

**The educational difficulties of Korean
missionary children on the mission field:
A narrative-pastoral approach**

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ABSTRACT

This study is a narrative research within the postfoundationalist and social constructionist paradigm which underpin the narrative approach to theology. The present research listened to the stories of Korean missionary children to ascertain their educational difficulties on the mission field.

The history of Korean missionary abroad is not a long one. Korean missionaries, having little previous experience, often have difficulty in deciding how to raise their children. They also have difficulty to know the educational options available and which to choose. Up till now there are only a few Korean missionary children who have grown up on the mission field until adulthood. Missionary families face various education options on the mission field, and options are different in terms of each situation on the field.

Today, there are up to 12,000 Korean missionary children around the world. Of these, approximately 60% attend schools on the mission fields and 40-50% are at MK/International schools. Most of MK/International schools are mainly based on the western education system, using mediocre English. Yet, Korean missionary children have a different background from Western, specifically in terms of language, culture, society, race and the educational systems they are used to. Most of Korean missionary parents have high expectations for their children's education with a good academic career. It poses several problems to Korean missionary children's education. Considering the struggle with education that Korean missionary children experience on the mission field this study aims to contribute towards the understanding of their situation, and thus to help them through their research process.

To be effective, this study focused on a small number, specifically five Korean young adult missionary children who have grown up in Africa, currently living in South Africa, South Korea and North America. In order to gain a deeper understanding of educational issues Korean missionary children experience, children were selected from different educational backgrounds. With the co-researchers, individual, face-to

face-interviews were held in Korea and in South Africa, and networking has been used when a face-to-face relationship was not possible. The internet phone was frequently used in the research process.

The influences of traditions of interpretation over the co-researchers were discussed from the collaboration with them, and alternative interpretations emerged on their traditions through interdisciplinary conversation. Through this narrative research process the co-researchers were lead to understanding and empowerment, and they developed new meanings for their preferred stories for the future. As the narrative approach is open-ended rather than results-oriented, this research is not closed ended, but rather allows for growth and development to take place.



KEY TERMS

Narrative research

Social constructionism

Postfoundationalism

Practical theology

Co-researchers

Missionary children

Mission field

Educational difficulties

Korean young adult missionary children

Traditions of interpretation

ABBREVIATIONS

Numerous abbreviations are used in this study, most notably the following:

ACSI: The Association of Christian Schools Interactional

AERC: Asia Educational Resource Consortium

ICHED: International Children's Education

KOMKED: Korean Missionary Kid Education

KWMA: Korea World Missions Association

MK: Missionary Kid

MKNEST: Helping Korean MKs through Networking Education Supporting Training Ministry

OFO: On-Field Orientation

PFO: Pre-Field Orientation

SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test

SIM: Serving In Mission

SIMIMKEC: Serving In Mission International Missionary Kids' Education Consultation

TCK: Third Culture Kid



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