

# Story by Hosea

## *Reflection from an Indigenous African missionary Kid*

"Hello Hosea, where is your home". Kidada asked a new friend I had just made right after we had moved into a new mission field with my parents. I didn't know what he actually meant by home, because I had not at once thought of it. I always thought that home is where my parents are, that is what I knew. It was from this question that I realized when an African asks you where is your home they mean, your father's ancestral land. Something totally new to me, a revelation of what home was. It is all about your tribe, your language, your land, stories about your father's people, the cluster group that your tribe is from, is it Nilotic, Cushitic, Bantu or Semitic, so much detail to describe home. Oh poor Hosea! I had nothing close to this and my answer was "mmmh", mentioning the location we were at a previous mission station and Kidada was not satisfied with my answer.

How then do I answer this question as an African missionary child born to indigenous missionary parents where tribal language matters, where your ancestral land has something to do with your identity, where your fathers people seem to be the custodian of where you belong. I had nothing like this. I was a wondering nomad crossing cultures and lands with a long history of rules of how communities interact, witnessing how these rules play in determining the legitimacy of my family to live among them as their own. I was always wondering. Of course. I am MK. I am a pilgrim looking for a place of belonging that I would settle in, always having a new perspective embedded in another new story I walked through all, just like the safari experience.

Unlike the MKS from the pioneering teams of missionary work to Africa either from Europe or America, It is a different experience for an indigenous African missionary kid, and little is known about their lives.

As I grew up as an indigenous African MK I would say not everything worked as it should have for me to experiencing child hood as I should have, being displaced as soon as you had just made friends in the new place you call it a new home, was so painful.

In the early 80s my parents joined nursing apprentice program with a mission hospital in rift valley region of Kenya that belonged to AIM, it was at this hospital that my father responded to the call to move among the unreached peoples group, after Africa Inland Mission (one of the early mission agency's to the inlands outreach) asked if there was someone ready to be sent, and it was by then that my father who was single young man of 25 years old at that time, heeded to the call, and in late 1984 he left to be among unreached close to 1000km away from his people and land. Later my mother join him She was also a nurse at the mission hospital. Two weeks after their wedding in 1985 they left their comfort and moved to the mission field. Less than a years later I was born.

So being raised in a mission field brought in serious challenges to me which I will not be able to talk of them all, I will pick one challenge for now, an area I also feel it touches other key issues that affect an indigenous African missionary Kid.

I would love to talk about my educational life a journey that made me question so much about My God, His Mission, His church and His missionaries.

When I started my preschool level it was so wonderful, my parents had just joined a missionary college to be trained on missions before we move back to the mission field, and right in the college was a place

we could school as missionary kids, but this did not last long, something was yet to come and would go on for long. When my parents finished their studies they were taken in to work with the Africa Inland Church missionary Board which was going to be responsible for their deployment to various mission fields.

We went through six mission locations within Kenya in a span of 14 years and this had great implication to my learning, my parents had no training for home schooling and it was a hard time to put my brother and I in the right environment that will give humble time to study, to be sincere I would envy children from the missionaries from the west who had school right at their home, they even had a tutor come to the field and teach them.

My parents had to utilize the public schools around us which had academic difficulty, some had few teachers others were not operational due to community clashes and so the conditions in the schools were hard. I am sorry if this seems like complaining, but I would just want to say I am sharing facts that I went through and how I felt them.

In one of the schools I attended had no desks we would sit on concrete blocks, or metal water pipes, while using our thighs as tables to write and complete our assignments, We also faced hatred because our parents were missionaries and because it was a Muslim community , we would receive punishment for nothing baring marks of whips in our bodies. we experienced being infected with jiggers while in school making our feet itch with pain a horrible experience we shared with those whom my parents were reaching out to them with the Gospel, It was hard to comprehend that my parents had made wise decision to be missionaries.

Everytime we changed schools we knew it is another time to repeat either one class or two or three classes backward and this made us hopeless in school, at on school I was announced as the most failed student of the year since I was always the last through the year, And as a resulted of all this challenges it took 14 years for me to finish the elementary school that should have taken 8 years to complete, this meant that all my friends I knew, when we started the school life were at least in 1<sup>st</sup> year in college when I was just done with primary school.

I would wonder what comes into your mind when you here this, what I share is a one stories among the indigenous African missionary Kids some have had to change schools more than 10 times, others after so unstable mission field life and trauma had to stop studying only to go back to school in their old age.

I really want to say that as a child I felt something was wrong with my life, things didn't add up and I didn't appreciate what my parents were doing. I felt God had forgotten them because just across our home I would see other missionary kid doing so well and having fun. And I wondered " are we not serving the same God" as one of the missionary Kid asked some few days ago.

The inconsistency of learning period denied me what I should have experienced like any other child, and my experience is an example to what happens many other African Missionary kid, some are affected by ethnic clashes, some go through long distance to get to school since their parents couldn't afford a ministry vehicle or transport fare to cover for all the term. Many of my fellow African missionary kids have always told me that they wish they would be understood so that they would express such challenges and even help future missionary parents and kids not to go through what we went through.

There I'd a lot that comes in my mind when I recall my life as and Indigenous African missionary Kid, I would love to say sharing this much, helps both you and I to create time and speak about them, maybe to hear your other side of the story and how we can make our stories a testimonial strands that will make a rope hope blending with multicultural witnesses of MKS to the Glory of God our Father.

Even though the African Church has sent missionaries, the lack of the church to recognize the needs of an indigenous Africa Missionary Kid, seems to be slowing the efforts in raising missionaries to reach out to the unreached nations especially from the households of the missionaries, since few African Missionaries have 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of missionaries from their homes, I believe a new generation of missionaries from the previous missionary families would be a gift with great force to advance the mission. It is my prayer that God will raise MKs to pursue such noble tasks in the best way the can do.

My desire is to help the Africa indigenous missionary Kid to see the gift of God, that he has bestowed them in our families, and by doing so they may appreciate the diverse range of his workers in the mission field whether western missionary, or Eastern missionary serving together, a life that would portray dignity and equality to offer a joyful ministry experience. I desire to look for ways that the church in Africa will in their own context participate in caring for the IAMKs.

Indigenous African Missionary kids challenges mostly rise such areas; lack consistent discipleship at home, difficult education experience, lack counselling care that requires biblical action plans to support these children, parenting for some indigenous missionaries is hard because they lack good training and closure to speak about it, and so many important issues apart from financial support which is so little to meet the needs for the kids and the family. I remember my parents received less than ksh 700 a monthly and by the time they retired there monthly support from the church was less than ksh15,000 , this would not meet our academic journey as well as home needs and so we relied on well-wishers to go through schooling, so many IAMK Go through such challenges extreme ones would be for those whom their parents have no sending church or agency and depend on support raising from individuals, but God is gracious to all.

In conclusion I would say the most important of all in this story is that God is raising the fainted hearts of the IAMKs to pursue a lasting joy that is in the God of their fathers. I am reminded of Paul when he says *"I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.- 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:3*

We hope that we shall with our hearts, mind and strength commitment ourselves to support MKs that they may with clear conscience serve God filled with Joy and with great healing of their hearts they will shine the light of hope wherever they will be.