

## CROSS-CULTURAL PARENTING

Today it is our intention to explore what cross-cultural parenting actually means. Our aim is not only to look at the issues involved in parenting while working in another culture but also to discuss these issues in groups so that by the end of this workshop we are able to provide some principles and guidelines for parents and for those who are responsible for preparing parents to work and live with their families in a culture other than their own.

In this first presentation we are aiming simply to explore what the term 'cross-cultural parenting' might mean.

**Is it simply a matter of parents raising their children in a culture other than their passport culture? And even if it is what difference does it make for the purposes of parenting if one does not live in one's own home country??**

Are we addressing the situation where the parents are of different nationalities or bicultural families?

Are we addressing the situation where couples within our agencies have adopted a child from a culture other than their own perhaps even the host culture?

These are both significant issues for parents as they raise their family but this would be the case for those families regardless of whether they were working overseas or not in a country that is the passport country for either of the parents. Within this workshop we are **not** considering either of these situations.

**So** what situations are we aiming to address? Our main focus will be to consider implications for parents raising their children in the area of their assignment in a culture other than their own.

As families prepare for their work assignment they will be looking not just at the work involved but also at the implications of living within the culture for their whole family. There will be a period of orientation to the country and the area where they will be living and working and part of that will relate to parenting issues. As they move to a new area of the world they come with their '**passport culture**'-here I am using the word 'passport' loosely allowing for those families where the spouses are of different nationalities and hold passports from different countries - and they will be focussing on how to live within their '**host culture**'. More often than not, however, it is likely there will be relationships with other '**cultures**' to be considered. These are most likely to be relationships with colleagues within one's own agency or maybe with those from a number of Christian agencies, and also with the expatriate community, for instance, development and research agencies, diplomatic staff, armed services. Here we will refer to them respectively as the '**agency culture**' and the '**expat culture**'. Each one is likely to bring a certain richness to their family life but may also bring some challenges.

So these are the areas that need addressing.

What parenting issues are likely to be raised as a family relates to any or all of these groups? This is the question we will be exploring. As we discuss and work together here we hope that we will be able to find and provide some principles and guidelines to enable us all to prepare parents as they take up assignments in different areas of the world.