

I have heard many comments from people about the Christmas cards the MK office sends out every year. Most comments are very positive; however, a few are not. Some people are offended by the absence of the words “Merry Christmas” on the cards. As you all know, we have kids in about 200 countries. Approximately 25 percent of those countries are restricted-access countries, which means our personnel are not formally there as missionaries. A couple of regions ask that we edit our materials for their MKs so as not to jeopardize their presence in these countries. Therefore, when we make the Christmas cards, we make them acceptable for *all* MKs. The only way to do that is make them applicable to any part of the world.

Since working in the MK office, I have travelled to most of our regions and have been to most of their retreats. I am always challenged by the passion and efforts of our personnel there.

We all live in unique places. As MKs we sometimes like to kid around about one region being better than another. However, I have seen that all of you have your own trials where you live! Every place has its own unique difficulties as well as unique benefits.

I have been trying to establish a way of reaching those who live in restricted-access countries. It is not an easy task; their struggles are especially unique. The very fact you are even reading this letter indicates you are not in one of those countries! We have MKs who can never say they are MKs. Some can't ever attend a church. Some live with the knowledge that every word they say in their home is most likely being listened to by someone else. Our challenge is to minister to *every* MK, regardless of where they live.

Would you join me in praying for our MKs who live under very difficult circumstances? You know them—they are your friends! We use the term *Third Culture Kid* often, because it includes everyone. Would you pray especially for those MKs in restricted-access countries?

If you were asked to send a letter to an MK who will soon be coming to your part of the world, what would you write? What would you say are the benefits and challenges of living there? For instance, in Holland I would say that one of the benefits is the great Dutch food! In Belgium I would have said the chocolates or the waffles. (Usually cultural benefits revolve around food for me. ☺) What benefits would you mention? What are your challenges? In Holland I would have to say the weather was a challenge (not seeing the sun for months is a challenge).

Our key word to new MKs is *tradeoffs*, and there are plenty of those. Sometimes it may seem like you have given up all the positives and have been handed only negatives; however, I would encourage you to seek out the positives/benefits of where you live!

Please remember to pray for all your fellow TCKs/MKs. You need each other.

Bwana Chad