

## CHAPTER 3

### MISSIONARY CHILDREN AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, it was stated that the most important issue missionary parents are faced with, concerns the educational needs of their children on the field (Kim 1999:55). Hale (2003:13) and Kim (2006:205) ascertained that many of the missionary agencies discovered that the problem of educating missionary children is always near the top of the list of problems encountered on the mission field.

Missionary families face a variety of choices when it comes to deciding how to educate their children, and every option has distinct advantages and disadvantages (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:216). Missionary parents often face this major decision with little or no awareness of the different kinds of options available for schooling in a cross-cultural setting. Pollock and Van Reken (2001:216) aver that children's experiences in school dramatically shape how they view their childhood and whether they look back on it with joy or regret. Making the right choice for schooling is crucial for missionary children. Missionary parents have to consider some important questions about their children's schooling; such as what are the available options, what language and curriculum do local national schools use, what language and curriculum does the local international school use, who will pay for the extra cost of schooling (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:217). Often missionary parents fear taking their children into a cross-cultural setting at all, because they believe their children will miss out on too many educational opportunities offered at the home country. But the educational process for any child includes more than school. It includes all learning, in every dimension of a person's life (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:219). Thus, in considering a particular school, parents must ask for an explanation of its philosophy of education, its methods of teaching, and its policy on discipline, and then decide whether this school is a good option for their child. Even when an educational option seems to be good from the parents' point of view, or has been good for other children in the same family, some of these differences in the philosophical or psychological approaches to education can cause enough stress for

a particular child that a change to a school with a different method of teaching is justified (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:220). Therefore, parents must examine the total approach to education in any system of schooling, not only the academic aspect. Styles of discipline, teaching, and grading can vary widely from one culture to another. These differences can have an enormous impact on children. So, wise parents must have some basic principles about the educational process to make the best choices possible. It is also very important for missionary families to make a long term plan for children's education from pre-school to college/university in order to ensure educational consistency. It is often difficult for Korean missionary children to make a wise choice of education systems on the field which are mostly different from Korea, while Western missionary children have more opportunities to choose MK/International schools which are based on the Western education system and supported by Western teachers and staff (Park 1999:127).

In this chapter the traditional approach to education will be investigated, as well as the contemporary tendency, and the compare alternative options for schooling. Then, language issues and education view of Korean missionary children will be discussed. Since I am a missionary serving under SIM I will further describe the education policy statement of SIM<sup>11</sup> in order to understand how this mission agency supports its members' children. Through this study, a statement for the future education of Korean missionary children will be developed.

## **2 TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO EDUCATING MISSIONARY CHILDREN**

### **2.1 Historical approach**

For various reasons, the traditional approach to educating missionary children has been to send them to regional MK boarding schools. For example, many

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<sup>11</sup> SIM (Serving In Mission) International is a community of God's people who delight to worship him and are passionate about the Gospel, seeking to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. SIM International was founded in the USA during 1893, and has 9 sending offices and has 2,000 active missionaries from 40 countries ([www.sim.org](http://www.sim.org)).

missionaries find that there are often not schools in the area in which they live and thus they must send their children to boarding schools. These schools often draw missionary children from several surrounding countries and are normally run as 'inter-mission' schools. Governing bodies are made up of representatives from all the different mission agencies involved in establishing the school. The schools are often located in rather remote areas and students are mainly comprised of missionary children and possibly a few other children from Christian families (Hale 2003:13) either from the international community or from national families who want an American education for their children (Haile 2007:1). Typically, the "MK school" provides a largely American curriculum. Some missionaries have a special sense of call to the ministry of school-based missionary children education and have spent long and distinguished careers as missionary educators in one or other of these schools (Haile 2007:1). For the past 100 years, missionaries have followed the abovementioned traditional approach to educating their children.

## **2.2 Contemporary tendency**

In today's world, many of these schools are facing many problems, including the difficulty of obtaining staff and teachers, decreasing student populations, increasing number of students from non-western countries, lack of adequate finances and inability to offer programmes which could be offered if there were enough teachers, finances and students (Hale 2003:13). Most missionary children are no longer spending a large proportion of their school career in boarding schools. Many missionary parents realise that this traditional approach is not always the best option for their children. The missionaries themselves were educated in this traditional way and have experienced the difficulties, especially the emotional difficulties such as unresolved grief and relationship difficulties with parents, because they were separated from their parents at an early age and for extended periods of time (Haile 2007:1). Pollock and Van Reken (2001:169-170) note that educational choices such as boarding school or staying in the home country for high school can create major patterns of separation for families when the children are still young.

Recent surveys (Haile 2007:1) among SIM missionaries demonstrate some growing trends that should be of interest to all who have a concern for the education of missionary children. In SIM's last survey, dated October 2004, 40% of 5-11 year old SIM missionary children were home schooled, and nearly all the rest were enrolled in Christian day schools. Even in the 12-18 year age group, traditionally the age group that has depended on boarding schools, only 25% were attending this type of school. SIM's policy (Haile 2007:1) for the education of missionary children is becoming more concerned with both missionary parents and missionary children, moving from the traditional approach to various other schooling options presented below.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLING**

Missionary families face various educational options according to the condition of the field. Generally they can make a choice in terms of their ministry, financial situation, and especially the education system (Park 1999:128). In order to make a wise choice for schooling, parents need to look at specific educational options and policies generally available to their families. The variety of choices may give parents the opportunity to discern the needs of each individual child (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:223). Current educational options available to missionary children are the following.

#### **3.1 International schools**

International schools are a popular option for missionary children in most major cities of the world (Hale 2003:14). Most of these schools originally catered for students primarily from North America and Britain, and the curriculum was generally either British- or American-based. Children from other countries had to adjust as best they could. British-based schools or American-based schools have different systems of education, of culture and of credit. In America 50 % is failure, but A's are given to those with 94 % and above. In Britain 50 % is passing, 70s and 80s are considered very good, and scores in the 90s are practically unheard-of (Pollock & Van Reken

2001:218). Some school systems practice learning by rote, and others employ only problem-based learning, where students must personally seek out the answers to each assignment. In some cultures discussion and other forms of student participation are encouraged, or even required. In others, this type of behavior is considered disrespectful. Ways of motivating students vary from culture to culture. Thus, in considering a particular school, parents must take into consideration the quality of the principal and teachers, the quality of the classroom experience, and ask for an explanation of its philosophy of education, its methods of teaching, and its policy toward discipline before they decide whether the school will be suitable for their child. The quality of the principal is a universal factor determining the level of a school's effectiveness in all the various countries of the world (Reynolds 2006:554).

International schools have a different curriculum and cultural framework from national schools. Many international schools are beginning to incorporate broader choices in their subject material, including the International Baccalaureate (IB)<sup>12</sup> degree and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). Besides French, Latin, German, and English, some other languages such as Chinese, Russian, or Korean may be included in some schools. Nowadays, international schools offer a greater diversity of subject matter, styles of teaching, basic curriculum, and philosophy of education (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:229). Therefore, parents must examine the whole picture of the international school, to make sure their child's needs will be met within the variety of subjects offered and the philosophy or cultural base of education it practiced.

These schools have advantages such as academically high standards, excellent facilities and equipment, enrichment and specialized programs, potential continuity with schooling during leave in the home country, and good preparation for re-entry if the curriculum is based on the home country's system. One of the greatest advantages of these schools is the diversity of the backgrounds of the students. Children develop relationships with peers from many different nationalities. These friendships open the door to knowledge and understanding of a much larger

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<sup>12</sup> IB is a non-profit educational foundation created in 1968 and is based in Geneva, Switzerland. It offers programs for primary, middle years, and diploma. These programs are currently offered in 1,293 schools around the world. It is designed for highly motivated and academic students who hope to attend university (College Prep Handbook 2008:11).

worldview. (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:220-221) In international schools the transmission of cultural values and expectations takes place. The differences are that teachers and peers come from many countries and cultures, along with the curriculum itself (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:221).

Another important benefit at international schools is their general understanding of the internationally mobile experience. Many international schools have a 30 percent turnover each year as families are transferred in and out. So, students understand what it is like to be “the new kid in school” (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:230), and typically extend themselves toward the newcomer. The school staff also understand the transition experience, so they can support students and families in transition. Thus, parents can factor into their decision which school provides ongoing, institutionalized transition programming (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:231).

However, there are various problems that arise with international schools. One of these problems is the high cost of tuition. Not many mission agencies or missionaries can afford the high tuition fees of these schools. On the other hand, most of the students in these schools are upper class in their society and their life style is very different from that of missionary children. This, economic imbalance among students may be a back draw to missionary children (Hale 2003:14).

### **3.2 MK/Christian schools**

The state of MK/Christian schools, and their boarding facilities will be discussed next, in order to understand how missionary children will adjust into these circumstances.

MK/Christian schools with boarding facilities have mostly been established by American mission agencies during the twentieth century (Haile 2007:1). Pollock and Van Reken (2001:232) explain that these schools were developed in the days when strong formal educational programs of any kind were severely limited in many of the countries where missionary families worked. In the early years of the twentieth century, various mission organizations founded boarding schools as an attempt to help missionary children remain closer to their parents. Before the days when on-

field boarding schools for missionary children were common, children were sent to their home country for schooling and lived with their relatives (Haile 2007:1). In such cases, many problems arose, such as children having to communicate difficulties with their parents because they were separated from them for long periods of time. It affected the relationship between parents and children. In considering a solution for this situation, mission agencies and churches in America started to establish MK schools with boarding facilities in many of the countries where a large number of missionary families worked. When missionary parents worked in remote jungle areas or villages, only a few educational options were available to their children. Thus, in general, missionary families had two choices either home school their children or send them to boarding school (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:232).

MK/Christian schools catered for students primarily from the United States or Britain, and mostly provided either a British or an American based curriculum. These schools have provided great opportunities for Christian education, having trained and committed teachers and staff caring for students. The benefits of boarding schools are the opportunities students have to make close friends with their peers who are all missionary children and can understand each other, and to have healthy competition in sports or other areas. Children also have the opportunity to understand their parents' work in mission (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:228-230).

The disadvantages are the following: Missionary children have no opportunities to experience the local culture and language as they spend most of their time in MK/Christian schools. Some of MK/Christian schools do have opportunities for children to learn about local culture as one of their school subjects. But they are very few. Another problem is the separation from parents and home when children are at boarding school. Many children leave home at an early age of five or six years, and are separated from their parents for long periods of time. Due to this experience, many people have emotional difficulties and sorrow from these early patterns of separation and still deal with these feelings as adults (Van Reken 1988:68). It is also impossible for parents to monitor what is happening to their children on a day to day basis. Many times, parents do not know that children are having many difficulties or problems with their studies or personal difficulties with a staff member. In the

extreme, there is the risk of child abuse at the boarding schools (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:233). In today's world it is also hard to find trained and committed Christian teachers and staff who will spend long and distinguished careers as missionary educators in the MK/Christian schools.

But the main disadvantage for Korean missionary children is the international MK/Christian school culture. Students coming from English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Australia, and U.K., may experience differences (as TCKs) between a British- or an American-based educational system and Western circumstances, but the feeling experienced by non-English-speaking and non-western students is even more complex. One Korean missionary confessed that he/she saw his/her children neither as Korean, nor American. To Korean students in particular, who come from a highly mono-cultural and monolingual society, studying in an international MK school does not readily translate to successful education. There are marked differences in educational values, deriving from different social and cultural milieus, between the westernized educational school system and the Korean school system. Several problems tend to crop up, such as the cultural adjustment on the part of both the international school and the student, poor preparation for Korean higher education, and learning disabilities due to lack of English language skills (Kwon 2006:3).

Nowadays, many missionary parents realize that boarding school is not the best option for their children as they see its difficulties, especially the emotional difficulties such as unresolved grief and relationship difficulties with parents. Recent surveys among SIM missionaries demonstrate some growing trends that should be of interest to all who have a stake in the education of missionaries' children (Haile 2007:1).

The statistics of SIM surveys (Haile 2007:1) indicate that boarding school is not a popular trend for missionary children in the contemporary world. There are specific reasons why parents choose a boarding school. If there are absolutely no other alternative options for children's education on the mission field, and if a child enjoys the boarding experience and has a positive attitude to it, boarding school is a viable option for missionary children. It is important that missionary parents consider the boarding school option and take into account the child's age and temperament, the character and reputation of the school, and how often they will be able to see the

child. It is essential to include children in discussions regarding their schooling. The decision about boarding school is one area in which their inclusion is vital. Children whose opinions are taken into account see that their thoughts and feelings matter; they do, indeed, feel valued (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:233).

Many MK/Christian schools have seen a change in their student body over the past decade as the number of non-American/Britain students is increasing at these schools. Recent reports from many schools show a growing number of Asian students. The larger number of Asian children reflects an increase in the number of Asian families on the mission field. Therefore MK/Christian schools need to think about educating multinational students. They should change the focus of the school's curriculum to meet the needs of children from a wider range of nationalities, while not disadvantaging those from American families. MK/Christian schools are facing the challenges of internationalizing the curriculum, and supporting multinational families. They will also be more effective as they incorporate the richness of cultural diversity among students (SIM Canada 2007:2). As Asian languages, cultures, and educational philosophy are very different from those of the West, Asian children have many adjustments to make at MK/Christian schools dominated by the American and British cultures. Once they get used to the MK/Christian schools, they find it hard to adjust to school and life in their parents' home country. Therefore, many Asian missionary parents struggle with their children who lose their mother tongue and become westernized. Simultaneously, the western teachers and staff may feel helpless to prepare these children for life and study back in their parents' home country (Ahlquist 2005).

### **3.3 Local/National schools**

Local/National schools are another possibility and may in fact be one of the best educational options in some countries. For example, it enables children to become immersed in the culture, learn the language quickly, make local friends and become truly bicultural. Missionary children may build a bridge between local people and their parents. There are two varieties of national schools such as private schools and

government schools. Both kinds of schools have local curriculums in local languages. Another merit of government national schools is the tuition cost which is far less than the MK/International schools, and this reduces the financial burden of the parents. Private national schools also have advantages as well as MK/International schools, such as conveniently situated campuses, facilities, computers, sports and academic programs. Another vital advantage of this kind of school is that missionary children may stay with their parents at home and will have an opportunity for holistic education by parents (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:226).

But several issues have to be considered. In some countries there are not many schools with a Christian ethos. There is the risk of the overwhelming influence of the local religion and culture which is deeply rooted at Local/National schools, and these schools have insufficient consideration for foreign students (Kim 2006:21). Other problems, such as language difficulties and a different educational system to that of their home country might make it difficult or even impossible for a child to function properly upon their return to their home country, especially at college level (Hale 2005:2). If school is taught in a language different from a child's home language, parents must make certain their children have at least elementary language skills before entering the school to function comfortably. When a school requires more than two languages for school work, it may cause children to suffer. Children have too much of a burden if they have to learn extra languages such as different kinds of local languages and English apart from their mother tongue (Echerd 2005). Missionary parents need to understand the basic philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the local system. Another sensitive issue is that missionary children become part of the surrounding community faster, and sometimes children are immersed in language and culture and forced to sink or swim, with some children who want to settle permanently in the host country. Thus, missionary parents should take great care in making a choice of these schools. The possible long-term implications of school and culture need to be thought through at the beginning of the children's experience, not at the end (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:227). Many of the approaches that have been mentioned have indeed had a range of successes (Hale 2003:2). My own children are examples of how local schools can be successful in the education of missionary children. Korean missionary children need to take extra

lessons including Korean language, history and mathematics in order to prepare for their higher education in Korea in future. Recently, the Korean language has become popular among some of the Asian countries such as Japan, China, Taiwan, since Korean movies and singers are popular in Asia. Thus, the Korean language and culture can possibly be taught for both Korean and local students. (Back 2001:3).

### **3.4 Homeschooling**

#### **3.4.1 History**

Modern homeschooling began in the 1970s in America and is increasing rapidly in various countries. Neuman and Aviram quote five stages (2003:133) in terms of understanding the development of the homeschooling movement in America:

- (1) Dissatisfaction with the existing public education system for political, economic and ideological reasons, which has resulted in an increased number of homeschool families.
- (2) Confrontation between the homeschool families on the one hand, and the establishment, the schools and the authorities on the other.
- (3) Networking among the homeschool families based on shared interests.
- (4) Cooperation between the school and the homeschool family, frequently following a court ruling in favor of homeschooling.
- (5) Compartmentalization, which occurs when the number of homeschool families increases, thereby also increasing their opportunity for contact with each other.

As a result homeschoolers are able, together with the other homeschool families, to explore the differences in educational philosophy, which leads to the formation of different approaches or schools of thought. At least two different schools of thought evolved in America. One school of thought is liberal, nonreligious, humanistic and pedagogical while the other adheres strongly to a religious/Christian ideology (Neuman & Aviram 2003:134).

Isenberg (2007:399) emphasizes the split between religious and educational homeschooling. The three top reasons for homeschooling in 1996 and 1999 were: (a) to give a child a better education at home, (b) religious reasons, (c) poor learning environment at school, a catch-all category that includes worries about peer

pressure, drugs, and safety. The methodology changed in 2003, but the top three reasons of 2003 are the same: (a) concern about the environment of public schools, (b) dissatisfaction with academic instruction at public schools, (c) to provide religious or moral instruction. There is also a significant number of homeschooled children due to physical or mental health/behavioral problems or other special needs. In 2003, 48 % of homeschoolers cited either school environment or dissatisfaction with academic instruction as the most important reason for homeschooling. The percentages of religious homeschoolers, and the percentages of the combined behavioral/special needs category are 14 % to 15 % in all these years (Isenberg 2007:399).

### **3.4.2 Characteristics**

Homeschooling is perceived by those who practice it to be a solution to several problems in different areas of life. It is a process of heightened awareness and a willingness of parents to take responsibility for their children's education and self-fulfillment. In taking responsibility the person is required to acquire knowledge and make intelligent and considered decisions. The definition of self-fulfillment changes, and instead of the person maximizing their potential through their career or studies, they will be focusing on maximizing their potential. It is noticeable that homeschooling is increasing the level of parental involvement in their children's education. Thus, parents take full responsibility for their children's education and do not hand the responsibility over to other parties (Nueman & Aviram 2003:132). According to Feiler et al. (2006:451) the involvement of the family in the learning process and the links between home and school are vital to the success of raising standards. Nueman and Aviram (2003:135) says that parental involvement in children's learning acts as a lever to maximize the potential of the already advantaged. Therefore, homeschoolers regard the shift to homeschooling as a deep and fundamental change in their lifestyle. This change affects various aspects of their day-to-day life at different levels, including career and structure of the family unit. Another advantage of homeschooling for Christian families is that of Christian education. The goal of Christian education is to grow according to God's standards.

For this, the Bible is the centre and core of Christian education and its principles are used for the education materials (Nueman & Aviram 2003:135).

Homeschooling has disadvantages. Some parents do not have the ability to teach their children, cannot motivate them, are anxious about their children's academic capacity and social and emotional development, and they lack education materials. It will be investigated in 3.4.5.

### **3.4.3 Homeschooling on the mission field**

Haile points out (2007:4) that there are two main varieties of missionary home schooling parents: those who have homeschooled their children before they became missionaries and prefer to continue doing so on the mission field, and those who homeschooled because their ministry location offers no other options. Sometimes homeschooling is the only way for missionaries living in isolated areas where there are no schools, to educate their children. In this case, the main benefit of homeschooling for missionary children is that children remain with their parents in the place where the parents stay and work. It decreases some of the disadvantages of separation from parents. In many cases the children of this second group are the younger ones. As they grow older their parents may request a move to a city with a school, or the children may go to boarding school for their high school years. Some of the former group of homeschooling families continues to use this option throughout the years of their children's education, but many of them find homeschooling for older children to be difficult in remote rural locations.

Unlike the success of homeschooling in the home country, homeschooling in a mission situation usually lacks the resources and support networks that abound in many home countries, which proves that the idea of homeschooling to be a completely "portable" education option to be fiction. Homeschooling is not always a viable option for a particular family, both socially and academically (Haile 2007:6) for the following reasons. On the one hand, some families are not suited to this type of schooling, because some parents have neither the natural nor the professional skills

to properly teach academic subjects. Other parents are struggling to organize the instruction circumstances. Some children do not accept their parents' authority, causing constant friction and confusion in the home. On the other hand, missionary children are potentially isolated from their peers, due to the local language and culture, particularly those raised in remote areas. Thus, parents intentionally need to make a plan for local language development and interaction with the peer group and the culture, especially when the children reach junior and senior school age, as teenagers like to be with their peer group and want to be independent from their parents (Haile 2007:6). Isenberg indicated (2007:406) that in America in 2003 children of fourteen years and older, 21% were homeschooled for behavioral or other special needs.

SIM and other international mission organizations actually recommend individual homeschooling and small school options because of their unique benefits. Home schooling offers a good opportunity for parents to impart their family values. It can also be flexible in order to meet individual learning and family needs. Another benefit is that the children can maintain continuity in school without having to jump from one system to another in the middle of the year (Hale 2003: 2).

Clearly the home-based education option has grown in importance in recent years, and the SIM surveys (Haile 2007:4) suggest that it will probably increase in use for SIM missionaries, so SIM must do whatever they can to make it successful. SIM is seriously considering ways in which they can provide enough support and resources of all kinds to enable homeschooling families to maintain good standards and a good morale even under difficult circumstances. These circumstances may include a difficult environment where the processes of daily living take a lot of time and energy, with limited electricity, very limited or completely unavailable internet access, and no public libraries. One option SIM is considering is an educational resource network such as SHARE<sup>13</sup> and AERC<sup>14</sup>. These inter-mission resources provide a wonderful consultancy and troubleshooting when problems occur; they run conferences and consultancy training sessions. Both SHARE and AERC provide these resources to a very large geographical area their staff travel widely to visit families, and they have

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<sup>13</sup> SHARE; SHARE EDUCATION SERVICES. <http://www.share-ed-services.org>

<sup>14</sup> AERC; Asia Educational Resource Consortium. <http://www.educatingourkids.org>

resources at central locations. An option which may be appropriate in smaller geographic areas is the “homeschool coordinator” based in a school, who offers services to families whose children are regarded as off-site students of the school. The school may offer standardized testing, assessment of suspected educational difficulties, the opportunity to take SAT<sup>15</sup> tests or other external exams, library facilities, and the opportunity for children to join the school in special programs for class when the family is in town. All these resources can help to compensate for the lack of external resources of homeschooling families, many of whom often feel inadequate and uncertain in their desire to do their best for their children. Honest assessment and visionary leadership are required in order to provide quality education for missionary children. Mission agencies need to support homeschooling families. This might include a resource centre, and specifically assigned staff to work with homeschooling families in the rural areas. Distribution of staff to small resource centers and itinerant homeschool support ministries are important.

For Korean missionary children, homeschooling is practiced in two ways, namely a full time schooling system, and a part time schooling system. To study Korean subjects with the full time schooling system most of the homeschooled students choose their curriculum and materials from America and include some Korean subjects, because no Korean full time materials and curriculums for homeschooling are available (Park 1999:139). For the part time schooling system Korean missionary families conduct homeschooling as an after-school system or Saturday school in addition to their school work. In both cases, the study of Korean subjects is essential (Park 1999:137). Fortunately, Korean language material for young missionary children was published by KOMKED (Korean Missionary Kid Education) at the end of 2007. These materials are user-friendly to Korean missionary parents to teach the Korean language to their children more creatively (Back 2007:1). However, the disadvantage of the full time schooling system is that in Korea homeschooling is not yet authorized as regular education. Therefore homeschooled students have to take a national certificate examination to gain admission to higher education.

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<sup>15</sup> Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is required to apply college/university in North America. <http://www.collegeboard.com>

There is another option which is receiving increased attention. This is the small satellite school and it will be discussed in the following section.

#### **3.4.4 Small and/or Satellite schools**

Another option is Small and/or Satellite schools, which can only accommodate a few students. In recent years, small and satellite schools have become popular on the mission field where students can join together into a slightly more formalized setting than at home (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:225). Haile (2007:5) explains that in these schools children of different ages are taught together or perhaps supervised as they study together using curricula from their home countries and sharing some common facilities. In Mongolia there is a small school which is constructed in this way and is succeeding very well. In these schools, parents are involved as teachers. The sponsoring agency sometimes sends out a qualified teacher to conduct the classes. Training for those who will teach in a one-room multi-grade classroom is now being provided in North America as part of the Pre-Field Orientation (PFO) program for teachers and boarding parents that is run each year by ACSI<sup>16</sup> and Interaction. The training for this specialized role is a valuable new resource for those who will be teaching missionary children. These resource centers/one room schools have advantages in today's world. They do not require much capital to establish, and can relatively easily be transferred to a place where they are needed. Internet access may increase the resources available to the teachers and children in such centers, so that even online classes can be taken. Families on their own may use internet-based education, but sharing the costs and the resources is desirable where possible. Videotapes or interactive computer programs are also used in some schools. While parents or teachers supervise the proceedings, the children work with electronic tutors. Satellite schools usually have a good teacher/student ratio, with each child receiving individual attention (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:225).

Some families from newer agencies are facing the reality that they cannot provide for their children as they would like to, and some are even leaving missionary service as

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<sup>16</sup> ACSI; The Association of Christian Schools Interactional. <http://www.acsi.org>

a result. For these families, the costs of traditional MK/ International schools are beyond their reach, and the curriculum offered in these schools may be inappropriate. The satellite school or resource centre can be a resource for the children of these families. One school in Bolivia plans to offer Internet access to Bolivian missionary children around the world. Those children could be part of a multi-grade classroom. The lower cost and more flexible approach of a resource centre or one-room school might broaden the scope of facilities that could be shared (Haile 2007:5). If the resource personnel of a small school or resource centre could include people with different languages and educational backgrounds it could perhaps meet the needs of a fairly diverse mission population. The resource centre approach may be accessible to a wider international range of children, as well as avoiding the huge capital cost of establishing a fully equipped school for a wide range of grades. These schools provide a bit more socialization than a strictly homeschool setting, and missionary children are still able to live at home with their parents (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:225). Additional advantages for Korean missionary children are that they have more opportunities to learn the Korean language and culture, and develop an identity as a Korean among other Korean children.

### **3.4.5 Assessment of homeschoolers for College/University**

Bob Jones University in America discovered that home-schooled students are academically admirable and have good skills in social adjustment and high self esteem (Kim 2007:8). Ray (2004:7) discusses the academic performance, and social and emotional development of home-schooled students as follows:

#### **3.4.5.1 Homeschool students' academic performance**

Ray (2004:6) says, in many studies of the academic achievement of homeschooled students, it was found that the average home-school student tests in the United States and Canada scored, from the 65<sup>th</sup> to 80<sup>th</sup> percentile in standardized academic achievement tests, compared to the average public school student's 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Homeschooled students have a strong ability to pursue their own goals.

Homeschooled students demonstrated similar academic achievement at college as students who had attended conventional schools. Similarly, Jones and Gloeckner (2004) cited the three studies of Gray (1998), Jenkins (1998), and Mexcur (1993) that showed that the home-educated student perform as well or better at college than institutional-school graduates, even though some college and university personnel showed animosity toward the homeschooling process. But it changed, and at present most of them are interested in welcoming the home-educated (Ray 2004:8).

#### **3.4.5.2 Homeschool students' social and emotional development**

Socialization questions are asked of nearly every homeschool parent and every homeschool teenager. Parents are usually asked whether the child will experience healthy social, emotional and psychological development. Numerous studies, employing various psychological constructs and measures, show the home-educated are developing at least as well, and often better than, those who attend institutional schools (Medlin 2000:110). No research refutes this evidence. The self-concept of homeschooled students is significantly higher than that of public school students (Ray 2004:7). Linda Montgomery, a principal of a private high school, investigated “the extent to which homeschooled students were experiencing conditions that foster leadership in children and adolescents who attend institutional schools” (Ray 2004:7). Her findings on 10 to 21 year olds showed that the home-educated were certainly not isolated from the social and group activities of other youth and adults. They were quite involved in youth groups and other church activities, sports, jobs, and recitals (Ray 2004:7). Ray quotes Foster “admission officers at Stanford University think they are seeing an unusually high occurrence of a key ingredient, which they term “intellectual vitality”, in homeschool graduates (Ray 2004:8). As shown above, Homeschoolers have a distinct advantage because of the individualized instruction they have received. This, combined with homeschooled students' experience in studying and pursuing goals on their own, may be showing long-lasting effects.

### **3.5 Korean schools**

As the number of Korean missionary children is increasing, the need to reassess their educational requirements becomes imminent in order to know how well Korean values and perspectives are communicated to Korean missionary children. For this reason several Korean MK schools were recently established by Korean mission agencies and churches on particular fields (Kwon 2006:4,5). This was also done to help the increasing number of Korean missionary children who re-enter Korea for higher education. The recent tendency of establishing Korean overseas schools as well as schooling in Korea is as follows:

#### **3.5.1 Korean overseas schools**

In order to maintain Korean values and views, the importance of Korean overseas schools is their aim to educate Korean missionary children toward the goal of being Christian, a citizen of the world, and Korean, as was laid down by the KWMA<sup>17</sup>. Korean missionaries and mission agencies need to be concerned about the situation of MK/International schools where many Korean missionary children are currently attending. Many of these schools have little or no understanding of Korean students. Even though schools realize the need to help Korean students, there is still a lack of understanding. Korean overseas schools have recently been established for the reason of awakening international schools to the need of helping the increasing number of Korean students (Huh 2002:1). There are two kinds of Korean overseas schools (Park 2002:39):

##### **3.5.1.1 Formal schooling system**

These schools provide full time schooling, teach international curriculums and include Korean curriculums (Park 1999:137). The advantages of these schools are that children can gain their Korean identity at school through Korean teachers, language and culture. Tuition fees are inexpensive compared to international schools, which lessens the missionary families' financial burden. These small schools may be

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<sup>17</sup> KWMA: Korea World Missions Association

an option to replace schools in Korea according to the situation (Park 1999:149-153). Its disadvantage is the children's possible loss of the opportunities of multiculturalism and internationalism of international schools. But the formal schooling system is not a schooling option for all Korean missionary families as it has not yet been established in many countries.<sup>18</sup>

### **3.5.1.2 Informal schooling system**

These schools provide part time schooling to help Korean missionary children study Korean language, history, and culture. On various mission fields they generally operate after school or on Saturdays. There is an afternoon school during the week for Korean missionary children in Albania with extra lessons in the Korean language. In South Africa, a Korean school operates on Saturday mornings in order to teach Korean language and culture. These schools have difficulties in maintaining steady progress in education because parents and students do not attend regularly, and it is difficult to find teachers. Most of the teachers in these schools are parents. The greatest difficulty of Korean overseas schools is to recruit long term qualified teachers and administrators. The frequent moving of teachers affects the continuity of education and the immutability of the curriculum. These Korean teachers need to be flexible and broad minded to understand Korean missionary children as their experiences are different from other children who grow up in Korea. Korean schools should above all develop a Christian education system and curriculum, improve teachers' capabilities, improve the English level in these schools and create the balance of multiculturalism (Kim 2006:23).

### **3.5.2 Schooling in Korea**

As a consequence of the different education systems and language problems, re-entry into Korea for higher education has many difficulties for missionary children. Hence, missionary parents need to understand their children and give special

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<sup>18</sup> The statement on Korean schools: according to the Korean Education Development Institute in 2000 there were 26 Korean overseas schools in 13 countries.  
(<http://www.edpolicy.kedi.re.kr/Home.php>)

attention to help them. At the beginning of a new adjustment, children need intensive care by parents or other family members (Park 2002:61). According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001:234), an early start in the school system of the home country is a major benefit as this makes it easier for missionary children to continue successfully in that system through university. Parents should ask in what way changing cultures and facing all the issues of reentry during the height of identity formation in the early teen years affect their children. They need to hear reports from those who have been to university. In some cases, to return to the home country before university may be essential to prepare for entrance examinations. The major drawback of schooling in the home country is the great distance from parents even if e-mail and internet-phones make for easy communication (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:235).

Recently, education requirements have been changed for the following reasons (Park 2002:62): every year approximately 5,000 students come back to Korea from overseas and they constitute the minimum of 3-5 children in each class at primary schools in the national capital city. Some schools have special classes to care for these children (Kim 2006:32). On the other hand, the numbers of special high schools<sup>19</sup> in Korea are increasing, and the foreign language high schools<sup>20</sup> make special allowances as circumstances require for admission for MK/TCKs, if they can speak a certain foreign language fluently (Joongangilbo 2008.4.18). Recently a variety of Christian alternative high schools<sup>21</sup> have been established in Korea and

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<sup>19</sup> Special high schools have been established since 1980, and are classified as science high schools, foreign language high schools, art and music high schools and sports high schools. The schools choose students capable of specific subjects according to their requirement conditions, and conduct special education courses in order to educate them to reach an excellent standard. There are 18 science high schools. In 2007 they selected 1,395 students (of these 492 were special selection and 903 were general selection students). All of these schools are public and have boarding facilities. (The statement of the special high school and the discussion of its closing. [http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data\\_view.htm/?rplD=188376](http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data_view.htm/?rplD=188376), 2009.2.9)

<sup>20</sup> Foreign language high schools are established to educate Korean students to be effective international students with excellent foreign language abilities (skills) to become leaders in the creative world. There are approximately 29 foreign language high schools, and they selected 8,237 students (of this 3,144 were special selection and 5,093 were general selection students) in 2007. (The statement of the special high school and the discussion of its closing. [http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data\\_view.htm/?rplD=188376](http://www.reportshop.co.kr/data_view.htm/?rplD=188376) 2009.2.9)

<sup>21</sup> Christian alternative schools are established in order to provide an alternative way of education for Christian families against the secularization of the public schools and its problems. The aim is Christian education based on biblical principles. (The Kidokkyobo 2008.11.25. p1, Forum for spreading Christian schools of the churches; the movement for Christian education by the church for its duty to present an alternative Christian way of education, Kim Sunyo, <http://www.kspress.co.kr/kidokkyobo/section/detail>)

they are concerned with the re-entry of Korean missionary children in order to help them to adjust to Korean schools. Seoul, the capital of Korea plans to establish more foreign schools<sup>22</sup> in the main part of Seoul until 2012 because of the insufficient number of these schools. Many of Korean overseas children are also allowed into these schools. Hence, missionary children have more opportunities to enter the schools in Korea than in the past. Universities in Korea also have special admission requirements<sup>23</sup> (Nho 2002:9) for missionary children who have studied overseas, for a certain number of years<sup>24</sup> at least as far as high school (Korean Council for University Education 2008:132). They have also started special courses with lectures that were taught in English (The New York Times 2008.6.9). Korean missionary children have more opportunities to enter universities in Korea. Unlike in the past, a problem is a rising that Korean missionary parents seem to be unwilling that their children to attend Korean schools for formal schooling during their home assignments or during visit to Korea. It is valuable for missionary children to have an experience in Korean schools during their childhood in order to learn the Korean school culture, Korean language and to make Korean friends. On account of home assignments they forfeit the opportunity of formal schooling for special qualifications to enter university.

There are few Christian alternative schools that take special interest in missionary children, such as Handong International school<sup>25</sup>, Glovill Highschool<sup>26</sup>, and Ansan

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<sup>22</sup> There are 21 Foreign Schools in Seoul city with 5,822 students, but they are insufficient for the demand. The Seoul city council has decided to establish three more Foreign Schools in Seoul by 2012. (Juh, J W Joongangilbo, <http://www.joins.com>, 2008.4.18)

<sup>23</sup> Since 1997 special admission to universities in Korea has been available for the children of Korean embassies and Korean residents abroad. As the number of overseas Korean students are increasing, the object is to extend education at universities in Korea to educate Korean leaders as representatives overseas. 163 Universities (27 National universities and 136 Private universities) in Korea had admitted Korean overseas students in 2009 according the special admission requirements. Universities are allowed to select up to 10% of their subject courses and up to 2 % of their entry students each year. Moreover, the universities have no number limit to select students who have completed the course of study in overseas for over 12 years. (Nho, C R 2002:9, pp.87-120)

<sup>24</sup> There are two patterns of special admission. One is applied to children who complete the whole education system from primary to high school for 12years. The other is applied to children who complete school for a certain number of years overseas. Each university has different rules for application for special admission. (The important recruitment outline for an overseas Korean and Foreigner, Korean Council for University Education, 2008:132)

<sup>25</sup> Handong International school, <http://www.his.handong.edu>

<sup>26</sup> Glovill Highschool, <http://www.glovillhigh.org>

Dongsan Highschool<sup>27</sup>. Other Christian alternative schools in Korea are listed below (<http://www.casak.org/sch>):

- ⇒ Sammuel Christian School ([www.smcs.or.kr](http://www.smcs.or.kr))
- ⇒ Dream School ([www.dreamschool.or.kr](http://www.dreamschool.or.kr))
- ⇒ Dongmeong Highschool ([www.kdm.hs.kr](http://www.kdm.hs.kr))
- ⇒ Eagle School ([www.eagleschool.com](http://www.eagleschool.com))
- ⇒ Doorae Highschool ([www.doorae.hs.kr](http://www.doorae.hs.kr))
- ⇒ Newjirech Christian School ([www.newjirech.org](http://www.newjirech.org))
- ⇒ Logos Christian School ([www.logosca.com](http://www.logosca.com))
- ⇒ Global Vision Christian School ([www.gemgvcs.org](http://www.gemgvcs.org))
- ⇒ Korean International Christian School ([www.kicschool.com](http://www.kicschool.com))
- ⇒ Sasa School ([www.sasaleader.org](http://www.sasaleader.org))
- ⇒ Shema School ([www.shemaschool.com](http://www.shemaschool.com))
- ⇒ Dream International School ([www.dreamin.or.kr](http://www.dreamin.or.kr))
- ⇒ Hannoori International Academy ([www.danvi.org](http://www.danvi.org))
- ⇒ Korean Christian Officer School ([www.ko-ca.org](http://www.ko-ca.org))

In this section I have examined alternative options for the schooling of Korean missionary children. There is however no perfect schooling formula that guarantees a happy outcome for all missionary children (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:217). Each schooling option provides benefits lacking in others. Not one option can provide for the development of all the skills, abilities and attitudes that missionary parents want their children to acquire to be ready for independent adulthood (Haag 2005:2). Every child has different needs and abilities to cope with each situation, therefore it is very important to be sensitive to the abilities and inabilities of every child and make the appropriate adjustments (Robbins 2005:2). Thus, missionary parents should look for a comprehensive and balanced education for their children.

#### **4. LANGUAGE ISSUES**

Language is the basic tool of communication among people, a very important symbol of people's identity. Mastering it is a sign of respect (Lloyd-Sidle & Lewis 2001:42). Heny (1994:186) emphasizes that learning different languages early in life can

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<sup>27</sup> Ansan Dongsan Highschool, <http://www.dsgo.net>

sharpen thinking skills in general and can actually help children achieve academically above their grade level. It is essential to emphasize that missionary children learn their mother tongue as part of their education. To learn a national/local language is valuable in various ways, not only for missionary parents, but also for missionary children, in order to make national/local friends and learn their culture.

#### **4.1 Mother tongue learning**

Today there is a universal recognition of the importance of mother tongue education as well as of multilingualism. UNESCO's new position paper encourages education in the mother tongue alongside bilingual or multilingual education. Languages are now regarded as an integral part of one's identity.<sup>28</sup> This will have a greater impact on the education of missionary children in the globalized world (Ng 2007:1). One of the current realities mission agencies face is that there is an increasing number of missionary children coming from a non-English speaking background. SIM and other mission agencies face this issue as well as the missionary children and the international schools. This phenomenon will continue to grow in the years ahead. The majority of Korean missionary children come from Korea, but there is a trickling in from many directions unknown in the past. It is the result of missionaries sent from Guatemala, Paraguay and Zimbabwe as well as from more traditional sending countries. Therefore now mission agencies have to take serious steps to address some of the issues. There may be missionary children who are unable to return to their home countries for higher education, or children who have lost their mother tongue. Missionary parents from new sending countries ask themselves how they can maintain their children's ability in their mother tongue, whether their children will be able to cope with English, and whether their children will be able to integrate into the education system back in their home countries when it is time for their children to enter university. The findings of Belinda Ng (2007: 2,3) why children's mother tongue is essential for the education for missionary children are the following:

⇒ Children gain a deeper understanding of the language and how to use it

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<sup>28</sup> UNESCO; Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)

effectively. They may be more flexible in their thinking through processing two different languages.

- ⇒ A strong foundation in mother tongue facilitates the learning of the majority language. It has the cross-over effects in improving literacy.
- ⇒ Children pick up majority language very quickly.
- ⇒ Knowledge of mother tongue will facilitate reentry to their home country. Missionary children who learn their mother tongue make it possible to return to their home country in future.
- ⇒ It also provides an option for higher education and settling down in home countries.
- ⇒ To see this as linguistic, cultural and intellectual resources. What these culturally and linguistically diverse children bring to the school and communities rather than view them as problems.

For the above reasons, missionary parents, mission agencies and missionary children educators need to be aware that when children have spent a number of years in a school where the language and education system originate in another country, their transition to a passport country is difficult (Haile 2007:3). Missionary parents, educators of missionary children, and mission agencies have a responsibility to provide the opportunity to missionary children to learn their native language to have the option of returning to their passport country for further formal education and settling down, if that is what they choose. A barrier to missionary children to acquire fluency in their home language is their resistance to it, as they do not realize its importance. Children follow their peers and see learning their home language to be extra hard work. As children are not aware of the demands after high school, parents and educators of missionary children must be sensitive to it and try to help their children see how learning their mother tongue is important for their whole life. Parents need to realize how to help their children to maintain their mother tongue and to develop their cultural identity. They can talk to their children in their mother tongue, instead of using a mixed language. Children need to be fluent in their home language and to expand its ability rather than to limit it (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:222).

Until the middle of the 1990s, many of the Korean missionary children lacked the ability to speak the Korean language because they did not use it while they were at the international schools on the mission field. The children had no opportunity to learn the Korean language at school, and were not motivated to study it by themselves while English was taught academically and used each day at school. As

a result of the difficulty of the Korean language, most of the Korean missionary children chose a college/university in America and other Western countries where English is spoken as a first language. At that time missionary parents thought that it was impossible for children to study in Korea because of their limited knowledge of the Korean language. Since Korea expended special admission allowances in 1997 to missionary children, a tendency has arisen that missionary children changed from a Western to a Korean college/university. Therefore missionary parents are more interested to enforce the Korean language on their children from an early age, in order to improve their Korean language for study at Korean universities. But there are many difficulties to challenge children to improve their use of the Korean language. It pertains to adequate materials, parents' consciousness and the lack of motivation for children. Missionary parents need to change their attitude about mother tongue learning, and to teach their children from an early age. Mission agencies need to support missionary families in various ways by providing language materials, and recruiting teachers in order to teach the Korean language at schools (Back 2007:1).

The following is a case study of the Ukarumpa International School in Papua New Guinea, which is a good example of how an international school could help Korean missionary children to learn their mother tongue (Ahlquist 2005) :

In 1993, a Mother Tongue Studies (MTS) program was added to the curriculum of Ukarumpa International School in Papua New Guinea. This program began in order to meet the felt needs of school parents whose first language was other than English. The previous year, two parents had given a presentation to the school staff explaining their perceived need for instruction within the school day in mother tongues other than English and giving suggestions for a proposed program to meet this need. At a subsequent meeting, the staff thoroughly discussed the proposal. Lists were generated giving the positives of the proposed program, the concerns teachers had at this point, and the ramifications to the school program. The areas of concern included such things as logistics, teachers, materials, the classroom time these students miss, and the content of the courses. The remainder of the 1992 school year was spent refining the program to get it to a workable course for the school. And in January 1993, MTS began its first year. The program runs two hours a week throughout the school year. Students go in a group of similar ages, grades 1-3 together and grade 4-6 together. MTS classes have been taught in seven languages: Japanese, Korean, Finnish, Mandarin, Swedish, German, and Dutch (and now

Latvian). Most language groups have been able to recruit a teacher from their home country to come and teach; otherwise, a parent from that language group in the community of Ukarumpa will teach. In 1999, the Finnish and Korean students began meeting each morning from 8am until 10:10am with an emphasis on language and mathematics. The goal of MTS is to help students from non-English-speaking countries be able to maintain their mother tongue and fit into the appropriate level in school when returning to their passport country. Possible areas of study are language, culture, and history of the home country. The program has also been included at the Secondary school for grade 7-12. Students take MTS classes during their free periods.

#### **4.2 National/Local language learning**

Children learn new languages best in an environment which reinforces their sense of who they are and who they are becoming (Lee 1998) English is a high-prestige language in most of the world today. If this is the language of the schools, and the language missionary parents expect their children to use, there is a great deal of positive reinforcement for speaking English fluently. If missionary families who are in the area tend to be from a higher socioeconomic level, their children may value learning English, and the positive reinforcement will come from speaking English with peers rather than speaking the national/local language. However, if missionary families are in a village or in the area where the majority language is the local one, or missionary children are in the national/local school, the national/local language may be more valued (Haag 2005). Missionary children then need to learn the national/local language to be able to make friends and socialize. Thus, in view of their situation missionary parents need to encourage their children to learn the national/local language. Positive parental attitudes toward the national/local language are essential for children.

#### **4.3 Bilingualism**

One of the biggest benefits of growing up overseas, according to many adult missionary children, is the opportunity to learn another language and culture. This skill has opened up many career opportunities or has enhanced their effectiveness

and the scope of their ministry as adults. Experiential exposure to another language and culture is often not sufficient to develop high-level language skills, but parents and teachers can provide a structure that will help children benefit more fully from the exposure they do have. Attitude is the single most important factor for success in learning another language. The influence of attitude outweighs aptitude, intelligence, learning styles, or teaching methods. Interactions with native speakers and a person's feelings about those interactions have a tremendous impact on how well he or she will learn the language. Positive relationships are extremely important for success. Learning a language in order to integrate with another culture provides motivation far beyond merely learning in order to accomplish a task. Learning the values of the new culture is an integral part of learning the language fully. Children may go through a period of rejecting one culture or the other, but should eventually come to appreciate the good and recognize the bad of both. Most studies say there is no critical period for beginning to learn a second language. However, certain ages are better for certain things: younger children have the advantage of being able to learn without a foreign accent; college-level students learn vocabulary more easily; adults understand the grammar (Haag 2005). If missionary children speak two or more different languages, it is of great benefit to them. Limited bilinguals are those who are limited in both their mother tongue and in the second language, which is obviously a disadvantage. But, balanced bilingualism brings many positive cognitive benefits: early readiness for literacy, good problem-solving ability, superior awareness of language properties, greater capacity for inventiveness and creativity with language, greater sensitivity to grammatical functions and higher performance than monolinguals on tests of intelligence and tests of fluency, flexibility, and originality.

## 5 THE EDUCATION VIEW OF KOREAN MISSIONARY CHILDREN

### 5.1 Historical approach

The history of Korean missionaries in overseas situations is not a long one (Oh 2008:21), and thus Korean missionaries, having little previous experience, often have difficulty in deciding how they can raise their children. They also have difficulty in knowing what educational options there are for their children and which options are best, because as of yet, there are still few examples of Korean missionary children who have grown up on the mission field and gone on to become properly functioning adults. Thus, in general, before entering the mission field, many Korean missionaries are often unprepared to make decisions concerning the education of their children (Park 1999:35). According to Jung (1999:35), Korean missionary parents were often not seriously concerned about the education system and options for their children. They rather sent their children to MK/international schools without considering the impact that these institutions may have on their children (Back 2007:2). Chan (1998:331) explains that all the MK/international schools are based mainly on the western education system and on the western culture, as teachers, staff and the majority of students are western. These schools are also mostly English speaking. This causes several problems and struggles that the Korean missionary children face regarding education (Park 1999:35). Korean missionary children have a different background from Western and Asian children, specifically in terms of language, culture, society, race and the educational systems they are used to.

For a western missionary family, it is easier to choose a school for their children as the schools in the field are mostly based on the western education system and curriculum. Korean missionary children have more difficulties in terms of the foreign language, education system and curriculum (Park 1999:127). Korean missionary children may also lose their identity as Koreans through school circumstances. As the time passes Korean children become familiar (Park 2002:30) with the western culture and way of thinking, and for further education, choose a college/university in America, Canada and other Western countries for its language, education system and culture. In such a case, Korean missionary parents have a heavy financial burden of education fees, boarding costs, and extra cost of living (Jae 2002:16).

Korean missionary children may face many difficulties to settle in a new country without their parents' care. They also become westernized, which may cause conflict between parents, children and family, and may cause an inability to readapt to Korea. In recent times many Korean missionary parents have a new insight into the educational tendencies of the past and attempt a careful approach to the education of their children (Park 2002:62).

## **5.2 The State of contemporary education**

### **5.2.1 The numerical significance of Korean missionary children**

Today, there are up to 12,000 Korean missionary children around the world (Kidok Shinmun 2008.8.13). Of these, approximately 60% are in schools on the mission field and 40-50% are at international schools (Lee 2007:6). Comparing this number to the number of children from other nationalities who live on mission fields around the world, it becomes clear that Korean missionary children constitute quite a large percentage of the number of missionary children living in foreign countries. In Middle Asia and China, Korean missionary children and third culture kids can constitute up to 50% of the foreign children at MK/International schools (Haile 2007:1). There are for example 42 Korean missionary children out of 90 international students at Davao Faith Academy in the Philippines (Lee 2007:6).

### **5.2.2 The education perspective of Korean missionary parents**

As Korean missionary children grow older, and the number of Korean missionary children increases, parents experience more and more tension. Therefore, it is necessary to understand, support and assist missionary children in their educational endeavors. Parents also need to investigate all available educational options before deciding which school and which system of education is the best for their children. Parents have to consider which language and academic curriculum are best for their children, who will pay for the cost of schooling (including vacation travel for high

school and university students), what they can do both to help their children to appreciate the local language and culture, and to help their children maintain their own culture and language. And once they have chosen a school, what are the reasons for their choice of a specific school (Hale 2003:14). Any choice of schooling should be measured in terms of how well it will help meet the larger goals of the educational process. It is also important for Korean missionaries to consider factors such as where their children will settle in future (in Korea, the mission field, or in another country), before making a decision as to how to educate their children. Once this has been decided upon, missionary parents need to decide on the correct long term plan and what citizenship their children will have and need for their future (Jung 1999:29). Thus, from the very beginning missionary families need to make long-term plans for their children's education. A 'family educational plan' helps missionary families to focus on the long-term values and goals they have for their children. It can also help them to be aware of and take advantage of different schooling options. Being caught up in day-to-day struggles can make it easy to lose sight of these long-term goals and to miss out on addressing some of the most important areas in which children need to develop. The family educational plan can help missionary families to keep their long-term goals insight (Haag 2005:2).

### **5.2.3 The challenge for MK/International schools**

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, huge changes are taking place within many mission agencies and MK schools. Non-traditional sending nations are answering God's call to global missions in increasing numbers. Most of the children of missionaries are no longer from the average evangelical missionary society of America. The majority of world churches sending out missionaries, are facing the challenges of evangelism, church planting and missionary care in more and more of the countries of the world. In the case of SIM international, missionary families have changed significantly from western countries to international compilation. The SIM Korea office has grown from 46 adult missionaries and 26 children five years ago to 75 missionaries and more than 60 children in 2007 (Haile 2007:2). At present SIM supports families from Guatemala, Hong Kong, Paraguay and Zimbabwe as well as from more traditional

sending countries such as America, Canada and the UK. Therefore SIM international is looking at changing the education system and structure of the MK schools in order to support SIM's multicultural missionary children, and to provide opportunities for SIM missionary parents to choose between options compatible for their children by providing information about various education options (Haile 2007:3,4). Korean missionary children who have become the majority are a new challenge to MK/International schools, which are run on western education systems with western teachers. Western teachers and staff members lack understanding of Korean culture (and characteristics) which can cause conflicts. They recognize the necessity of extra lessons for Korean students. Some of the teachers and staff at MK/International schools have visited Korea to better understand Korean students, and have attended a forum with mission agencies in Korea. They discussed ways to help Korean missionary children at MK/International schools in the field. It led to some MK/International schools offering an additional Korean curriculum with Korean language and history, and requests for Korean teachers, caregivers and counselors to teach Korean students. These schools include the following (Back 2007:6):

- Faith Academy in Philippines

There were 205 Korean students among 580 international students from preschool to high school in 2007. Since 2003 the school has offered Korean Studies comprising of Korean language, history and social science. The school holds Korean festive days, shows Korean movies, and shares Korean food and culture. As a result of the Korean studies and the experience of Korean culture, 12 Korean students out of 21 entered universities in Korea in 2006 (Kim 2007.12).

- Davao Faith Academy in Philippines

In 2007 there were 46 Korean students out of 90 international students from preschool to middle school. Since 2006 this school has offered Korean culture studies for an hour a week in preschool and primary school, and has offered these studies as a choice in middle school since 2007 (Lee 2007).

- Hope Academy of Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan

Since 2000 this school has offered a course in which Korean language is taught as

an academic language for 4 and half years. It stopped for 3 years in order to reconsider its course of action. Since 2007, the school has offered a Korean language course for children from grade1 to 10 (Kim 2007).

- Tien Shan International School in Kazak(h)stan

Since 2005 this school has offered a Korean language course. Children can choose Korean language study from among the compulsory foreign languages. From grade 11 children can also choose Korean history instead of American history (Lee 2007:12).

#### **5.2.4 The state of College/University entrance**

Since special admission for missionary children was granted in Korea, many changes have occurred to the university entrance of Korean missionary children. Unlike in the past, Korean missionary children prefer to enter universities in Korea through the special admission (Jae 2002:15). As explained in 5.1, Korean missionary parents were burdened financially with the support of their children's higher university education in western countries like America and Britain (Jae 2002:16). It became more difficult as the UK pound and the US dollar appreciated against the Korean won. Hence, it adversely affected the standard of life of missionary families and their ministry (Interviewed Huh 2008.7.10).

Children who have entered university in Korea and settled there are still in the minority and seem to be at risk in a strange land. Children face many difficulties when they enter university in Korea with a limited knowledge of the Korean language, a different education system, the cultural shock, and the separation from their parents. But their experience of the Korean culture and relationships with Korean people will help them to settle in Korea in the future.

## 6 THE EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT OF THE SIM INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

The education policy statement of SIM International Council is examined to understand how this mission agency will support their members' children. SIM has a long history of overseas mission<sup>29</sup>, a broad distribution of mission fields<sup>30</sup>, numerous missionary members<sup>31</sup>, and a policy of intensive care for the education of its members' children. Their education policy statement on the care of SIM missionary children is presented as an example.

Information of SIM IMKEC (International Missionary Kids' Education Consultation) 2007 and from the SIM international council will be used.

### 6.1 SIM policy statements about parents' responsibility and accountability

Though the education of missionary children is the personal responsibility of parents, SIM is prepared to assist parents to meet the educational needs of their children. Parents are given the opportunity to weigh the factors involved, and make their own decision of educational options for their children. SIM requires that the quality of educational systems that their mission personnel choose be verified and validated at regular intervals.

In the minutes of SIM's 2007 International Council (Haile), they clarified their policy on the primary responsibility for the welfare of members' children as follows.

SIM affirms that the primary responsibility for the general welfare of the children of SIM members rests with the parents. In offering services for children, the mission recognizes its responsibility to consult with the parents, and that any assessment of the children's wellbeing will be done with the parents' consent. As an organization, SIM also affirms its supportive role and may intervene if necessary to ensure the wellbeing of

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<sup>29</sup> SIM International was founded in the USA during 1893, when Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham of Canada and Tomas Kent of the United States landed in Nigeria, determined to evangelize the Sudan region of Africa. (<http://www.sim.org>)

<sup>30</sup> SIM has 9 sending offices and SIM missionaries are working in around 40 countries. (SIM Korea prayer diary, [www.simkorea.org](http://www.simkorea.org))

<sup>31</sup> They support more than 2000 active missionaries from 50 different countries. (<http://www.sim.org>)

the children of SIM members. Thus, SIM has stated that we believe the primary responsibility rests with parents, but that SIM may intervene if necessary.

## **6.2 SIM's responsibility for the education**

In 2007 SIM had 363 school age children in the field. 42 % were in MK/Christian schools, 33 % were in home-based education, 10 % were in secular international schools, and 13 % were in national/local schools.

SIM is composed of missionary families from international backgrounds and this has changed significantly in the last ten years. SIM provides excellent opportunities for Christ-centered education of their members' children, with education strategy and planning as their greatest responsibility. As the composition of their membership changes they re-evaluate their overall purpose with the education of their missionary children, to be relevant for today. SIM has reviewed their philosophy on the education of their missionary children, specifically how it relates to the core values of their mission:

In support of our purpose to glorify God, SIM is committed to identify and facilitate quality care and education options for our missionary children. SIM recognizes the special calling of missionary educators and care personnel whose roles are vital to the mission's mandate to make disciples of all nations. As people of prayer, we call upon the Holy Spirit to empower our ministries. Our educational philosophy reflects a biblical and multi-national perspective, which seeks to develop potential for godly living to facilitate our children's transition into the educational institutions of their country of citizenship and to fulfill God's calling in their life.

SIM values its children and wants them to succeed, wherever God puts them in life. The following are some of the basic reasons why SIM cares about the education of missionary children.

- SIM members are the extended family for each other in overseas situations
- Unhappy children make unhappy parents - unless the kids are happy parents will not stay on the mission field
- Missionary children's educational needs are a common cause of attrition for

missionary families

- Helping the SIM family (and each individual in it) reach its/their own personal goals for ministry (in achieving balance between ministry and family)

As the result of the Education Consultation by SIM MK coordinators in 2007, SIM developed statements on the education for SIM members' children. The following conclusions were arrived at during the consultation.

### **6.3 SIM policy of subsidy for education**

Children of long term and special assignment SIM missionaries participating in an elementary or high school program approved by the appropriate council are eligible for a subsidy as available and needed. SIM will provide an amount of money based on need, to the extent that funds are available in the following ways (SIM 2000):

- Up to 90 % of the tuition costs in excess of three month's MK salary allowance per year up to a maximum of 3 members
- Plus up to 100 % of the related field transportation costs in excess of one month's MK salary allowance per year, based on the least expensive mode of travel with a maximum frequency of one round trip per school term
- Plus room and board costs in excess of seven months' MK salary allowance per year

The subsidy for SIM missionary children was cut in recent years. In 2009 SIM only provided approximately 15 % of the tuition costs for SIM missionary children.

### **6.4 The possible role of the SIM sending offices and of the field offices**

#### **6.4.1 Sending offices**

SIM sending offices can help missionary parents and their children cope with educational issues through stimulating their questions, providing resources, finding answers to specific needs. Below are some ideas:

- Publicizing the needs through relevant media resources inside and outside SIM
- By finding all possible recruits and to stimulate them
- Take every possible opportunity for input and influence
- Discussing SIM's educational principles, policies and options
- Helping educational staff to understand the “big picture” of their role in discipline, mentoring, and contributing to the work of families
- Provide information to prospective missionary families
- Encourage and stimulate recruitment of education resource personnel
- Make sure the selection and training department staff consider missionary children education issues in selection and preparation
- Make sure education-related issues are included in pre-field orientation
- Watch and listen for education-related issues faced by families
- Collect individual family questions, including questions regarding schooling needs and concerns
- Encourage links with a schooling support network, for example, homeschoolers' association/network of families; teachers from their part of home country.
- Continuation of dialogue: planning for the specific place for specific children
- Checking to see that no one slips through the cracks, for example, adjustment during the early months overseas
- Resource and network supply, for example, for homeschooling families
- Guide missionary children to prepare for home assignment schooling
- Help missionary children to prepare to enter university
- Regular communication, home assignment debriefs, and other informal opportunities
- Regularly provide educational materials to missionary families
- Interviews with SIM children at arrival for home assignment

#### **6.4.2 Field offices**

SIM field offices can also help missionary parents and their children in the field in various ways. Below are some ideas:

- Make sure the field office considers missionary children's education issues in the selection and preparation of missionaries for the field
- Make sure education-related issues are included in field orientation
- Through stimulating their questions, providing resources, finding answers to specific needs
- Work with “personnel” staff to include missionary children education issues in the Area/Field Handbook and other materials
- Regular communication, annual and education orientation reviews, other informal opportunities, and encouragement through conferences

- Know who the experts and resource people are
- Provide information to applicants (prospective teachers and resource staff, families with children)
- Discuss field's policies and options, especially on educational issues
- Provide contact with a family already doing the same proposed option
- Have an assigned person who keeps in touch with families and helps to meet their needs as they arise and test their resources
- Provide reentry seminar information
- Provide personal support and encouragement to children on their various campuses, to ensure that they are surviving often with parents far away on what are usually secular university campuses
- Ensure that parents and children have provided a family/friend/church support network for their university student
- Need to co-operate with sending office and missionary family toward effective work

## **6.5 The perspective of SIM parents on their children's education**

The most important issues concerning children's education was discussed by SIM missionary parents at the 'SIM IMKEC 2007'. The results are as follows:

- Parents need to know different school options and their child's needs as each of them are unique and in different stages
- Give attention to the comparison of various school options
- Make long term plans from preschool to university in a consistent education system like the American system, the British system or the Korean system
- Parents need to understand their own educational philosophy compared with that of the local system
- Parents need to know that each child will get a full and total education - comprehensive in every aspect
- Make a holistic plan for education: balance between academic work, art, sports, music, culture, and emotional development
- Biblical basis needs to be formed by parents and outside help
- The importance of Christian education, emotional needs, spiritual needs, emotional security and safety needs: priorities to be evaluated
- Children's emotional needs, safety and security are valued
- Understand each child's action, emotions and abilities
- Consider the academic language level of each child
- Quality of education in a school setting - as good as home country (not disadvantaged for the future - adequate preparation for return to next educational setting, including caring teachers)
- Maintain mother tongue and improve its level
- Good quality of higher education and teachers

- Caring of teachers for students
- Communication with school about the child's peace
- Development of life skills, social skills and each one's gift
- Keep track of what each child is doing at the school
- Peace of mind when children are in boarding in another country - someone needed to communicate with
- Children reaching their full potential
- Guidance through the process, access to help when needed
- Consideration of school fees
- Special need for guidance for university/college information in home country and overseas
- Counsel children with different personalities and consider each situation
- Most of SIM parents prefer SIM MK schools on the field

## **6.6 Parents' responsibility and accountability**

At the consultation, balancing missionary parents' responsibility and accountability in relation to their children's education were discussed as the first topic. The main question is, "Are parents accountable to the mission agency where their children are concerned?" The definition of "accountable" was discussed to the role of the parents in the education of their children.

The following issues were suggested as a general framework of a family's needs which should be provided by the mission:

- Early information on educational options available and mission policies
- Opportunities to discuss educational options and choices
- Family ownership of their own education decisions and philosophy
- Ways of monitoring the educational options
- Effective screening and supervision of all those involved in the education and/or care of missionary children
- People and/or resources of other kinds to assist parents in the education and care of their children
- On-going educational planning

Discussion and questions about the parents' responsibility and accountability reached the following conclusions:

- Accountability is needed for the child's protection because in the homeland there are many mechanisms for the protection of the child but when the family goes overseas, many/most of those protections are lost
- The triangle of accountability is the sending office, field leadership and the individual family, all working together
- People and/or resources of other kinds to assist parents in the education and care of their children
- Parents need to take responsibility for their children in overseas situations. They fulfill the educational part of this responsibility directly while the children are young, and later on most parents delegate some of their responsibility to others.

Education for missionary children is an immensely complicated and highly emotive subject. Missionary parents retain the primary responsibility for their children as they know their children best. But they do not necessarily have the best knowledge about education providers, nor do they know the local situation as well as the agency. Thus, as part of the believing community of church and mission, the mission agency should be able to help its families to make an informed decision about the most appropriate educational provider for their children, at least in the initial stage. Later on the family may change their minds in light of what they learn and of changes in their own family situation. It is important that the mission agency provide and/or ensure the above resources. The mission agency has the responsibility to ensure communication with key sending church/supporters when/if adequate education for the children becomes a problem.

## **7 SUMMARY**

This chapter examined the educational issues of missionary children in the following ways: traditional approach was noted. The contemporary tendency in education with alternative options for schooling has been investigated by comparing, international schools, MK/Christian schools, national/local schools, and homeschooling with small and satellite schools. Korean schools overseas and schooling in Korea have been examined in order to understand the educational aspect of the Korean missionary children. Language issues have been discussed, and the past ideas about the

education of Korean missionary children were compared with the state of contemporary education. The education policy statement of SIM was investigated to consider how this mission agency supports the education of their members' children.

Missionary families face various education options on the mission field, and options differ according to the situations on the field. Affluent countries have various educational options, but a less affluent country has limited educational options (Park 2002:70). The variety of choices may give parents flexibility to consider the needs of each individual child (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:223). There is however no perfect schooling formula that guarantees a happy outcome for all missionary children, as every option has distinct advantages and disadvantages (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:217). Each schooling option has its own richness. Not one option can provide for the development of all the skills, abilities and attitudes that missionary parents want their children to acquire (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:216).

Hence, missionary parents must consider the total approach to education in any system of schooling, not merely its academic aspect, but also their style of discipline, teaching, and grading. The parents have to consider each child's character, ability, the parents' ministry and financial condition, and especially the education system (Park 1999:128). In order to make a wise choice of a school, parents need to look at specific educational options and policies generally available for their families (Park 1999:145).

Most of the Korean missionary parents have high expectations for their children's education as they expect children to have a good academic career after graduating from university. They place a great value on education, expect good marks, and force their children to study hard in order to enter top universities in America, Korea or any other country. But Korean missionary parents and children lack insight as far as education is concerned and have no long term goal for life (Park 2002:38).

Korean missionary families need to pay attention to the specific research<sup>32</sup> done about Korean students who have been studying at Harvard and the Ivy League in America. This research discovered that 9 out of 10 who failed in the universities are

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<sup>32</sup> This research was recently done by the Harvard University in America. (Chonan Sinmon 2008.4.7)

Korean students. Harvard found that the reason was that Korean students have “no long term life goal” while they are studying. It affects them, because the education system in Korea normally focuses on the examination to enter a top university. Hence, it is difficult for Korean children to have a broad view of their future, and are without long term life goals, and a vision of what they will do after they graduate from university. Therefore children are confused and not motivated to overcome circumstances which they encounter at university. When people have an ultimate purpose of life, they also have a purpose for each stage. A broad picture of their life plan gives purpose to children’s lives (Chonan Sinmon 2008.4.7).

The failure of Korean students in the Ivy League in America shown by the research challenges Korean missionary parents to have a new insight in education. Parents need to recognize the uniqueness of missionary children and encourage them to make the most of their strong points. Parents also need to provide extra lessons at home in order to supplement the insufficiency of the school program (Park 1999:128). Korean missionaries have to consider where their children will live permanently in the future before making a decision as to how to educate their children. Once this has been decided upon, missionary parents need to decide on the correct long term plan with a balance between the reality and the ideal, their financial position, which citizenship their children will have, and the subsequent need for their future (Jung 1999:29). To decide where their children will go for college/university, the preparation at high school has to be appropriate. Some of the Korean missionary children fail in the universities in Korea because of their lack of knowledge of the Korean language and their incapacity to adapt to the Korean culture (Seong 2006:191).

From the very beginning the Korean missionary family needs a long term plan for their children’s education. Being caught up in day-to-day struggles make it easy to lose sight of long term goals, and to miss out on addressing some of the most important areas in which children need to develop. A ‘family educational plan’ helps missionary families to focus on the long term values and goals they have for their children (Haag 2005).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CHILDREN'S NARRATIVES

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

This narrative research within the social-constructionist paradigm has implications for the view on truth, and truthfulness in doing research. According to Müller et al. (2001:2,3), the aim of research is not to bring about change, but to listen to the stories and to be drawn into those stories. The intention of this research is to engage in collaborative, horizontal relationships, in which the co-researchers choose their preferred stories and attach their own meanings to them (Freedman & Combs 2002:205). Therefore, this research strives for subjective integrity and for participatory observation.

All the co-researchers are in their early twenties and were introduced by their parents, who were concerned about their struggles with education and life. Within this reason I engaged with the co-researchers. This research is not aimed at any personal objectives of the researcher, but rather at being beneficial and of value to the co-researchers. "The aim is, through this research process, to empower the powerless" (Müller & Schoeman 2004:8).

The co-researchers have spent most of their childhood and adolescence (and some into their early twenties as well) with their parents on the African continent, and in substance they have been educated on the mission field. Some of them went to high school and/or universities outside Africa, to South Korea and/or America, as the educational situation on the mission field was inadequate.

In narrative research the story of the action part is about the NOW of the story. "The researcher must learn to stay in the now – not the last now, not the next now, but this now" (Müller et al. 2001:4). The now is never fixed and never acts as a given or even as a curse. In the narrative approach, the now is action, and thus dynamic in nature. To take the action seriously and to have it told is to open up a possibility, to create a new now for tomorrow. Therefore, the now must be described as the very first step of narrative research (Müller et al. 2001:4,5).

To start telling the stories, the co-researchers were asked which difficulties they experienced with education. The problems the co-researchers are currently facing are the issues that result from their educational experiences. Thus, after the interpretations of the now of the story were understood, their educational experiences from childhood to university were listened to in order to understand the background.

Müller et al. (2001:7) says, “Background is where you let us see and know who these people are, how they’ve come to be together, what was going on before the opening of the story”. People are influenced by their past experiences, therefore it is important to explore their background in order to understand them better. The background story is not only concerned about the now, but to revisit the rooms and places of their past. Through this recollection, people can begin to understand the origin of their problem stories and its influence on them, and it can stimulate the development of now stories.

It is important to discover the co-researchers’ understanding of their own lives and behavior. Therefore their stories and the interpretation of the stories were listened to. Morgan (2002:2) avers that in the narrative approach people are the center experts of their own lives. According to Müller (1999:2), “The narrative approach has made the discovery that people do not tell stories only for interest’s sake or for entertainment, but that life’s grain is exposed through these stories. Through our stories we not only discover identity, but also build identity.” The narrative approach looks at the unity between the past, the present, and the future. In the narrative approach people’s stories are continuously being told, the telling of the story of their experience provides people with a sense of continuity and meaning in their lives. People renew their stories, make new meanings and create new possibilities for a new future.

From the ethical side the co-researchers were assured that none of their stories will be told to anyone else and that pseudonyms will be used in their stories to protect them. Their pseudonyms are based on their characteristics which have become apparent through the research process. The co-researchers took part in the choice of the pseudonyms as symbols of their preferred future.

This chapter will examine and describe the interpreted stories of the co-researchers' educational experiences. The now of the children's stories will first be presented and then the story of the past. "The action in the now is played within a background that must be pictured, but it is alive with associations and connotations of the past" (Müller et al. 2001:8).

The co-researchers' open-hearted narratives are presented below.

## **2. LISTENING TO THE CHILDREN'S NARRATIVE**

### **2.1 The story of Hope**

Hope is a young woman of twenty-two years. She graduated at college in America, and wanted to do her master's study in that country. But she was not accepted at the college that she applied for. As a result she recently returned to Korea. Because of the failure she could not renew her study permit for America and because of financial constraints she could no longer stay there. Her parents called her to Korea where they are living. In Korea she found a temporary job to save money for further study in America. But she could not adjust in Korea because she saw herself as a foreigner in Korea. She wants to return to America in the future for further study. Her mother does not approve of her going back to America. She wants her to settle in Korea. This causes many problems between Hope and her parents. Her mother worried as Hope did not share her real thoughts and feelings with her parents. There is always tension between them.

I contacted her in this regard and interviews were carried on from the beginning of 2007 through the end of 2008. Interviews were carried on mainly through networking and internet phone, with face to face interviews during the time of my visit to Korea.

At the first interview, she talked about emotional distress which often leaves her feeling down. This feeling of depression seriously affected her, so that she could not concentrate on her work, she lost confidence in life, and was really unstable. I was

quite surprise that she immediately brought the issue of her emotional distress instead of giving an answer to my question. In this regard, I was aware that this was the most important matter for her at that time of the interview, so I decided to discuss it with her. In her stories the theme of separation recurs time and again during the interview sessions. Other issues were also discussed. The story of Hope is summarized below in the order she preferred.

### **2.1.1 Separation from parents for primary education**

For the sake of missionary work, Hope's family settled down in a rural area after their arrival. There was no school for the children. Thus, in order to consider their children's education, her parents chose to send the children to a boarding school as most of the missionary families in the team generally did. Thus, she and her brother were sent to boarding school a few days after they arrived on the mission field. She was nine years old at the time. The children were not involved in the decision making process of schooling options. A few days after they arrived on the mission field, they were sent to the boarding school, where nothing was familiar to them. At that time their parents had no knowledge of alternative ways of schooling. They thought boarding school was the best option for educating their children on the mission field. Because of their way of thinking, the children were separated from their parents from the ages of seven and nine.

She still remembers that they were terribly afraid to be separated from their parents and of being strangers at the boarding school. She said that she had always struggled with fear since she was 'a little girl'. She thought that her parents chose God and the ministry above her and her brother, and she did not know how to deal with it. In her mind her parents only thought of God and the ministry, but did not care about their children. She said, "I was very angry with my parents and with God." "My parents only thought about God's calling. When I needed them and their love, they didn't care about me, they only thought about God and the ministry. I was really afraid of being alone at the boarding school." In this way, she thought that her parents showed great integrity for missionary work and God, but she did not receive

the love from them which she needed.

At the boarding school, children had dorm parents and they were grateful, but she was not satisfied with them. She needed to get love from her parents. She said, “Actually, I remember that I cried a lot when I was a little child. Emotionally I could not say good bye to my parents. I cried a lot when I left home after the school holidays. I did not want go back to school.” It seems that she had real difficulty being separated from her parents after spending time at home. She was hurt and had bad memories of reunions and separations. At the boarding school, she noticed that there were other missionary children whose parents were staying close to the school. She envied them.

### **2.1.2 The atmosphere at the boarding school**

Another major problem she faced at school was its atmosphere. She stated that the school exercised a very strict discipline, and expected the children to obey the rules. Even though she agreed with discipline, she disliked school for its too strict environment. Children were caned when they made mistakes. Some teachers even spanked the children until they were bruised. It fostered her sense of fear and insecurity. She said, “Because of fear I was obsessed to be a perfect child. So I was never satisfied with what I did. I had no freedom. The school was much too strict, so I always felt that I was not good enough.” “I think a child needs to be free. I have felt like that all of my life. If I try just to be myself, I still struggle with it. I always think about what other people think about me, but ironically I don’t care about others.”

She also stated that the school’s religious sentiment had been too excessive for little children. She said, “One specific night the teachers confiscated children’s dolls, stating that they encouraged fantasy and superstition, so the dolls were burnt in a fire. The dolls were presents from their parents to comfort the children. They symbolized the love of their parents. So many children were shocked, hurt and very sick. We were shocked and crying. We couldn’t understand why the teachers did such a thing... even now I don’t know whether it was a Christian act...” In

surroundings like this she was unstable and missed her parents immensely. She was terribly afraid to stay at school away from her parents. Because of the separation she spent all of her energy coping with feelings of sorrow, uncertainty and unrest. She had no interest in study because of her confused feelings. Looking back, she has negative memories of primary school because of the experiences mentioned above. However, she has some good memories of friends at the school.

### **2.1.3 Better adjustment in high school, but still hurtful**

At high school she was not seriously concerned about the separation from her parents, because most of children were also separated from their parents. The high school was situated in a different area as the primary school. She enjoyed the environment as teenagers prefer to be independent as their parents. She had good memories about high school, because of its atmosphere which different from the primary school. She remembered that the dorm parents as good people who tried to create a peaceful atmosphere for the children. They often took them on trips that left good memories with the children. At college she was encouraged through these memories whenever she became depressed. She said, “I have good memories about high school, it was more exciting than staying at home... It was like a small family. With the dorm parents’ care I was happier than I had been in the primary school.”

She realized that her real emotions, feelings, and thoughts had been hidden for a long time. She discovered this while taking a counseling course at college. She said, “You know, I was so hurt at the boarding school, and even at the high school, I really missed my parents, I really needed them and their love. When I really needed them, they were not there for me. They didn’t care about me, they just worked for God and the mission. They didn’t love me.” She strongly expressed her feelings of deep hurt which she experienced at high school due to the absence of her parents. And to this day it affects her relationship with her parents. “With this kind of emotional background I can’t talk nicely to my mom. I always blame her when we talk. For a long time, it has been difficult to show them affection, or to speak about my feelings,

or to show love... to my parents. Talking about these issues made us uncomfortable. There is much tension between my Mom and me on these issues..." While she was sharing these feelings her voice was shaking and I was aware that she was almost crying with pain.

Hope did not refer to academic issues much during our conversation about primary and high school education. So I realized that her need was not academic problems. She was more concerned about the emotional issues. She mentioned that academic issues were not very important to her as she was not interested in school work. Instead, she was seriously concerned about life and people. Hope thinks she was not a good student, "Something was lacking, I was not very smart, but I was always unhappy with God and my relationship with my parents and friends. I thought more about these issues than of my studies. I was confused and unstable during my school life. I questioned many things in my mind.. She also said that she and the other children did not find the Korean class which was provided at the high school interesting. She had negative memories about the class because some of western children at school teased the Korean children about their special relationships. She was worried that her western peers looked upon her as different and she was ashamed of being different. She now realizes that this kind of feeling was caused by the western environment at school.

#### **2.1.4 College education in America**

After she graduated from high school, she went to America for study at a college. She encountered many difficulties to adjust to the new place without her parent's support. In spite of it, she enjoyed university life and its freedom. Yet, she thought that something was missing in her life, she was struggling with many feelings of uncertainty such as loneliness, sorrow, and sadness. Often she was depressed by her feelings of uncertainty. Because some of her friends complained about it she decided to take a course in counseling at college. During the counseling courses a lot of things came to her mind. She found that she was very hurt by her parents because of her boarding school experiences, and became very angry about it. She

thought that her parents should have homeschooled her and her brother instead of sending them to boarding school. But she realized that at that time her parents did not know about other possible options for their children's education, and only thought about God's calling.

Her discoveries during counseling motivated her to study psychology. She studied psychology at college, worked hard, and found it very interesting. She spent much time thinking of her childhood and her parents. She wanted to continue with psychology and applied for the postgraduate course in that country, but without stating a reason she was not accepted. Therefore she could not obtain a visa to stay there. As a result of this failure, her parents persuaded her return to Korea after she graduated from college, to get a job, and to stay with them. It was extremely difficult for her to return to Korea as she felt that America was the place for her to settle. She had made good friends at college and felt that they had become a family who were really important to her, so she wanted to stay in America. She said that missionary children were always moving, which she experienced to be difficult, and she really wanted to settle down in one place. However she came to Korea because of her visa and financial problems.

### **2.1.5 "Reentry into Korea is not easy"**

As the time passed in Korea, she realized that the best thing about coming to Korea was re-connecting with her parents. She tried to take advantage of being close to her parents in order to build a new relationship with them. She said that in many ways she tried to accept them, and gradually build up a new relationship with her parents. She felt that her parents had missed out their parenting and that they were also struggling with these feelings. They were trying to feel better themselves by doing things for her. She struggled to control her anger toward her parents, and tried hard to control these feelings. Her parents had missed family functions such as birthday parties. As the children were far away they missed a lot of family things, and felt deprived. But she still felt that her parents ignored her needs because they always did what they wanted to do. Her mother did not want her to return to America for

further studies. She wanted her to find a secure job and settle in Korea. Therefore, she thought that her mother was not concern with her needs, but always wanted to control her daughter.

She complained that her parents were always busy doing mission work and she feels isolated. I asked her what made her feel that way. She responded, “He is so busy with missionary work that he has no time to talk to me... Even when we have time, he doesn’t ask about me, he only wants to talk about the mission.” Because of her father’s deep concern for the mission without showing interest in his daughter, she feels discouraged. I asked whether she has someone else with whom she feels free to talk about her difficulties. She said, “Not many people really understand me. Other missionary children just say they were blessed to be missionary children, because many people say that missionary children are blessed. Because of this common idea missionary children do not honestly show their feelings. They rather defend themselves. But I can be honest I think... because I’m isolated. So I don’t want to talk with people about myself. I think no one can genuinely understand me.” In saying this, it seems that she has a preconceived idea that her parents cannot understand her and this affected her relationship with them. She was afraid to share her thoughts with her parents and with others, as she thought no one would understand and genuinely accept her. So she tried to hide her real thoughts and emotions from people, and felt isolated.

I recommended a specific book<sup>33</sup> in order to encourage her to get perspective on her life from similar experiences of others at boarding schools. She was glad when I talked about this book as she said, “I read that book when I was at college, it was the first time I heard about other missionary children’s hurtful experiences at boarding school. I cried a lot as I read that book. She had similar experiences to mine. I still have many needs of my own. It doesn’t necessarily solve any problems for me, just helps me to cope.”

She was recently confronted with some issues, such as making a choice of career and marriage. In the same way many of young adult children face to these issues, she has been struggling with these issues, and she has been looking for someone to

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<sup>33</sup> *Letters never sent*, Van Reken, R E 1988.

share these problems with. Yet, she could not find the right person. In fact, she was really glad to contact me since we know each other.

She was not satisfied with her job, and was looking for another way to find herself. She was struggling in life and was not sure what she really needs or wants to be in future. She explained her struggle as follows:

I don't know. I really don't know what I want right now. I'm tired, just very tired... In Korea, the culture is different from America; I don't understand people in Korea. Many other MKs feel like I do, but I feel I'm alone. When I was younger at boarding school, a Korean teacher came to my school. And one day she told my parents that I was an outsider at school. My parents didn't understand me. I felt that my parents look different; I look different from the other students and their parents. There were all kinds of differences. Every time they came to visit me and my brother, they said that we must have a Korean identity because we are Korean. So we have to learn the Korean language as it is very important for us. But I didn't understand its necessity, because I was a little child. For a little child, it was so confusing. I endured much of a culture shock. I was so shy and was very ashamed of my differences.

Then, I asked her why she was ashamed of the differences between herself and her western friends. She said, "My feelings were most negative. Because there were only two to four Asians in the group, I always felt unattractive by contrast. Maybe it's my personality?... Somewhere inside me I didn't feel that I was Korean. I didn't like the fact that I was a Korean American. I think that Americans have more understanding and are interested in other cultures. Even now, I'm afraid that Korean friends will emphasize the fact that I am Korean. They are very nationalistic. I'm not sure whether that is true or not, but I feel more comfortable with my western friends." She further expressed her feelings about being Korean as follows, "I feel uncomfortable with my Korean friends, because we don't really communicate with each other. The difference in culture is part of it, but language is also a part of it. I would like to make some Korean friends and try to improve my Korean, but I know it will be hard. I feel tired at the thought of doing it." My observation was that in her telling she often used the term "tired", so in order to deconstruct her feelings of tiredness I asked her to explain more about her feelings of tiredness. She said, "I always feel too tired to do anything. I only want to do something for myself. I just want to be free. I just want to

be myself in a natural way. I struggle to think of other things. I'm so 'tired'..." Then she started to talk about her present issues as described in the following paragraphs. These stories helped me to understand her feelings of tiredness.

Recently she was offered a position as a part time teacher at a Christian school. She hesitated to make a decision, because she thought, "I'm not excited about it, because it is a Christian school and all the kids are Christians, it is too religious. I can accept it as being a part time job, but, I wouldn't like to be tied down to it. It's a Christian school." It seems that she was not happy about being involved in a Christian school, so I asked her why she was not happy about being tied to a Christian school. Then she explained her feelings, "I have a genuine relationship with God. I want to know Him in my own way, not through my parents or the religious environment. I will be confined to certain religious boundaries if I work there. That's not how I want it. That's not me. In many ways, I know myself better... My own real personality is repressed and hidden. It's not good for me to work in a environment similar to the one I grew up. Inside me, somehow I feel this will follow the same pattern as the one in which I grew up. In some way, it's still the way I was, still part of me. It's like going back to boarding school. I just want to run away from it. It's the way I feel... Honestly, I don't want to work at a Christian school, it's scary..."

Because of her experiences at boarding school, she was afraid to be in a similar environment. She was aware that it would remind her of her painful experiences in the past, and that she would be hurt again. She knew, and had difficulty in accepting it. At the same time she really wanted to face it, and to surmount it. It seemed that she had come to a fork in the road, and was struggling to know how to make the right choice. Indeed she was afraid to work there, "It would be so tiring to work in that religious atmosphere. If I work there, I will be hurt, my head knows it." Yet, she was not able to show her real thoughts, feelings and emotions about the Christian school to her parents and the principal of the school.

### **2.1.6 “I want to return to America”**

Since she came to Korea she longed to go back to America and to settle there. She feels comfortable with western/international people, so she was convinced that America is the place where she will be able to stay comfortably. She said, “I should have stayed in America. I wanted to stay there. But, at the same time, God brought me to Korea. Reason... He wants to help me to survive?... It’s why I am staying in Korea, it’s not my decision. I’m unstable here... I want to go back to America for further study.”

### **2.1.7 Reflections on Hope’s narrative**

Hope’s interviews reflect that she focused more on the separation from her parents than on any other issues. The significant stories about the separation from her parents emerged through the research process. In her stories the theme of separation reoccurred time and again. She said that she was terribly afraid of being separated from her parents and to live with strangers in a strange place. She was really confused about her parents’ priority concerning their children, the mission, and God. Instead of trying to adjust at school and concentrate on her studies, she spent her energy coping with sorrow and unstable feelings about her separation from her parents. Fahlberg (1994:139) avers that children who are separated from their parents during primary school years, “are spending their energies coping with feelings about separation. It may interfere with their ability to accomplish the primary developmental tasks of this age, which include learning in school, developing friendships, and internalizing values and conscience... Separation during these years is likely to cause a temporary regression to more concrete thinking and less mature behaviors.” Even though she was brought up in a MK school by missionary teachers and staff, she was not able to share her sufferings with any of the staff members. Ironically she was more hurt by them because of their strict rules and their attitude.

In spite of her age as a young adult, she is still struggling with her relationship with her parents due to her past experiences; she was hurt so badly by her parents and God that she feels isolated, and suffers emotional difficulties, which she cannot aptly control. This kind of thinking and feeling often caused her to feel instable and restless in making decisions for life.

She wanted to study psychology at university as the alternative way to her interior suffering and struggling in life, but her parents did not agree as they thought it not to be the real for her. They rather wanted their daughter to have a certain and steady job in order to settle down comfortably in Korea. Between these gaps, Hope was struggling with her parents and confused about her purpose in life.

Since our stories were related we felt sympathy for each other in understanding missionary life. She trusted me and opened her heart freely to share her painful stories with me. While listening to her life stories, I felt genuine empathy with her, and had specific times of prayer for her to seek God's help. Müller (1999:20) insists that narrative researchers must allow themselves to be drawn into the other's story in order to understand their world of experience. With empathy, we can communicate with others.

While the research was carried on I had an opportunity for a short visit to Korea due to the situation of my parents. During that time I had a chance to meet Hope. We met three times at coffee shops with delight and affection toward each other. One day she invited me to her flat. I was excited to see her place. Visiting her flat gave me a great opportunity to see her drawings and paintings which contained her life stories. The wall was covered with her pictures. It seemed that they were an expression of Hope's hidden stories. They gave me new insight to understand her memories of childhood and her real thoughts and feelings. I was considerably impressed with them. A little child who was growing up in isolation and confusion has now become a beautiful young lady, but still with sorrow, instability and uncertainty in life, and she seemed fragile. Müller (1999:2) said, "we make progress and life becomes a journey, since we take past experiences, organize them into a story, which then in turn becomes a map of the unknown territory that lies ahead".

## **2.2 The story of Dreamer**

Dreamer is a twenty-one year old, male, university student. Recently he transferred from a university in Korea to America in order to get a better education. He was confused and struggling while he was studying in Korea. In America he is confronted with financial difficulties and loneliness. He did not settle as easy as he expected.

Three interviews were held at my home between July and September in 2008 when he visited his family. Therefore we communicated through networking till 2009. At the beginning of the interviews we focused our conversation on the issues of his university education in America and turned to the past stories of his educational experiences that were connected to the story of now.

The following stories we composed from the story of Dreamer's primary school up to his university experiences. I present the whole process of his stories of education below to gain a deeper understanding of his educational difficulties.

### **2.2.1 Foundational education in the Philippines**

Dreamer and his family arrived in the Philippines when he was five years old. He started at a local preschool where the majority of the children were locals and the local language was used exclusively. His parents enrolled him there because it was close, and as a help with their relationship with the local people. He has very limited memories of preschool as he was too small, but good memories of primary school. After he graduated from preschool he attended a Korean school in that country, and completed grade one and two. This school was established by Korean missionaries in order to provide a Korean education system for Korean missionary children, and most of teachers and staff were recruited from Korea as missionaries. The Korean language was used as the official language at the school. He studied Korean, history, mathematics and science. Because of this environment, the Korean language, culture and society are familiar to him.

### **2.2.2 Korean school on furlough**

His family returned to Korea for a year of furlough when he was in grade 3. He experienced the primary school in Korea negatively, because the Korean children often teased and beat him. At school in Korea he was unhappy and felt inferior. He wondered what made him different from the other Korean children who had grown up in Korea, and why the Korean children did these things to him? ...

Later he realized that there were many differences between Korea and Philippines. He became aware that Korean children think differently about him than he realized. He thought that it was his fault that the Korean children teased and beat him. He also said, “My conception of the conduct of Korean children was negative. For instance, they ignored the fact that some children misbehaved and were disobedient. Children in Philippines never behaved like this. I could not understand the Korean children, and they could not understand me either...” He said, “Korea was very institutional and systematic, I was uncomfortable in Korea.” However he enjoyed playing games and liked some places.

### **2.2.3 Follow-up education in Botswana**

After a year, his family left Korea in order to continue their ministry. His parents decided to change their mission field from the Philippines to Botswana, and he was not unhappy about moving, because of his struggle at the Korean school.

He was in grade four when he started at the new school in Botswana. Contrary to expectation he struggled in the new country. He said, “I have bad memories about Botswana, they are only negative, I especially didn’t like the schools.” He remembers that people in Botswana ignored and teased Korean children as they put Koreans and Chinese in the same category. The image of the Chinese was very negative in that country and this kind of attitude caused Dreamer to be teased at school. Moreover he was struggling to study English, and found difficulties with all his subjects except mathematics. His difficulty with English was based upon his past

education which had been in Korean. He had attended Korean schools in Philippines and in Korea. So, he had had no opportunity of learning English as an academic language and his English was very poor. In spite of the struggles with his studies, he had some positive memories of school and the environment of the country. It was a Christian international school and the children were well behaved. Yet, he was isolated among his peers, because of different nationalities, languages, and culture.

On account of the financial condition of his family and the school environment he had to change schools three times since arriving in that country. He liked the first school much more as the second school where he was more ignored for his Korean nationality. The second school was also a private but a local school. Most of the children at that school did not have a good comprehension of foreigners, and teased him a lot. The language was a difficulty. The local language was spoken by everyone and he could not understand it. French was also taught at the school which he found difficult to learn. There were a small number of Korean children at the school. He sometimes joined them, but was struggling with both his local and Korean friends. He had a better relationship with his Angolan friends as they were the minority group at the school and he felt they could understand each other. The children always gathered in the same language groups and he was angry at this kind of racism. He realized that he did not belong to Botswana, and felt himself to be a stranger. He realized that Botswana was less developed, and he developed distaste for the country. He asked his parents to send him back to Korea. He was isolated both at school and at home, because his parents were very busy doing mission work and lots of guests often came to their home. Hence, he thought that their children were not important to his parents, and he felt lonely both at school and at home. He really wanted to go back to Korea, complained to his parents and said, "Why did I come here?", "Who am I?", "I have no reason to stay here, I want go back to Korea." Even though he had had a negative experience at the Korean school while his family was on furlough, he wanted to go back to Korea rather than stay in Botswana. He knew that Korea is a developed country and would have more opportunities for him.

He changed school again in grade eight due to the financial position of his family. The academic standard of school was low, and the children were not well behaved at

the new school. He was dissatisfied and really missed the previous school. However he did not show his real feelings and thoughts to his parents because he was concerned about their financial situation. He said, “The rest of my life in Botswana was terribly tough, and I was really isolated both at school and at home. My parents only valued their ministry and did not care for their own children. I always felt angry towards my parents and against them, so I really wanted to go back to Korea. I felt emptiness in my heart when I was in grade 9, and tried to replace it with something else, but couldn’t find anything. I felt upset that I had to change schools on account of our financial situation, but I couldn’t show my feelings to my parents. I didn’t like being a missionary child. I had a sense of inferiority in comparison with the other children. So I didn’t like to invite friends to my house, even on my birthday. I had an inferiority complex. In my thoughts missionaries have no opportunity to earn money, but I didn’t want to say anything to my parents, because I knew that they couldn’t deal with it. I felt isolated most of the time... No one could understand my loneliness, and inferiority. It was really difficult...” He was struggling with all his subjects because of his lack of English competency. The result of this was that he lost interest in anything academic. However, in order to prove himself at middle school, he was more enthusiastic about sports and music than about his studies. As the time passed he did so well at sports and music that his friends were impressed and he was proud. He was also good at science because it involved experiments, where his lack of English was not such a big drawback. As time passed his English progressed, but he still struggled with it. In spite of many difficulties, he completed middle school in Botswana.

He applied to a high school in Korea and was accepted. He could go back to Korea and boarded at the school. He was so glad to leave Botswana where everything was boring and hurtful for him. He added the following reasons for wanting to leave that country. Firstly, he was very angry with his parents because their mission work took priority over their children. He felt that his sister and he were neglected as their parents concentrated on their mission work. It was difficult for him to understand and accept that situation. Secondly, he struggled with his identity as a Korean boy growing up in Botswana. In his mind he had to live in Korea. He was wondering why a Korean should live in that kind of boring place where they were not accepted.

#### 2.2.4 Reentry into Korea for high school education

He was extremely happy to leave Botswana when he reentered Korea for high school education. The school he attended in Korea was a Christian school, missionary children were understood, well accepted, and well taken care of by teachers and staff. He was deeply impressed and challenged by its atmosphere and he was able to find a vision for his future. However, contrary to his expectations the adjustment in Korea was not easy for him.

Before he went to Korea he supposed everything would go well. But living by himself at the age of sixteen without his parents' support was unexpectedly difficult. He faced difficulties with Korean subjects which are taught mostly in the Korean language. It was really difficult to understand the meaning of Korean history with his limited ability in Korean. The standard of mathematics was higher than his level, and he could not catch up. The school was known for the fact that most subjects were taught in English, but in his experience Korean was generally used due to the teachers' poor English. During his whole high school course his Korean improved dramatically. A major problem was accommodation. The school dormitory was closed during school holidays and according to the rules the children had to leave. Most of the other children went home during holidays, but he could not go to home because of the expensive air fare. Therefore he had to stay at inferior places during school holidays. Each school holiday, he had to look where to stay temporarily and he felt tired.

Since he was just a high school boy and his parents were far away, he often felt stressed by the difficult situation he had to cope with. He needed the comfort and support by his parents, but they were away from him. He did not understand why missionary children should live such a difficult life. And he thought that his life was like living in a wilderness. He likes Moses<sup>34</sup> and thought about him often in his times of distress. He was encouraged when he thought of Moses' life in the desert of Midian and could understand that it would be God's plan to train him in those difficult situations. Yet, he regretted his academic achievement as he found that he was

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<sup>34</sup> In the Bible book Genesis Moses was the famous leader of the people of Israel that come out of Egypt.

insufficient to apply to excellent universities in Korea. As the result, he entered a university where he had many problems and was not satisfied with it.

### **2.2.5 University education**

He entered university in Korea and received a full scholarship. When he entered university he first had a good experience of 'human nature' among the students at the university. As 'human nature' is a unique feature of Korean culture, he was inspired by it. He also experienced university culture and was alert to recognize what was right and wrong. He was eager to acquire decent learning, but after six months of studying he was disappointed with the education system and academic standard of the university. He said, "I found all that interested the Korean students was employment at famous companies, and that academic background is exceedingly important in Korean society's evaluation of people. As the present Korean society sets great value on outward appearance university students are also exceedingly concerned about their outward appearance. As this seemed to be the most discussed issue among students, I was confused. In this environment I began to think that the education system at Korean universities was going the wrong way. I was strained to breaking point because of the education system and environment of the Korean university, and was thinking, 'what will I learn here? I can't study in such a system.' I was distressed with the environment of the university in Korea." Because of so many complications he left the university after six months and started wandering.

The following year he applied to four of colleges/universities in America and was accepted by all of them. He actually wanted go to A or B universities, but due to the financial situation of his family he chose a college in order to get a scholarship. Because he was least interested in a college he was dissatisfied from the beginning. To survive alone in a new country was difficult in the first year, especially regarding finances. He received financial support from his parents besides the scholarship in order to pay the educational expenses and dormitory costs, which was very expensive. His parents made a large loan in order to pay for his college education. It

made him feel uncomfortable to receive financial support from his missionary parents, and so he looked for a way to get a college subsidy. He presented the matter when we had interviews. Furthermore, he failed in some subjects in the first term examination. He realized that the education system in America was different from Korea's and it confused him. He expressed his plan to transfer to a university after he finished his second year course, because he was not satisfied at the college. I asked him what made him dissatisfied at the college, and he said that the academic standard of the college was not good enough for him to accomplish his goal in life. He needed to transfer to a university where the academic standard is higher. For this, he had to achieve an excellent academic record in all his subjects, but his academic result was not up to standard. Hence, contrary to his expectation he realized that his ability to study was insufficient to reach his goal, in this regard he felt regret at the inferiority of his educational situation during his childhood.

#### **2.2.6 Reflections on Dreamer's narrative**

In Dreamer's narrative the matter of interest was the frequent changing of schools. I observed that it had adversely influenced his study. He was struggling with inconsistent education systems during the period of primary and middle school. The moving from private school to local school fostered in him a low self-esteem due to the difference in environment. The financial condition of his family was the main reason for the frequent changes of school; it inhibited Dreamer from making good friends and also caused instability. Pollock and Van Reken (2001:61) state that frequent moving makes children fear loss and have no confidence in relationships with friends. The pressure of financial poverty caused him to rebel against the mission and God. Moreover he had problems with his parents, because he believed that his parents valued their ministry higher than their own children. He complained loneliness most of time. He was angry with his parents and felt enmity towards them for a long time. Racism among his peers also afflicted him. The atmosphere in Botswana negatively influenced his identity as a Korean, and it led to his negative attitude toward the locals. It still influences him in his negative image of that country, even though he became an adult, who absolutely do not want to stay there, and

grew to hate being a missionary child. Dreamer's education was inconsistent from primary to middle school because of his family situation, and so he lost interest in study. At high school in Korea he was stimulated by teachers and staff. Yet, he had to cope with many difficulties at universities in Korea and in America, and ultimately realized that his study ability is insufficient to be excellent. Furthermore, he always struggled to settle. Therefore he plans to transfer to another university because of his dissatisfaction at college. In my observation, the frequent changing of schools during his growing years caused his inability to settle.

### **2.3 The story of Challenger**

Challenger is a young lady of twenty-four who graduated from college in America. She stayed in Korea temporarily to prepare for further study in America.

I met her in Korea at the time of my visit in 2007, and the first interview was in a coffee shop in Korea. The following year interviews were continued at my home in South Africa since she moved for temporary work in one of the Southern Africa countries which borders the country I live in. I had more opportunities to see her because of her proximity to my home.

Challenge's problem started when she was looking for an opportunity to do voluntary work at a hospital to prepare for medical study at a university in America. She struggled to find such an opportunity. I tried to understand her problem and we searched for descriptions of the problems she experienced. She said that she tried hard to find an opportunity for voluntary work at hospitals both in America and in Korea, but did not succeed because of her own unstable condition. As an international student in America, she was not allowed the opportunity. In Korea she was turned down as a foreigner with her limited knowledge of the Korean language and her western way. She was discouraged by the situation and regretted her academic results at university. To be accepted at private medical schools, she would need excellent reports, but her academic results were not good enough. Therefore,

she could not even apply to a private college, and regretted her past education.

During our conversations the story of her education history unfolded.

Her narrative started with the story of her college education, and then turned to the story of her past. In the telling of the story of her past, she revealed the issue of the Korean class that was operated on the mission field, and proceeded to other issues.

Her narrative is presented below following her order of preference.

### **2.3.1 Korean class, as an extra lesson**

She went to the mission field when she was in grade 2 and luckily stayed with her family living close to the primary school. On the mission field, she attended MK school as a day scholar, because her parents were staying near to the school. She said that she was lucky not to stay in the hostel. At the beginning of the first interview she brought up the issue of the Korean class which was provided for Korean missionary children as an after school subject. She attended it at her parents' request. The Korean class was held twice a week, and Korean language, history and customs were taught. She showed her feelings about this class by saying, "It was really boring, I didn't like Korean class, and I didn't like the Koreans gathering together, because I didn't want to be different from the western children who would come into the classroom and say, 'Something smells different, Um~ Korean smell, such a bad smell...' I was ashamed, it hurt me a lot! I didn't know what smell they were talking about, I didn't like my family to be too Korean. I really didn't like being different. I wanted to be American. I wanted my parents to make my home like a western family and have the same smell as the other children. Until I was twenty years old I didn't like being different." "Now I understand that my parents did try their best for their kids... But at that time, I didn't know it. The majority of friends were American, but some were Canadian, British, and Australian." Through these experiences she became non racist and wanted the children to be integrated and tried to associate with a diversity of children.

She struggled to learn and to follow Korean customs which were strange and inconvenient to her. Another burden she faced was the many classes and activities

expected by her parents. She said, “Being a Korean child brings much pressure, because most Korean parents made their children work very hard and made them participate in many activities. This is the Korean way, it bothered me. Because of so much pressure I couldn’t do anything well. Korean children felt pressurized to be a good example to others, but for me it was too hard. I couldn’t do anything well.”

### **2.3.2 The atmosphere at the MK school**

Challenger said, the school had so many strict rules and the teachers were very strict, and there was too much religion. She was really confused about Christianity due to the behavior of the teachers and staff. The teachers and staff liked quiet, well behaved children as they said that it shows their Christianity. But she disagreed with them. She said, “I was different. I didn’t agree with the staff. I tried to be quiet and well behaved like the other children. But I couldn’t be the same, so I was depressed. I always misunderstood the meaning of Christianity. Some kids were labeled as bad kids, I was one of them... Other children also felt the same as I did. Racists cursed us, cursed me a lot. The school had a western environment as most of the teachers, staff and children were western. I didn’t like being a Korean; I wanted to be an American. I wanted to be same as the other kids.” There was ongoing conflict between herself and a certain pastor. The pastor wanted her and some of her friends to be quiet and nice. She always misunderstood his discipline and his idea of good Christian behavior. So she was hurt and really didn’t like him. She said the teachers taught the children that good Christians are quiet and gentle, and have good manners. They preferred such children, but she was loud and talkative, so the teachers thought that she was not a good child. She said, “I had a best friend and we were loud and active. The teachers said we were bad because we were noisy and not quiet. So we were sent to discipleship class, that’s funny (inconsistent)...” She spoke of the environment at the school, “The teachers and staff were very old fashioned. I was wondering what Christianity is... I liked to go to school, because I liked being with my friends, not the school, the teachers or the study. They negatively affected my Christianity...” She also insisted that the school made the mistake not to appoint good teachers and staff. Many teachers and staff lacked the background to

understand missionary children, and this affected their attitude towards the children. It is therefore important to examine the motivation and the disposition of prospective teachers.

She left school when she was in grade 9 and the family went back to Korea. All the time she was at the school she never felt God's presence there because of the teachers and the school environment. She said, "When I think about my school life, I hurt a lot. I really didn't like the school." Even now she has negative memories of her experiences at the school. My observation was that her voice was wavering and she felt chilly while she was expressing the above experiences, she still experiences pain in this regard.

### **2.3.3 Homeschooling on furlough in Korea; hurtful experiences**

Challenger's family went back to Korea for a year for home assignment. She found it difficult to readjust to life in Korea. Due to her scant knowledge of the Korean language and the different education system she could not go to a Korean school; She tried homeschooling and was not interested in it. Homeschooling was very hard both on her and her parents, because she did not enjoy it. She also struggled to cope with the Korean culture being a stranger to the Korean people. Especially the Korean elders criticized her by saying she was impolite and was very westernized. She was also incompatible to other Korean children who were about her age because of her being different to them. Thus, she was estranged and isolated during that time. Even now she does not want to think about that time and the hurt that she experienced.

### **2.3.4 Transition to another country for high school education**

After a year Challenger transferred to another country to complete her high school education. She was separated from her parents and stayed at a hostel. The school with boarding facilities was established by western missionaries to cater for their

children's education. She studied there for two years until she graduated from high school, and was happy with the academic standard and with the school environment. For her the most important benefit of the school was that she could prepare for college in America which was what she wanted. Even though many children did not like the school due to its strict rules, she was happy. She enjoyed the school's religious atmosphere which she felt was more open than the previous school on the mission field. She said that she could share her mind more openly to teachers and was readily accepted by them. She was happy there. But she did not like the Korean children to gather separately as they would be seen as different. Therefore she did not join the Korean group, and was reviled by these Korean children. She wanted all the children to be integrated and to try to associate with a diversity of children. It was because of her inclination to be non-racist that she found her identity. Since she started at this school, she was challenged to work hard and tried to have a genuine and hard working life style in order to prepare for her future, but she regretted the short time for study. She regretted that she had not found her purpose earlier, for then her attitude towards study would have been changed and she would have receive better marks in order to apply to university.

### **2.3.5 College education**

She entered college in America and enjoyed a new life there. Personally she felt that she was more accepted and free at college as she said, "At the college, I could speak or ask questions of the professors, and this was allowed. I could try new things there. So I was happy." She was challenged by the new environment because of the acceptance and the freedom she found. At college she started to think seriously about which career she would follow in future. That was when she decided to be a medical doctor. But she had a problem in applying to the medical school at the state university in that country, because she did not have a permanent permit. In addition financial constraints and academic results prevented application to private college. To be accepted at private medical schools, she needed excellent reports, and experience of volunteer service, which she could not obtain as an international student.

She was unhappy with her lack of ability to study due to the many transitions in her life. In spite of hard work in grade 11 and 12, she did not do as well as she wanted. I asked her whether there was any possibility for her to enter medical schools in Korea, but she answered that it was impossible due to her limited knowledge of Korean as well as her lack of knowledge of the Korean society. She wanted to go to medical school in America because qualified as a doctor in that country would guarantee work anywhere in the world.

### **2.3.6 Challenger's view on education for Korean missionary children**

Challenger averred that most of the Korean missionary children lack the information to apply for college and various available job opportunities. They also need guidance and to discuss career choices. Since Korean foreign mission outreach is relatively recent, the problems relating to missionary children are still a challenge. This applies especially to young adults who are the first generation to explore these unknown situations. Thus they need good sensible advice and guidance by adults who have a better understanding. Challenger also pointed out that Korean missionary children have more difficulties than western missionary children on the mission field due to the difference in language and culture. At her school most of the western missionary children spoke English as their home language and only needed to learn the local language and culture. But Korean missionary children needed to learn additional languages such as English, the local language, their home language and perhaps more. Through her experiences she realized how difficult it is for Korean children. Hence, she stated that teachers and staff need to be more concerned about the Korean children. They need to understand that they have different challenges from the western children.

### **2.3.7 Reflections on Challenger's narrative**

Challenger was struggling with a school atmosphere where there was too much emphasis on religion and the teachers' too strict discipline. She was hurt by the racist

attitudes of the teachers and students against the minority of Korean children. As she said earlier her Christianity was adversely affected by the school environment and she became very critical of Christianity. She also complained about the atmosphere in the Korean class. For these many reasons she was not interested in studying and did not want to stay in the country. David (1994:149) argues that if teachers are unfair, unsympathetic, and unmotivated towards children, the children are affected by these attitudes and perhaps the precious years of preparation for life may slip by.

However, even though her family went back to Korea for a year of furlough she was unhappy in Korea, because she had a culture shock and had to face the prejudice of church members. People criticized her different way of thinking and acting. She was hurt and felt a stranger in her home country. On the other hand, she was struggling with being homeschooled by her parents. When she transferred to another country to complete her high school education, she was separated from her parents but adjusted well at the new school. As she studied in the country for two years, she found a new interest in her studies. However, it was not long enough to make the kind of progress that needed for college entrance. In spite of these difficulties, she studied at a college in America. At college, she found a purpose for her life so she made every effort to make her dream come true. Even so, acceptance at medical school in America was denied since she did not have a permanent visa. She was also denied the opportunity to do voluntary work at the hospital. Yet, she did not give up and endeavored to look at all possibilities. She stated that to prepare for a career was the most important issue for her at that time. But after her graduation from college years went by and she began to worry about her situation.

## **2.4 The story of Visionary**

Visionary is a twenty-one year old university student, at present staying in Korea for her university studies. She came to the mission field at the age of eight and grew up on the field until high school. I had interviews with her at the time she visited her family in South Africa.

I asked her about the current issues she faced at university in Korea. She said that

she was exhausted by the studies, and with coping alone in Korea as it was her first experience to stay without her parents who are very far from Korea. She felt very tired because of study and extra work, and also missed her parents a lot. Her parents asked her to visit them in order to have a rest and to meet the family during school holiday. Unfortunately, she had an awful experience of racism during this time. I cannot report on this happening in this thesis as it was her private experience. During this visit she experienced real anxiety from the social atmosphere in South Africa and this reminded her of her painful experiences of racism in childhood in the country. At the outset of this interview, she wanted to talk about her childhood experiences which brought out the issue of the social atmosphere in the country and its violence which had influenced her since childhood. Then, she turned to her experiences of primary and high school, and university education. The follow is her interpretation of educational issues.

#### **2.4.1 The social atmosphere on the mission field**

The social atmosphere in South Africa was one of disorder and racism was prevalent when she and her family arrived on the mission field. From the time that Visionary entered primary school, she experienced much racism from her peers and teachers. She was teased by peers because of being Korean. She said, “At that time, it was hard for Asians to hire a house or to enter school. Because of these circumstances my family was struggling and I was being teased by my peers at school. One day a white girl hit me in the face because I was Korean, and others often teased me because of the different color of my skin. It hurt me a lot; I didn’t know what’s wrong with my appearance. But I lost my self-confidence and felt ashamed when I changed clothes for sports at school.” At the first school, she really struggled with racism and strict school rules. So, her parents decided to change schools. The new school had a more peaceful atmosphere than the previous school, and she soon adjusted well.

#### 2.4.2 Primary and high school education

From grade 1 she worked very hard at all her subjects especially English because she understood its importance in the country. Because of her hard work she became fluent in English. She practiced hard to master the piano, and put efforts in sports in order to prove herself to her peers and teachers. She received good support from her parents and teachers in learning language and school work. She was happy with the academic standard of the school but struggled with racism. She said, “Until I reached grade 9 I had a very difficult time coping with the racism at the school, some children teased me and made fun of me, other children wouldn’t talk to me because of my nationality. So I decided to excel in my studies, piano and sports in order to show the teachers and my peers that Koreans can excel.” Visionary accomplished the purpose that she had decided on. In order to do this, she had to manage her time wisely. As a result, she was identified as one of the top students at high school. Yet, she had difficulty in learning the local language, Afrikaans, until she reached grade 7. Her marks for this subject were low. “I couldn’t find any reason for learning a language, which is only used in that country. For several years I complained about it, and my ability in the language was deteriorating.

One day my father encouraged me by saying, ‘The language would be useful in future if you can speak it fluently.’ I was challenged by his words. From that day I changed my mind and tried to use the language with my peers at school, moreover I joined a group in order to take extra language lessons. As a result of my hard work, I achieved 80% average in the language every year since grade 8. I also got a distinction in it at matric.” For help in studying the language Visionary asked for support from her school teachers, and concentrated on writing and listening. She thought that the teachers were helpful in the learning of the language and she was encouraged to approach the teachers confidently. However, she struggled with mathematics since she decided to study at university in Korea. Because she knew that the level of mathematics is much higher in Korea, she took extra lessons in mathematics and worked very hard.

Racism was still prevalent among students, and thus, she was often daunted by native and western students. So she regretted it that she was not involved in leadership at school because of it. She said, “I regret that I was not involved in

leadership at high school because of its atmosphere. If I had been, it would have made a difference to my experience at school.”

### **2.4.3 University education in Korea**

She initially planned to attend university in Korea in order to experience Korean culture and society, and to build personal relationships in Korea for the future. Because she was not aware of the requirement of an entrance examination for the universities in Korea, she was unable to apply to universities in Korea in the year that she graduated from high school. Instead she entered a university in South Africa, on the mission field. She intended to study in that country for a short period in order to complete the requirements of the university in Korea. So she took advantage of the experience of studying at the university in that country for a short period. After a year she applied to one of the top universities in Korea and was accepted through the special admission<sup>35</sup>. Preparation for the entry examination for the Korean university required so many things and lack of information was the biggest problem when she applied. However she completed it successfully.

She left South Africa for her university education in Korea and has been staying in a dormitory at the university. At the university she was happy with the academic standard and the environment, but soon she realized that her academic ability was not good enough in comparison with the other students who had studied at high school in Korea. Because they were all top students at high school, their academic abilities were excellent. She experienced difficulties especially with mathematics and science, since the levels of these differ so much from Korea. She felt oppressed among Korean students. She recognized that she missed some of the important aspect of these subjects at high school. Thus, she focused on these subjects in order to make a good progress. So she had to work extremely hard as she said, “When I compared myself to them I realized that academically I was far behind. So I studied very hard for that year. I stayed at the university all day long. I even slept at the library and went back to the dormitory early in the morning just to shower and

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<sup>35</sup> See, chapter 3, p87.

change clothes.” She said that the university had high academic standards and excellent professors. She also remarked that 50% of first year students taking the course would be selected to take a special course the following year. She studied very hard in order to be selected for the course which she wanted to take, which brought much tension. She also struggled with cultural and social adjustment in Korea, because everything was new for her. She could not understand the busy Korean life style. She felt tired by looking at them. Furthermore, she struggled to make good relationships with students at the university as they were biased against her as a special admission student.

In addition, she was burdened by her lack of finances to pay for tuition and living expenses. To help cover her financial needs, she worked very hard in order to get a scholarship and she tutored some primary school children in English. She also volunteered at a hospital in order to gain extra marks towards her course. She said that she stressed out all the time doing so many things at once.

Above all, she had a problem finding accommodation during the school holidays, because the dormitory was closed during that time and so she needed to stay in different places during each school holiday. Recently, she is facing a problem of having to move out of the dormitory because of a university law and she needs to find other accommodation which would cost more. She was nervous about this situation.

#### **2.4.4 Reflections on Visionary’s narrative**

Visionary’s narrative started with the social atmosphere on the mission field, and her awful experience of racism when she visited her parents. It reminded her of her childhood experience that was tainted by the racist attitude of her peers and teachers since she was a little girl. At the time of her arrival the country was in a political transition, but racism was still wide spread. Because of this, Korean families faced many difficulties in the country. As Visionary experienced discrimination when she took part in any kind of competition, Rust (1989:17) states that minority children often gain racial perceptions which are harmful, and negative feelings about race

cause self-doubt. He (1989:18) also indicates that “The teachers and principals are sometimes the source of the racist attitudes... The effects of racism begin to impact children more directly after eight or nine years of age.” Even though she had excellent results, she would not be given top marks, due to her nationality as Korean. She was discouraged and lost confidence.

Similarly to my other co-researchers she pointed out that language learning was one of her big problems during her primary and high school years. To learn many languages at the same time was not easy. It needs a lot of time and effort. However, since she was challenged by her father she changed her attitude toward multi language learning. She realized that learning those languages could have advantages in future, like the ability to communicate with different groups of people. Therefore, she improved her ability in Korean since she entered university in Korea. Heny (1994:186) agrees that learning different languages at an early age can sharpen thinking skills in general and can actually help children achieve academically above their grade level. Visionary received a good education in spite of her suffering through the social atmosphere on the mission field, because the school she studied at, is one of the country’s top schools academically and in many other ways. The school caters for international students from many different countries, local students included, and so Korean students found more acceptance and encouragement than they would have had at the local schools. At present she is suffering tension to adjust to the new situation in Korea, trying to cope academically and facing financial issues.

## **2.5 The story of Faithful**

Faithful is a twenty-four year old male student at a South African university. He came to the mission field when he was in grade 9. He was one of the top academic students in Korea before they moved to the new country. He works hard at his studies and has an amazing ability to manage his time. Yet, he is stressed by his studies at university.

I visited him twice at the beginning of the interview sessions and at the end of the interview sessions. The rest of the interviews were conducted through networking, internet phone and email. Initially, I wanted to listen to the story of his adjustment on the mission field and how he coped with his school work during the time he was at high school, and also to understand how this situation influenced his study at university. Then we turned to discussing his current education issues. The following is the narrative of Faithful.

### **2.5.1 Transition to the mission field during high school**

He had a positive view of his high school education on the mission field, compared to his previous high school in Korea. He earnestly wanted thank the teachers because they always encouraged and helped him with his studies and his adjustment. He liked the environment at the school. However, he experienced problems with the education system which differed from the one in Korea. He found communicating in English difficult, and studying English was a great problem. Mathematics was his favorite subject because it was based on formulae, but other subjects were difficult because they had so many words to read and understand. He worked very hard to do well in English, did self study for two or three hours in all his subjects every day, and this helped him a lot. He was progressing well in his school work after three months, better after six months, and better still after nine months. In grade 10, reading text books and understanding the meaning was getting easier, yet he needed to find a lot of unknown words in the dictionary in order to write down the meanings in the text books, that he needed to work extra hard. Mastering English was the most important issue for him and this caused him much stress. Moreover he regretted that he could not form close relationships with his peers at high school because of a lack of time, as well as his inability to communicate in English.

Another difficulty he experienced was the separation from his parents. His parents moved to another city to continue their missionary work, while he and his younger brother remained at the same place in order to continue their high school education. Although, the separation from his parents was not a big problem for him emotionally,

he missed the parental support and encouragement for his studies. He wondered whether he would have worked harder if his parents were with him. However, he accomplished his purpose during high school and made good grades to enter university. He pointed out that the school used a system of individual thinking rather than cramming, a uniform system of education, and teachers were helpful. He was grateful for it.

### **2.5.2 University education on the mission field**

Faithful entered a university on the field, and was happy with the academic standard and attitude of the professors. He found that the university had a high academic standard and that the students were eager to study. In spite of his satisfaction, he found studying difficult since the education system differed so much from Korea and his limited English was a drawback. Even though he genuinely worked hard, he failed some subjects. He said, “I worked approximately twelve hours daily during the exam period and worked three or four hours daily at other times. If I didn’t do this, I would have failed, so I had to do it. My studies caused so much stress but I depended on God in order to find mental stability. My faith grew stronger during my university period.” It is clear that he tried to make every possible effort with his studies. But he often felt discouraged by his marks in comparison with that of the local students. He pointed out that his imperfect knowledge of English was the main reason for his marks. On the other hand, he was suffering with insufficient finances since his parents had moved to the other city, and he had to tutor Korean high school students in mathematics and English. Time management was really important for him to do his best in his studies. Not freed of financial problems he was always careful with his money.

While this research was carried out, he received a written notice from the university that his results failed to qualify him for graduation. He could not understand this failure and was very upset, because he had completed all the requirements for the graduation assessment, and he thought everything was completed. In fact, the result meant that he had to change his plans for the future and he was devastated. He had

an extremely difficult time coping with this. Moreover, his parents unexpectedly had to find money for extra payments and educational expenses. He studied for a year longer than he expected, and due to this, his future plans have been completely changed. He was really discouraged and felt anger towards the university.

When he looked back on his high school and university education in that country, he saw that his difficulty with English was the main problem both for his studies and his relationships with people. Also he stated that he felt let down by the lack of information he received in terms of entering a university and studying overseas. In these circumstances, he often felt lonely and he needed someone to discuss these matters with him. He felt sorry that it was difficult for him to make close friends with his peers at high school due to the language problem, cultural differences, and time limitations. But, actually he felt nervous and tense in approaching the native children for the above mentioned reasons. This kind of attitude still causes him to keep his distance from the native people but this is not his real intention. Now he realizes that building close relationships with his peer group is essential, he regrets not doing this.

### **2.5.3 Reflections on Faithful's narrative**

During my first interview with Faithful, I tried to focus my research on the effects of change during high school years in order to discover the following: how does changing cultures and facing all the issues of transit during the teenage years affect children? How do children cope with a new language, their studies and a new culture at this age? How did this situation influence his study at university?

He noticed the major differences in schooling patterns between Korea and the mission field. In his experience, changing cultures and facing language differences during high school years made it really difficult for him to cope. As mentioned above, he often got low marks at university in spite of the excessive effort he put into his studies. He observed that English was the primary factor to overcome his studies. In comparison to the native students, he needed to study many more hours than they did. Even though he did, he became really discouraged because he never coped as well as the native students did. So, he sometimes felt to commit suicide because he

became so discouraged and/or depressed with the results of his studies. Since he failed to graduate from university, he was very stressed because this caused him to change his future plans. For instance, he faced having to join the army which is obligatory for Korean men, instead of going to America to study for his master's degree.

### **3. SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the children's narratives of educational difficulties emerged from the discussion with them. During the research period, my co-researchers were dispersed in Korea, America and South Africa for university study and for preparation of further study. They have experienced many difficulties in their unique situations and most of their problems are connected with their background. "The action in the now is played within a background that must be pictured, but this background is alive with associations and connotations of the past" (Müller et al. 2001:8). People are influenced by their past experiences, therefore it is important to revisit past situations in order to gain a better understanding of their stories. Lamott (1995:62) quoted by Müller *et al.* (2001:7) emphasized that "Background is where you let us see and know who these people are, how they've come to be together, what was going on before the opening of the story". When people recognize that their problematic stories are influenced by their backgrounds, they may be stimulated in the process of story development. Hence, in this chapter I first tried to listen carefully to my co-researchers' stories of the now, and then tried to discover the stories of the past which is connected to the now.

Dreamer had changed schools frequently while he was growing up on the mission field, because of the financial situation of his family, and this matter had essentially influenced his study. He was struggling with an inconsistent education system from primary school to middle school, and it prevented him from adapting to schools on the mission field. Hence, he was sent to Korea for high school education for a better education opportunity. He entered university in Korea after he graduated at high school. But, he could not adjust in Korea because of insufficient support from his

parents and his struggle with his financial situation. Faithful really struggled with English and could not make good progress at high school. At university he still experienced difficulties with his studies due to his inadequate ability in English. This caused him more stress. Hope had serious emotional difficulties when I first met her. She stayed in Korea for a short while to prepare for further study in America, but she suffered feelings of depression and instability, and struggled in life. We discovered that these feelings were the result of her past educational experiences. She experienced emotional difficulties at boarding school which influenced her life adversely. Challenger had the vision to be a medical doctor and put effort in her study. However, she struggled to find volunteer work at a hospital to fulfill the requirements for admission at a medical university in America. Visionary reentered Korea after 13 years since her family went to the mission field. She studied in South Africa from primary school to high school, and went to Korea for university education. During the first year at university in Korea, she struggled to understand the education system that was immensely different from that of South Africa, and also needed to put extra effort in her study to accomplish the academic competence required at university. Furthermore, cultural adjustment and understanding Korean society and people were problems, and with insufficient funding became her burdens in the new country.

My co-researchers had many difficulties with education, and interpreted the meaning of their experiences from their point of view. Freedman and Combs (1996:8) suggest that the “performance” of stories does not happen automatically. It does happen when a person is immersed in the story and when he/she experiences the story as meaningful. Müller et al. (2001:9) cites the metaphor of the Polaroid used by Lamott (1995:39) to explain narrative research. Doing narrative research is like waiting for a Polaroid to develop. After taking the picture with the camera, we cannot see the picture on the film; we need to wait for a while to obtain a clear picture. The picture becomes clearer and clearer as time passes and finally we see the whole picture on the film. Narrative researchers have to be patient and curious to listen to the participants' stories and wait for the research plot to develop. Müller et al. (2001:10) suggested that “the contribution of the researcher is to reflect and facilitate and wait until the plot emerges. It’s like being the assistant for someone who is writing an

autobiography”. Thus, I was curious about the unique stories of my co-researchers and to understand its meanings. I had to wait for the research plot to develop.

The following are the traditions of interpretation that emerged from the collaboration with my co-researchers through the research process.

- MK/Christian boarding school
  - ⇒ separation from parents
  - ⇒ atmosphere at school
- Relationships with parents and friends
- University education and reentry
- Financial situation of Korean missionary family
- Language learning, cultural adjustment and identity
- Young adult issues

Müller (2004:1) says, “Practical theological research is not only about description and interpretation of experience. It is also about deconstruction and emancipation... to develop into a new story of understanding that points beyond the local community.” Narrative is interested in discovering, acknowledging and “taking apart” (deconstructing) the beliefs, ideas and practices of the broader culture in which a person lives and which are assisting the problem to develop (Morgan 2005:45). Thus, I attempted to get my co-researchers to reconstruct the problems in order to create new meaning.

I will describe how the traditions of interpretation were developed through deconstructive conversation from the discussions with my co-researchers, and explore alternative stories in chapter five.