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My experience serving overseas and, more recently, counseling with many postadolescent children of overseas workers leads me to agree with many of Werkman's observations. I share his enthusiasm for seeking ways to improve the quality of growth experiences for overseas children. Like his, my sampling of the population may be biased in the direction of maladjusted individuals.

Werkman reports that research material on childrearing in alien cultures is modest. The amount of material specifically applicable to mission personnel is even more modest and is twenty-five or more years old.[1] It would probably be unfair to assume that children of missionaries are any less well adjusted than their counterparts at home, but the potential for maladjustment is apparent if one looks at the problems of mission life from the standpoint of developmental psychology. In the absence of sufficient data I will look at the problem from a theoretical viewpoint, in the process probably raising more questions than I answer. My comments are offered in the hope of stimulating someone to use them as points of departure for further investigation.

SELECTION AND ORIENTATION OF MISSION PERSONNEL

The unique pressures inherent in service in a foreign country require exceptionally well-adjusted and well-informed persons, the more so if the parents are rearing children at the same time. Consequently, it is essential that the motivation, life patterns, family background, and quality of family interaction be investigated carefully before an appointment is made. Observations indicate that the selection process frequently allows enthusiasm and devotion to outweigh sound judgment and emotional stability.

Since the degree to which the children in the family have successfully carried out the tasks of adjustment up to the time of the appointment may well be a significant predictor of future adjustment, this factor should be carefully considered. The chances of poor adjustment in a foreign country are multiplied for children who may not adjust well even in their home country. Encouraging progress is being made at Andrews University in the development of orientation programs for new and returning missionary appointees. Those responsible for such programs would undoubtedly welcome empirical knowledge based on well organized scholarly research. When we attempt to assess emotional adjustment and family interaction, or when we attempt to give people advice concerning the raising of their children, we are entering a very delicate area. But the rewards may be worth it.

Werkman's major concern with respect to caretakers centers on the use of servants. I believe, however, that the critical focus in the case of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries is on the education of the children. Although a variety of patterns of education exists, two extremes should be mentioned: (*a*) the education of the child or children at home by the mother, with relative isolation from other children; or (*b*) handing the child over at a relatively early age to a boarding school frequently hundreds or thousands of miles away from the parents. Although these are often the only alternatives available, they nevertheless have hazardous implications that should be noted.

Most psychologists agree that children pass through a number of critical periods or stages in the course of their development and that at various stages they face specific tasks by which they accomplish the transition.[2] Difficult enough in one's home culture and where the parent is aware of the developmental process, the transition becomes quite another matter in a foreign environment, with some of the essential elements changed or missing, and with the parent perhaps naive about the dynamics involved. Consider the preadolescent at age 9-12. According to Sullivan, at this time the child is setting the stage for future interpersonal intimacy by forming a close relationship with a chum of the same sex.[3] This is the first period of life in which there is true loneliness if such a friend is not available or has been lost by moving or by rejection. The parents' presence at this stage gives a feeling of security while the child ventures outside the family to experiment with interpersonal relations in his peer group. Either of the patterns of education mentioned can interfere seriously with this developmental task of the preadolescent. Mission parents are usually reluctant to allow free friendships with children of the alien culture, fearing cultural patterns they do not understand. Actually, in the absence of other preexisting emotional problems, children may perhaps adjust better if allowed more freedom to mix with their crosscultural peers.

Mission children most frequently leave home to attend boarding school at 12-14 years of age, although in many cases they are much younger.[4] A totally different crisis comes into the process. Having come through struggles with inferiority in his attempt to handle the tasks of school and work, the early adolescent is now undertaking the task of consolidating previous gains into what Erikson speaks of as an accruing sense of identity.[5] Failure at this stage results in what has been termed "identity defusion," characterized by inability to focus on a career, to develop a sense of purpose, or to

move toward the intimate relationships that result in marriage and other close adult ties. Here again the early adolescent child needs understanding adults to offer the support and security essential for the process. This help is seldom afforded as well in a boarding school, where surrogate parents are frequently overloaded with work and their own individual problems. Probably because of good resolution of earlier states, many children make a good adjustment in spite of the system, but a discouragingly large number do not.

Inevitably teenage mission children are separated from their parents most of the time in order to gain adequate education. The least one should expect of a boarding school dealing with early teenagers overseas would be that it provide: (*a*) the presence of well-adjusted and well-informed adults able to take a personal interest in the student without allowing their own problems to interfere; (*b*) attitudes and opportunities for the student to become acquainted with and appreciate the culture of the host country rather than to fear or ridicule it; (*c*) opportunity for the student to develop work competence appropriate to his age level; (*d*) opportunity for the student to talk through his fears and uncertainties in a supportive atmosphere; and (*e*) an environment in which the student may develop his own set of values. I am painfully aware of the difficulty of staffing boarding schools, but the critical nature of this aspect of mission life must be recognized and dealt with.

A recent study by Olson stresses the need for further investigation but presents some optimistic data concerning 208 children of missionaries in the Far East, Central America, and South America.[6] The study shows that students rated the overseas schools as lacking in equipment and having inadequate curriculum. But 97.6 percent of the responding students in the sample attended college, 78.8 percent were soon to graduate, and 35.7 percent had secured advanced degrees at the time of the study. The quality of staff members was not mentioned as a variable. Only 5.2 percent were openly critical or antagonistic to missions, and only 5.7 percent had left the Seventh-day Adventist church. No comparisons were made with the Seventh-day Adventist population in general, and no data were collected to assess the emotional adjustment of the respondents.

FURLOUGHS

I suspect that the traditional one-year furlough has been a destructive factor on the development of children in the 10-14 age range, when chum relationships are so important. At the furlough time — when parents are excited about the trip and caught up in visiting and in acquiring education — the child has been uprooted and taken into situations that are frequently

unfamiliar and frightening to him. If he has a friend, the friend has been left behind. Because of the temporary nature of the furlough, he will probably not form close ties — if he does, he must break them again and cope with the feelings of loss and resentment against the agents responsible for this loss, the parents. Since one way of coping with these feelings is to avoid future closeness, the withdrawal and loneliness that result may later be the pattern in adolescence and early adult life.

Increasingly I am of the opinion that the best adjustment pattern can develop if the family goes to the mission field early in the lives of the children, takes only short, frequent furloughs, establishes solid ties with mission life, and returns to the home country when the child is ready for college. This pattern is difficult to develop, of course, if there are a number of children of varying ages. But observation indicates that the child who has spent a large portion of his life in a foreign country has difficulty facing life in a school in America if his family remains overseas.

OTHER PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Children who do not go to a boarding school face other problems. Although a child may be fascinated with the alien culture, it does not give him the "looking glass" from which to receive valid appraisals of himself for the development of his self-concept.[7] Typically the overseas child will receive unrealistic feedback from the national children, either in the form of unrealistic deference because of his uniqueness or in a feeling of inadequacy because of lack of experience in the culture. Since in most cases he cannot consider himself one of the group, the reflections he receives are frequently inappropriate even if he forms relatively close relationships with his cross-cultural peers.

It is not uncommon for adolescents to experience some of their earliest romantic feelings in association with attention from opposite-sexed members of the alien culture. These may be highly stimulating experiences with long-lasting effects on the emotional life of the child, but later he may make unfavorable, although not necessarily realistic, comparisons with those of his own culture.

One girl in an American college experienced difficulty coping with feelings of hate and resentment toward her parents and the church, seeing these as responsible for her abandonment by a valued young man friend from whom she had to be separated because of moves from one mission station to another. The loss at the specific time appeared to bear some relationship to her later poor vocational adjustment, withdrawal, and subsequent suici-

dal threats. One may wonder whether a better understanding on the part of her parents might have helped her bridge this traumatic experience, although such an assumption could be regarded as speculative.

SUMMARY

Admittedly, the variables involved in this consideration are difficult to identify and measure. However, I believe there is a large enough sampling of the population by which to attempt some intellectually honest assessment of the subject. If funds were available, graduate students in social or developmental psychology might be interested in conducting research that would both evaluate the hazards of growing up in foreign lands and ascertain the factors favorable to sociocultural enrichment among missionary children.

Werkman promises to report in a forthcoming paper the methods found useful under these circumstances. I look forward to what he will say. Even more eagerly, however, I look forward to the development in our own church of an efficient method of assessing the potential of candidates for mission service and of making increased effort to give foreign service personnel the quality of back-up support they deserve to assist them in raising emotionally and spiritually well-adjusted families.

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In this comment on Werkman's article I shall concern myself with the problem of the effects of Seventh-day Adventist children being reared in a missionary family. One can hardly consider the plight of some of these children without making a few remarks about the parents and their reasons for accepting a missionary "call."

There is the mature couple responding to a deep religious conviction that they can serve God and the church most effectively in a foreign mission post. Unfortunately some answer the call for a variety of pathological reasons including, among others, "peer inferiority." These people feel inferior and "put down" when among their own peers, but they can feel competent and effective when working with persons they feel are their socioeconomic inferiors. Then there is the opportunist who needs a mission hitch to earn his missionary badge and collect a supply of mission stories in the hope of rising faster up the organizational ladder toward a position in the General Conference. And there are social misfits — the immature, the borderline psychotic, and others. But this is a comment on an article about the *children* of missionaries.

The child of an American Seventh-day Adventist missionary must often survive a combination of severe emotional impacts that frequently result in serious psychiatric problems. First, he suffers the shock of being separated from his own culture and having a foreign culture imposed on him. Second, he is exposed either to an artificial "compound culture" — an island of Westernism in a foreign sea — or to the native population, which imposes a different set of problems. Third, having made necessary adjustments to this new way of life in his early years, the child then faces a number of pos-