

Educare June 2007

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Introduction

This edition continues with the theme of cross-cultural families and we have another contribution from Janet Fraser-Smith to complement her article in the March edition. The other contributor is Kezia Schoonveld who co-led the seminar on this theme at Eurotck. There are recommendations from this seminar along with all of the others on the website at www.eurotck.net If you have any comments on these articles, experiences of your own to add, or would like to make a contribution of your own, you can send an e-mail to us on SteveGill@mkea.freemove.co.uk or mk_tck@yahoo.co.uk

Cross cultural parenting

Parenting is very much about teaching your children values, the do's and the don'ts of life. Of course you as a missionary will teach Christian values. But a lot of what you teach your children comes from the culture; you have learned it from your own parents. For instance: we teach our children not to shout and to yell at each other, because this isn't polite. In Ghana it was completely normal that both children and adults talked very loudly to each other. Often we thought they were having an argument, but it was just their way of speaking. Producing many decibels in communication is not seen as rude or impolite, unless the word content is. We teach our children that the floor is dirty. They shouldn't sit, sleep, eat on the floor, but in many cultures people take their shoes off at the door and everything is done on the floor.

On the field parents only know their own cultural way of parenting, but are confronted with very different ways of raising children all around them. So in order to raise their children they cannot just do as their own parents did, but ask themselves some difficult questions.

Questions:

- 1. How much do you live according to your own culture? How much/what do you want to pass on to your children of their passport culture?**

This is a decision you as a couple have to make. The answer will depend on several things, but mostly on what your vision of the future of your children is. How long do you plan to stay? Do you intend to stay in this country until your retirement (or even beyond) and do you want your children to stay in this country, even when they are adults? Usually this is not the case. If it is very likely that they will return to their passport country for education, then it is your task to prepare them for that. During pre-field and on-field orientation the parents should be taught about vital core values and they should plan and establish their own family core values based on that. The children need to know what these values are.

- 2. How much do you need to prepare your children to return to their passport country?**

This will very much depend on how long your stay will be and how long until you will go on home-leave or re-enter. It will also depend on the children's age. For a teenager it will be good to tell him a year in advance that you will return to your country. But the smaller the child, the less time in advance is necessary.

You yourself cannot fully prepare your children as you have been away too. You can tell them what you know, but if there are visitors or other workers nearby who have just come from your country,

ask him/her as much as you can, or let the children themselves ask. It helps if you keep yourselves updated with the changes in your country, not just the last few months, but continually (listen to the news of your country regularly, have people send you news paper clippings)

Factors that may help the children feel at home in their passport country while on home-leave or at re-entry.

- Education in their mother tongue while overseas/on the field
- Letters, e-mails etc from home – family and friends, preferably also from peers. If the children are very young, one good idea is to have grandparents or other close family members or friends fill cassettes or CDs with songs and stories. In this way they will know their voices already when they return to their passport country and there will be a sense of having a relationship with them already too. For older children contact with a Sunday school at a supporting church can be very helpful.
- Bring/have sent some food, toys, books, pictures (bring a photo album of all your family members and important friend and keep it updated), DVD's etc. from home, if possible.
- Have family time together regularly in which you can concentrate more on your own culture. This includes family devotions. This is where you can pass on your own (biblical) values.
- Think about what positive events or activities from your own culture you can share on the field, for instance: birthday parties
- Celebrate national occasions such as Saint Nicholas for the Dutch, Thanksgiving for the Americans.

But because you are in the host culture, you want them to feel at home there too and know the do's and don'ts.

3. How much do/should you and your family immerse yourselves in the host culture?

This will depend very much your attitude. Your children will pick this up. If you find the people and their houses dirty, your children will find so too and will not be happy to play at a local friend's house. It will also depend on how much the local culture conflicts with your own culture, how much the local culture conflicts with Christian values.

One should ask the question "What, in the long term, are the implications of immersion in the local culture for the children?" Of course, you cannot answer this question before studying in depth the culture for yourself. As you do so, the children will pick up a lot already, just by being there

4. Do you encourage your child to invite local children to your home, to let them play with his toys, share things, play at their house?

Some children need more encouragement than others to go out and play with friends. Try to find a balance between gently encouraging an introvert child who feels very different from the local children and who is insecure and pushing beyond what he can bear. Some families divide the toys in two: toys to share with the local children, for instance on the veranda and (expensive) toys for your own children to play with amongst themselves. But do encourage sharing, especially if exchanging gifts is part of the culture. You can be a big example in this. If the children are home schooled, it is important that they develop friendships with local children, to develop their social skills.

5. How much do you expose your children to local culture? (local school, transport, Sunday school, visiting places like market etc., visiting local people, clothing)

This will also depend on the same sort of things as point 3, also on the child's character: does he like to meet new people, go to places with you or rather stay at home and play with a few close friends or with his toys or read, but very much on how much it conflicts with your values. Local food: as far as it safe, let them enjoy it. Don't be overanxious. We found that families who are very careful with hygiene had the most troubles with sicknesses. Clothes: you must conform to the local rules of decency, but often on your own property, and almost certainly away on holiday, there is more freedom. Be aware of dress codes, especially when the children get into adolescence.

Factors that may help the children feel at home on the field:

- Playing with local children, both at the mission house and at the friend's house. This could be the children of their parents' local friends or colleagues.
- Attending a local school
- Accompanying their parents when they go to the market, shops, clinic, visiting friends, greeting people.
- Think of what positive aspects of the local culture you can point out to your children, like visiting interesting sites, such as a game reserve and what aspects of local life you can adopt as a family even when you have returned to your own country.
- Joining local sports
- Having a local family 'adopt' your family as their family/relatives

6. What do you do when the local culture clashes with your own culture?

- a. Think about what you find most important in this case. Is it really important for you to hang on to your own culture? For instance, to shift the time of the evening meal from 5.30 p.m. to 7 pm may not be a big issue, but feeding your baby every time he or she cries is too much for you.
- b. Ask other missionaries for advice
- c. If what you do according to your culture is seen as bad or rude and would be a bad testimony, make every effort to adapt to the local culture, unless you are convinced this is totally unbiblical or unethical. For instance, in my culture it is rude to interrupt a conversation between two people, just for the sake of greeting them. In Ghanaian culture however, it is rude to pass and **not** greet, even though it means interrupting a conversation. In this case we adapted to the local culture. But for the funerals that took at least 48 hours, in which a lot of dancing, drinking and fetish rituals were performed, we chose not to spend 48 hours at the funeral, but just to go and express our condolences to the family, even though it was regarded as 'bad' not to stay all the time (even to the point of being suspected of causing the death of the deceased). Because we were white, they forgave us and it didn't harm our reputation.
- d. If the local culture conflicts with the Bible and yours does not (are you sure?), choose for your own culture and explain very clearly both to your children and the local people why you choose to raise your children otherwise. Be very careful though. Think and pray.

It is important to have local friends and advisers who can help out when there are cultural clashes. The attitude of parents towards local and passport cultures is extremely important. Avoid criticism in front of the children and bear in mind that decisions on use of local transport, eating local food etc are part of shaping attitudes. If your attitude is negative towards one or the other, your children will be negative too. Children can return to their passport country with a very negative image of the country and culture. This will not help the re-entry process. On the other hand, if the parents are negative towards local culture on the field, it will not help the children feel at home on the field and make friends.

Always be respectful both to local culture and to your home culture.

Kezia Schoonveld; June 2007, (based on her presentation at Eurotck in March 2007 at the OM Centre in Mosbach, Germany) Kezia is the MK Consultant to WEC Netherlands, is married to Alex and they have 3 children.

Bringing up children cross-culturally part 2. by Janet Fraser-Smith

In the first article we looked at the role of the parents in bringing up children cross-culturally. In this article, I would like to look briefly at the part that children play in their upbringing. The children are starting from a very different external and political environment from either of the parents. This implies that their expectations cannot be the same as those of the parents and the preparation of the children for overseas will of necessity be very different from that of either parent. The child of overseas workers whose parents are called by God to work in a particular place is to be contrasted with a passport country child with a mono-cultural framework. There will be differences among mono-cultural children, but the overlay of the main culture will be shared (things like geography, climate range, political history, TV and main sports). The child in an overseas

context is exposed to at least two different environments and value systems, one in the home and the other in society.

What does it mean to be a child?

To be a child means to be immature physically and to be open to emotional, social and spiritual influences that contribute to their development.

It means:

1. Primarily to absorb and learn and be formed.
2. To be dependent on sources outside of themselves for love and learning
3. To get to know themselves and their gifts and personality
4. To become aware of the wider world outside "their" own.
5. To become aware of the options available to them and to test them and to learn to make the right choices for themselves and for others
6. To be groomed for adulthood and its responsibilities.
7. To have someone else in charge of their security.
8. To be a member of a family group

What does it mean to be brought up cross-culturally?

It means to be brought up as a member of a family unit *within a culture that is different from the culture of their parents*. The types of passports they hold are not important to very young children.

It means *learning about oneself from various and possibly contradictory perspectives*. Childhood goes from birth to adulthood during which time the children are learning about themselves as a family member and themselves outside the family in the society in which they are living.

1. Learning about themselves - their identity as a member of a family

As an integral part of the family group, young children have no choice when it comes to major family decisions such as moving to a foreign country. They simply move with their parents. If there is more than one move, one possible consequence is that the only part of life that doesn't change is the family unit. One police chaplain said, as many others who move for reasons of work do, that the frequent moves caused their family to become a very close unit. A downside of this can be that the children of such families suffer a greater loss and adjustment as this unit disperses, (e.g. when they go to college) and they themselves have to make the decision to move away from the tightness and safety so characteristic of their earlier years.

Sibling position also is integral to identity in the family. It may be that the eldest must assume hereditary roles. He/she is more than likely to assume responsibility for younger children. This is the case for the mono-cultural family, but in the case of a different language being used in school, the eldest child may well be the interpreter.

Parents need to remember that kids will go through normal behavioural stages, so not all behaviour is a result of MK or TCK life.

2. Learning societal values – their identity outside the family

a) Absorption of values

Children absorb their cultural surroundings, noticing that the values of the family may be different from that of the society. The process of growing up means that what the child experiences hands on will have more impact than what they hear. They learn by observation, mimicking and challenging what they see in new situations (Kolb learning cycle). For a mono-cultural child, what they experience outside of the home will coincide in many ways with the framework in which the family lives. In a cross-cultural setting, there will much greater divergence between home and society and the parents may be less aware of the family values of their adopted society because they have only lived mono-culturally. It would be helpful for the children if the parents became

aware of the underlying values of the host culture's behaviours. Children can be instrumental in aiding their parents to understand the values reflected in societal structures and expectations.

In his exhaustive map of culture, Edward T Hall has suggested that it is the values held by a culture that determine how life is structured in a society – from the way hospitals and schools are run and defence is carried out, to the spaces that men and women occupy and how they dress, to how the food is produced and prepared and whose responsibility it is to reprimand. He has identified ten inter-related aspects that describe a culture. (See chart 1 below – which is an adaptation relating his points directly to children). Without necessarily understanding why, children learn how to behave appropriately in that setting.

Chart 1

CHILDREN LEARN CULTURAL SKILLS THROUGH :

1. Learning the language
2. Living within certain patterns of time and schedules
3. Interacting with space and property
4. Experiencing how they are controlled, how they control and what is shared
5. Fulfilling / observing the division of labour in their homes
6. Associating with their kin and the community
7. Learning appropriate modes of speech, conduct and dress code appropriate to their gender
8. Gaining “formal” information through observation, modelling and instruction
9. Relaxing by taking part in humour and participating in games
10. Maintaining their security and well being through patterns of health care, social conflict resolution and through an understanding of their beliefs

Adapted from Edward T Hall's work

b) Role of schooling

How the child is educated also plays a vital role in the absorption of values. Parents are faced with schooling options – either with the home culture values or with the host culture values. For home culture values there is the choice of schooling in the home country, with the relatives, in boarding schools, or home schooling. If the children are educated with host culture values, there will be a need to acknowledge and perhaps counterbalance the learned values with the home values. There may also be an international school available. In the international school, the children are surrounded by children from various countries but the ethos of the school is essentially that of one country (e.g. US, British, Arab etc). One parent commented on her observation of the number of nationalities represented among the children's friends. “I feel we are so fortunate to be bringing up our children in *this international atmosphere*.” My comment is that this is a valid point, but I would add that these same children, like our own are only “American” or French” or “Jordanian” or “Indian” *because the homes they come from are based on those cultural values*. It is the definition of TCK that says the child is formed by more than the culture of the parents. Thus all of these other children are also in the process of gaining more than their parents' cultures and, like MK's, are also more international than national.

Educational methods from one culture to another vary enormously. A problem can arise for the children if they need to change systems and are faced with different methodologies from rote to reflective, from inductive to “taught”. The religious aspect of education may not be important to the children but maybe of concern to the parents. Once again there may be a need for counter balance. The children need an understanding of who they are as Christians. They need a reasoned rather than a “just by faith” understanding of the Christian gospel and need to try to understand it in the light of the story and the logic of the cultures in which they are and have been living.

c) Identity through participation

Children do not only absorb, they also participate and are seen to do so. The child's identity thus includes him/herself as participant in the *local* society, wherever they happen to be at the time.

This is about belonging or not belonging, about civics and racial identity. Is it possible as an adult foreigner to get involved locally? How do our children see themselves in terms of the location and the society in which they are being brought up? To an extent, as foreigners there can be little more than a current interest – to be aware of the news and the tensions in the local political sphere. There are a greater number of opportunities for the children through school and through sports. One family who had teenagers encouraged them to get as involved as possible with the local community and to do things outside the mission world so they gained a feeling of the “real” people and place where they lived. The teens did these things through school and youth groups and opportunities that arose according to the child’s particular interests – e.g. ballet, hiking, musical outlets, babysitting...

3. Acquiring a sense of personal identity

a) As a member of a minority

In the overseas community, the young of missionary parents, either for physical differences or because the parents come from other countries, are always distinguishable from the local population. They may feel themselves to be part of a minority even if they are well accepted. Some will nevertheless retain the attitude of a being a member of a majority, an attitude acquired from their parents. The children may also hold unwittingly a sense of superiority in their minority position. How one handles and sees oneself as a member of a minority is very dissimilar to that of someone in the majority. Another challenge for MK’s can occur when they go “home” as the above scenario may be reversed. Although they are now racially part of the majority, they find it hard to fit in because of the experiences they have that are not shared.

b) Identity as a unique person.

A child’s sense of identity may simply be fostered through the reaction of others to his person. He may identify himself or be identified physically in some instances with one parent or the other, or with the society because of the presence of distinguishable behavioural or racial characteristics he has inherited.

This aspect of identity only becomes an emotional and practical issue if

- The quality is felt to be a negative if it is also perceived to be a negative in the community in which the child/adult lives.
- The child believes the quality is perceived to be negative for whatever personal reason: looks, abilities, illnesses, identification with one parent.
- If one or both parents believe this quality to be negative in themselves, in their partner or in the society at large.

With this scenario comes the inevitable seesaw between acceptance and rejection depending on the location in which the family is situated. A sense of identity comes through belonging to a group who are similar to some and subsequently dissimilar by comparison to others.

c) Developing identity through many moves at particular stages.

Parenting cross-culturally inevitably means accompanying the children through the changes of location (long home-leave) and moves (to new places of the parents’ ministry). The moves, the changes and loss, the “stop and restart” cycle, affect every member of the family differently partly because of *their personalities*. Children are affected differently in addition because of *the stages at which they are in their development*. Chart 2 at the end of the article gives the moves of one family and the ages at which the several children moved.

The *anticipated and actual length of stay and its similarity to previous locations* will also affect the degree and the speed at which the children and the family are able to integrate. With every move there is a sense of loss that may be spoken about or may remain hidden. Accumulated unresolved grief may hinder the maturing process since a mature adult is able to experience deep pain and great joy. As the children grow there is a need to revisit these losses.

One key positive result of such a lifestyle is that, because of their experience of settling into new places and meeting new people, many of these young people are not afraid to mix socially and can make others feel at ease in almost any circumstance.

Advice is sometimes given to an MK who has moved a lot in their first twenty years that they consider staying in their passport country where they have a reason to belong. Such a decision cements one of their many possible selves, the one in which they have the right to remain. This came across to me in a new way recently as MK's sometimes choose to marry cross-culturally since this other person "seems to understand me." However, one or both of them continue in the pattern of moving and later on in life may not say that they belong anywhere, *not really*.

Processing the development of their identity

The long term impact of a childhood flooded with a wide variety of experiences *that they do not necessarily remember, and probably won't if they were young at the time, but are part of their formation* means that it will take time for the child to unravel and process these even into early adulthood. Children might find it a challenge to catch up with the perception of reality of their upbringing because how they see and interpret the worlds in which they grew up must inevitably be confined by their own experiences and their maturity *at that stage*. The parallel processes of becoming aware and evaluating may go on for a lifetime and parents cannot do anything about the rate of processing. They must, if allowed, become good listeners and be involved in correcting *factual* memory mistakes such as when and under what circumstances a particular move took place. Often the child is too young to comprehend the full picture and indeed may remember through the distortion of his own feelings at that time. If we as parents can be open about our own feelings, the task for our children may be simplified.

The parenting process itself to which they have been exposed need not be blamed if these young people need someone to listen to them or take some professional counselling to understand themselves. The variety of experiences that the family as a whole have been through together may for one member indeed be painful and difficult to make sense of whereas for another it may be enriching and a positive jumping board for future opportunities.

Understanding and incorporating bi-cultural / cross-cultural heritages

It is of course assumed in this article that the child will be given a multicultural heritage simply by being in another country. Within the home will be the parental influences toward the home culture(s) through food, language, and the mental, social, spiritual and therefore cultural environment.

In addition, in the MK home, there will be the essential contact with supporters through prayer letters and visits that are talked about. Perhaps the importance of all this is not felt as much as the parents want. As the children grow older, however, they will become more aware of the links to their passport culture and of the provision given in their home to help them to retain some sort of contact with the home /passport culture. They have had grandparents to write to and visits friends from previous visits, football teams to support etc. "Wherever I have been in the world, I have supported Tranmere Rovers!" But for me, it is possible and necessary for there to be a balance between a desire to retain an awareness of the home culture, to integrate into the ministry culture and thus to develop a level of appreciation of both concurrently.

The three words that are important here are: retention, integration and appreciation.

1. Will the children be comfortable in **our passport countries**? We make an effort **to retain** some sort of identity with the home culture. Do we assume they will eventually end up "at home"? Of course for the cross-cultural couple, the "home" countries are in the plural.
2. Will the children be comfortable in the place(s) *where they are living* because they are aware of our support as they integrate into the new society?

3. Will the children develop an appreciation of their passport countries without devaluing their parents' culture? The wife of one military chaplain (who moved his family frequently) studied all the tourist sites in that country/ area before they arrived and so was prepared to use the move as an educational event. For those in mission, the role of the wife may be tied up in her husband's or their joint calling and so would not be as free to do this – also this family went together on these trips which meant there was a day off!

Do we as parents have a choice in how we develop an appreciation of both home and local living? I think it is often limited to energy and our belief as to whether or not we can offer the wider knowledge of both /all, so that such appreciation is possible.

Understanding the political and historical framework of the passport countries.

It is extremely necessary to give children a sense of the history and the politics of their parents home land(s) even if this not an important subject to the parents. Do not we as adults live in a historical void of current knowledge while overseas? History as taught in the home country is integrated and internalised through a mono-cultural perspective but cross-cultural kids get taught the same “story” through the eyes of the educational system they are in, therefore they become more aware of difference. I feel it is necessary to teach this because it is a temptation to live life in the present only and not see ourselves in the stream of history. One mother said to me: “I teach my children to speak English because they have to eat their peas.” In other words, “You may not see the sense of this now, children, but you will.” Is there not always an historical gap between acquiring knowledge and appreciating its relevance?

So bringing up children cross-culturally is not just about what stage they are at now (though as for reasons above, that also is important) but also what the children will need in addition for their future. They need *more than value awareness and behavioural demands for acceptance*. These young adults, and not primarily because they are MKs, but rather due to having had access to two or more values systems to use, discover that the clarity of identity is not about being able to say “I am from ...”. The implications of no clear answer to “Where’s home?!” include that they have a perhaps subliminal sense of belonging to various places which they will never lose fully from their bank of memories. For example, a whiff of hot pines in Cyprus is enough to reconnect to a childhood spot/ experience, or, when meeting someone from a particular place where the young adult grew up that he/she remembers instinctively that it is impolite to look into their eyes.

Whether they like it or not, the children will by dint of being the offspring of overseas Christians, be implicated in their parents' work. Some will have that country as their place of birth. Not all of our roles in witness are suitable for sharing with the children, but the children will benefit from at least understanding why the family is overseas. How the parental organization views them while they are overseas and on their return will do much to underline the reality of the family atmosphere of most such organisations. Fostering their own faith will mean taking time to be with them too. One other point here is about language for worship. Depending on the focus of the parents and whether they are church planting in a language other than the home language the children's worship language at church and the one with which they are most familiar may not be their first language but it will be the one in which they have become attached emotionally to their faith.

The gift of a multicultural identity

The child has absorbed values and experiences in several cultures either from the parents or from the societies. As a result he has gained a **tapestry of cultural colours** in varying intensities. The diagrams below are a visual way of suggesting the responsiveness of the multicultural child to the various cultures that he has lived in and which he meets again as an adult.

1. During childhood, from each culture he “picks up” values and experiences characteristic of that culture. These form the range of values and experiences that are integral to his being.

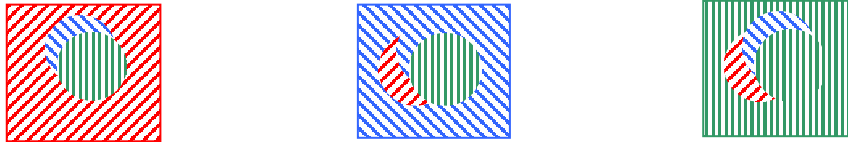
Culture 1 + culture 2 + culture 3 which gives an identity of



2. As and when he returns to a culture or meets someone from there, he is able to draw from that store of memories.

For example:

Within a red culture, the young adult is aware of both being different (his blue and green sides which he does not need to access) and of fitting in (the red experiences). Should he meet someone from the blue culture, he can choose to put the red and green to one side and use the blue side. The more positive he feels towards each of “his cultures”, the more easily he will be able to use this upbringing to his advantage. Indeed he has a transferable skill in his ability to understand and feel at ease with people from different places – even though he may not recognize that these different behaviours will appear contradictory to the onlookers e.g. individualistic and collectivist values, or hot and cold cultural behaviours. For example, due to the many skills these kids build up they are able to cross not just normal cultural barriers but can help churches cross other divides between social groups, different religious backgrounds etc as they have an ability to see things from the other point of view.



Note the merging of the “outside culture” and “appropriate” experiences as the child blends that side of his identity into the environment.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has tried to focus on issues known to be important to parents and to look at them from the point of view of the child.

- Are we primarily involved in creating and maintaining an enabling environment for their growth?
- Do we recognize ourselves as key to their development but only a part of their network of trainers?
- Can we trust God to show us what the key issues really are as we walk alongside our children in their path to mature adulthood and to mature faith as Christians?

That both parents and children are just *pilgrims* here still needs setting into the amazingly varied context of the cultures and ministries experienced by the family.

Note from a parent to parents; Janet Fraser-Smith

1. Are MK families really so different?

All children have to process their lives so why MK families are different? Why do we emphasize the MK model and indeed what is it?

It differs from the TCK model due to four factors

- **The parents believe that God has called them contribute to the task of church planting cross-culturally in collaboration with a particular organization, and their presence in a**

particular place and team is in order to follow this call intentionally. The focus of the parents' work is local and their efforts include training and adjusting appropriately in order to work /to minister/ to belong there. These efforts are also part of the dynamic of their home lives. The children are not part of the team except through their parents and yet, belonging to the team helps shape their identity. The children also need to feel that they belong in the local setting but for different reasons: to create an environment in which they can grow and flourish as developing individuals. (Is this team connection similar to living on a compound?)

- **Finances.** Even though parents may be paid a salary for their secular work, the parents still have to raise a) their support money – in part to pay the dues for the company offices - and b) spiritual support, in addition to the time they spend on their key role/ work/family.
- **Responsibilities to those who have vested interests in the parents' key role** The parents are accountable to organizations, supporting groups and individuals. School holidays may be associated with the work of fostering these relationships. E.g. on home ministry assignment, the children all go on "holiday" to the "*home*" country but it is really *work* for the parents.
- **It is very likely that the children of such families have far more people praying for them and taking an interest in their lives** than they are ever aware of and which continues beyond their time at home.

2. Being part of an MK home may mean that the family life is under observation. **How does what parents discipline their kids for reflect their calling?** Parenting has to challenge the beliefs of both parents if both are involved in raising their children. **Are we acting on our prejudices, cultural practice or Biblical standards?** Parents need to be able to explain to themselves why they do what they do and what values they want to inculcate into their kids.

Parenting follows the stages of growth of the child. *Are these stages the same in the culture in which the family live or even from one mission family to another?* How discipline is applied would have to include the age of the child and maybe the degree to which the parents see eye to eye and why each values their own approach. Does this create stress and/or ambiguity for the child?

3. Creating additional spiritual support. Some parents have found it useful to arrange for three or four people to take on each child to **pray for them** and befriend them as stable mentors, someone other than you. Parents tend to be busy in the context of their own roles.

4. Preparation for any move of the family needs to take into account how comfortable the parents are in both the place from which the family is moving and the one in which they intend to settle. Consider the needs for the following two moves of a mission family where at least some of the children were born in:

A) Overseas Culture B and returned "home" to culture A when children were 2; 8; 10; 16 yr.

B) Home culture A and moved to culture B when children were 2; 8; 10; 16 yr.

What differences would it make for each gender at each age?

5. **Parents have been parented.** The parents' own experiences at a particular age may also give rise to exhilaration or apprehension at a similar moment in their child's experience. If we give ourselves permission to question our own experiences in growing up, our children may also to our surprise at their perception, ask very probing questions.

Educare is a ministry of WEC International, Reaching the unreached for Jesus.