

Cross-Cultural Perspectives



Holding On & Letting Go

It is transition time again. It's that melancholy season when some of our missionary kids complete their on-the-field education and turn their heads—but seldom their hearts—toward re-entry into life in North America. For parents and kids it's that bizarre time of holding on while letting go.

I still get a lump in my throat when I think of our kids leaving. But, my how well they are doing now. We recently visited Leah and Andrew in Los Angeles. Two received the Holy Ghost and we baptized one in Jesus name. Jared is being greatly used of the Lord as Assistant Pastor to Danny Chance and the Youth President of Louisiana. Amy is teaching at Christian Life Center. It is our joy to see each one pursuing God's purpose for their lives.

I would like to recommend a couple books for those called upon to give their children wings whether the kids are leaving home or at home learning to fly.

Carol Kuykendall wrote *Give Them Wings: Preparing for the Time Your Teens Leave Home*, and does a first-rate job helping parents "thrive on the changes and challenges the next few years are sure to bring." She also promises, "you'll discover the joy that comes with emptying your nest, knowing they're well-prepared for the flight." Here is a favorite thought from Carol's timely book: "I also brought a sense of order to my confusion about holding on and letting go. I want to hold on to a child who needs me, but I want to let go of a child who is ready to go. Only then will his love be able to grow from an immature love that says, 'I love you because I need you,' to a mature love that says, 'I need you because I love you.'"

Our MKM Office Manager, Cylinda Nickel recommends *As You Leave Home* by Jerry Jenkins. He offers his graduating son advice about life and puts emotional parental feelings into words.

Here's a quote, "Only my selfishness would tell me I'd rather have you stay than go....That covetousness would cup a butterfly in our palms and withhold it from its purpose...."

And that brings us to the bottom line in this constant cycle of transition experienced by missionaries and their families. Missions and the Christian life are marked with fulfilling God's highest purpose for our lives. We cannot expect any less for our children. So the push-pull battle weakens. We're holding on to God's promises and letting go of our kids so they may pursue His purpose.