

# NURTURING MISSIONARY KIDS



## Some personal experience

In 1998, we began our first mission assignment in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, where many families had dogs for security. Several years later, when our organization moved to Entebbe, a small town in Uganda, we lived in a rented house about four km away, thus needed a watchdog. A neighbor gave us two dogs, for which we had to learn how to train. A dog trainer, who came to help several hours a week, used a dog chain to train the dogs to submit.

In 1986, my wife and I migrated to Australia, where there were about 200,000 Chinese immigrants. I established the Ambassadors Multicultural Mission and four weekend Chinese schools in Sydney to reach out to the Chinese community. A lot of Chinese parents wanted their Australia-born-Chinese (ABC) kids to learn the Chinese language and culture. However, teaching Chinese to ABC is a very difficult job, because the kids were not interested in learning a language they did not expect to use. As a result, we organized many workshops for the teachers and parents to develop appropriate teaching skills.

## Nurturing missionary kids

To nurture and train missionary kids (MKs) while they are students is equally difficult. Yet such effort is very important, for many missionaries began at the student age. It would have broken our hearts if we had seen the staff and teachers at the MKs' school training our kids as training dogs. May God teach these kids to willingly have a submissive heart. Quality teaching, counseling, guidance and spiritual care are so important in nurturing them to become future missionaries. Without quality spiritual care, the MKs

may encounter a lot of problems in the mission field, and may even become problem kids harmful to the mission.

We are grateful that our own kids attended a missionary kids' school, which provided not only education in academic, sports, drama, music, and drawing activities but also in spiritual counseling and guidance. MKs are "third-culture" kids, who commonly have to adapt to different living environments, cultures, friends, languages, school systems, church lives, climates, locations, etc., because of their parents' move.

## Pray for the next-generation missionary leaders

Please pray for your missionary friends' kids at the student age. Pray for their spiritual growth so that they may become another thrust in the mission work. Pray for a balanced family life, a good relationship with their parents. Also pray for their adapting to a different culture, custom, climate, friendship, and relationship, for overcoming loneliness, for a sense of belonging, for having a feeling of being loved, for encouragement and comfort, for education, furlough, and support, for their patience and interest in learning a new language as well as their own mother tongue.

Chinese churches have so far lagged behind the western churches in missionary work. They need to press on with this work, and at the same time with nurturing the missionary's next generation at the student age.

(The author is a senior cross-culture missionary, presently serving in Uganda.)