or rejecting them. Teens must undergo a process of personal evaluation. “If that personal evaluation never comes, then the teenager fails to bridge the gap between ‘what I’ve been told’ versus ‘what I believe’” (Dobson 1974, 55). There is nothing wrong with a teenager questioning the veracity or truth of the

self-examination about issues by teens is what matters. The Sunday school class is a good forum for handling these questions teens have. However, as questions are being answered, the teachers should be open to give other known views about God, as well as their strengths and weaknesses rather than forcing beliefs down the TCKs' throat. TCKs may have grown up in Asia, Africa or other parts of the world with many religious beliefs, so they need to be clarifications about issues that they express as they question what they are being taught.

Communication

Along with cultural differences in what is being learned go differences in how communication with children is structured. Cultural variations in communication strategies deeply influence the ways in which parents and children collaborate in children's socialization. (Rogoff 1990, 119)

TCKs have experienced various communication styles, depending on where they grew up. Some cultures communicate by using certain gestures or nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, while some may verbally speak. Due to these differences, teachers have the task of discovering various forms of communicating. The main reason to communicate is to socialize. Teachers meeting the needs of TCKs have to use the appropriate communication skills in order to reach them.

Decision-making

As mentioned earlier, some TCKs struggle to make decisions about life. Hence, they need direction in making godly decisions. The teacher is a good resource person for TCKs in respect to guidance. The type of relationship between the teacher and the TCKs determines whether the TCK will consult the teacher when he has a decision to make. TCKs are not handicapped; they only have mixed cultural experiences that affect their outlook on issues. The teacher is a guide, counselor,

friend and model. TCKs need to be shown that people do not have anything against them, but are actually looking out for the interests of TCKs in order to make life less complicated for them.

Awareness of cultural conflict and struggle

Knowledge about cultural diversity is crucial. In an African city there is a guarantee that several cultures will be represented. This diversity contributes to the attitudes or behaviors of those residing in that city and leads to conflicts and struggles even among the Africans themselves. If they struggle, how much more will it be for non-Africans in Africa? Spradly stated that,

Culturally constituted social groups are necessary for human existences as are any of man's vital organize [*sic*]. Nevertheless, as an even cursory observation of children reveals, the acquisition of culture is often accompanied by conflict and struggle, and conformity with cultural rules and norms is frequently associated with frustration and tension, (Spradly 1972, 100).

Cultural experiences can be a great advantage to TCKs, but in teaching them TCKs' multi-cultural experience includes both advantages and disadvantages. A TCK's vast cultural experiences can affect or enhance how that student interacts with the teacher. The teacher needs to be aware that the student may react adversely to the teacher because of his past experiences as a TCK.

If some of these culturally induced needs are not met, it is possible that the TCKs will become frustrated, resulting in disruptive behavior. The teacher, not knowing the depth of this need, may make every effort to gain the attention of the TCKs. However, this effort from the teacher could make the TCKs become defensive avoiding interaction with the teacher and maybe even with the peers.

The use of the cultural norm of one particular place as the standard for determining how to manage TCKs might do more harm than good, because values

vary from society to society and from individual to individual. The task of teaching TCKs entails more than just knowing how to teach. It requires a great deal more knowledge of different cultures. TCKs experience culture shock wherever they go. The manner in which this is dealt with has a lot to do with the success of their adjustment.

TCKs feel more at home with other TCKs because of their varied cultural experiences. If they are among non-TCKs, they feel marginalized. “They do not fit perfectly into any specific culture where they have lived, but on the other hand, fit comfortably on the edge or margin of any one of them” (Kidd and Lankenau 2004). The feeling of being different could affect participation in class, so they need help in feeling at home in the class.

Sunday School Programs

In helping TCKs feel at home in schools, Kidd and Lankenau suggested that teachers,

- Recognize and draw upon the strengths TCKs bring into the classroom.
- Strive to help them feel a part of the class. Implement strategies such as the buddy mentor system and cooperative learning activities to give them opportunities to interact with you and others.
- Support them during their periods of transition.
- Foster students’ multicultural identities. Explore and celebrate the diversity TCKs bring into the setting.

Teaching TCKs is a task that demands a heart of love and patience. The teacher has to have a great deal of knowledge on how to manage the classroom effectively and at the same time be open to using attractive activities that they could

take part in. Their cultural experiences play a large role in their worldview. They need understanding from the teacher.

A Sunday School class with TCKs should be structured with an orientation to a new culture program in such a way that the needs of TCKs are met. The teacher in the class has to be familiar with the probable experiences that the TCKs are going through in order to make the class work well.

The integration of several cultures for children in their formative years can be very detrimental unless the church, through the Sunday school classes, as one of its many avenues of teaching, deliberately addresses the needs of the children. An Australian TCK, Alex Graham who grew up in India wrote the following poem entitled “Uniquely Me,” quoted by Pollock and Van Reken.

I am
 a confusion of culture.
 Uniquely me.
 I think this is good
 because I can
 understand
 the traveler, sojourner, foreigners,
 the homesicknesses
 that comes.
 I think this is also bad
 Because I cannot
 be understood
 by the person who has sown and grown in one place.
 They know not
 the real meaning of homesickness
 that hits me.
 now and then.
 sometimes I despair of
 understanding them.
 I am
 an Island
 a United Nations.
 Who can recognize either in me
 but God? (1999, 37 – 38).

After reading this poem and reflecting on the United Nations, I saw the disintegration of ideas and thoughts to which this child had been exposed. I also

wondered what this TCK must have gone through. It is not possible to really know and understand TCKs unless one is involved in unveiling their thoughts and feelings. Before answering the question of what makes TCK's feel the way they do, Sunday school teachers must take a closer look at the world in which they grew up, a world filled with cultural transitions and high mobility (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, 91).

TCKs tend to be comfortable with the culture in which they find themselves until changes begin to take place. Then, they try to hold on to what is familiar, though it is slipping away from them, while they also try to understand the new issues that are coming into the society. TCKs often question themselves and feel that something is wrong with them. Pollock and Van Reken said,

Many TCKs have told us they wonder what is wrong with them; because they never seem to “get it.” No matter what situation they are in they often make what looks like a dumb remark or mistake. Others wonder at their apparent stupidity, while they are left with the shame that somehow they can never quite fit in socially as others do (1999, 43).

TCKs have the benefit of being exposed to a larger worldview but face the challenges of:

- Confused loyalty
- Painful view of reality: tragic happenings experienced
- Ignorance of their passport country's culture.

There are several other challenges that TCKs experience. They not only struggle with identity, but also with the need for strong relationships, a sense of belonging, of being nurtured and cared for, of internal unity of significance and a feeling of knowing themselves and being known by others (Pollock and Van Reken, 146). With so much going on in the minds of TCKs, Sunday school teachers have a wide range of critical issues to address adding the peculiar teenage needs to the list of issues TCKs carry. It makes teaching TCKs, especially teenage Western missionary

children, much more challenging. Nevertheless, teachers who know how to meet TCKs' felt needs can provide hope and fulfillment.

Recommendations

This study gives certain suggestions from site observations, relevant literature and the TCKs themselves.

- Implement strategies such as the mentor/mentoree system and the use of cooperative activities to give opportunities for interaction with others in the class and the teacher.
- Encourage and explore the multicultural identities of TCKs. Give them opportunities to share these, raise awareness of the diversities that they bring and join them in celebrating such experience. Use their talents to enrich curriculum and teaching style.
- Help TCKs see how they could fit into the society like other kids and even contribute positively using their rich cultural experiences.
- In light of TCKs' difficulty in maintaining commitments (due to a history of unplanned changes or movements), help them use the time they have to make and maintain commitments.
- Be sensitive to needs and alert to solutions. Adolescence compounds TCKs' difficulties as they face emotional and physical adjustments while coping with adjustments into new environments and lifestyles.
- Be willing and prepared to function as mentors or the 'bridges' between TCKs and their new environment, until TCKs get acclimatized to the new surrounding.

- Encourage TCKs to reach out to others as others make effort to reach out to them in friendship.
- Encourage TCKs to be open to relationships and profit from the good things around them.
- Prepare a welcoming and comfortable classroom environment.
- Introduce more outdoor activities.
- Make lessons very interactive.
- Utilize life-relevant curriculum teenage TCKs will enjoy discussing. As LeBar explained,

God means his words to be more than facts, even eternal facts. He means them to reveal Himself and His Son. He never meant us to separate the written word from the living word. The living word is contacted only through the written record. Therefore Christians have curriculum that is word-centered rather than Bible-centered (1981, 213)

- Give TCKs the opportunity to share or integrate their experiences with the Word of God.
- Intercede for them by praying for the following
 - A strong relationships with their parents and siblings.
 - A willingness to embrace new ideas.
 - An ability to be alert to their struggles by their parents.
 - A selection of the right and appropriate means of education.
 - A willingness to talk with their parents or others (the right people) and God especially about their feelings.
 - A comfortable feeling as they return to their passport countries.
 - And good mentors who will help them as they adjust.

Conclusion

In conclusion, TCKs have a wealth of experience that is useful to all who come in contact with them. Sunday School teachers and others who meet TCKs should be more open to hear them out and give them the opportunities to share their experiences and learn from them. On the other hand, TCKs are still growing teenagers who need direction and support as they make an effort to adjust to various cultural settings, so all who work with them should patiently help them adjust as the right concepts are being passed on to them.

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