

# Spiritual Heritage of TCKs

by  
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*Through my journey of reconciliation with God and my parents, I saw the glory of God shine through this deep well of my missionary heritage. Yes, this is who I am and where I belong! I believe that God is extending this invitation to all TCKs... God's scales are heavy with the pain and sacrifice by pastors and missionary kids, whether or not they have made it completely through their pain yet. I believe TCKs are born to be world changers. So, let "Phase II" of Modern Missions begin!*

## Part One: Cultural Transitions

I had already shifted between the Eastern and Western cultures five times by the time I was fourteen years old. It may seem like an exciting life to some, but for me, these were critical points in my development that left me feeling like a confused iceberg (see "The Iceberg"). I moved so frequently during my developmental years, I struggled with cultural balance. The importance of cultural balance is stated well by Kohl in David Pollock's book.

"Once we have stayed in a culture long enough to internalize its behaviors and the assumptions behind them, we have an almost intuitive sense of what is right, humorous, appropriate, or offensive in any particular situation. Instead of spending excessive time worrying if we are dressed appropriately for a business appointment, we can concentrate on coming up with a new business plan. Being "in the know" gives us a sense of stability, deep security, and a sense of belonging... we may not understand why cultural rules work as they do, but we know how our cultures work.

Conversely, during transition, we have to learn and relearn the basic rules by which the world around us is operating. Our energies are spent in surviving rather than thriving. It's as if we are still figuring out the fingering for the scales on the piano while others around us are playing a Rachmaninoff concerto. Being out of cultural balance leaves us struggling to understand what is happening rather than fully participating in the event."

My developmental years were full of difficulties because of the lack of cultural balance. No matter how hard I tried, I could never keep up with the surrounding culture. Just as Kohl and Pollock describe it, I experienced the full force of "iceberg confusion". Iceberg confusion can also be described using the analogy of acting in a play: Imagine being in scene 1 which is a living room. All of a sudden the set is changed and you find yourself in a forest instead. You can't watch TV anymore; you have to struggle for survival! The rules for your existence are suddenly changed. It throws you completely off balance. This is what it is like for TCKs, especially those who have experienced frequent moves.

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### **Schools and Languages**

My cultural struggles were in two main areas, in academics and language. I have a natural ability for studying the sciences. However, because of the influence of culture, I have not been able to attain to the level that I would have if I had stayed in one place. I have often regretted this, but God has shown me that in the end, He has more than compensated for my lack of achievement in the sciences. Another area affected by cultural struggles was language. I am currently trilingual in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. People often admire my language capabilities, but many do not know the pains that I went through to overcome my language struggles.