



Episode 011: How Can We Support Missionary Kids? Show Notes

Paul Dyck grew up as a missionary kid (MK) in India and he leads the Canadian Missionary Kid Network. He serves with Outreach Canada. Paul currently lives in Abbotsford.

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be passionate about missions and missionary kids?

- Born to WEC missionaries, his parents gave him a deep love for the Lord. Paul has a deep love for the people of India and the surrounding countries. We learned to live as people in the minority, and Paul witnessed his dad show love to the people he was ministering to, and that love transferred over to Paul and has stayed with him.

What are some of the highlights of being an MK?

- MKs have a beautiful view of the world. They see the world in the brilliant color that it is.
- It is a gift that Paul would wish on everybody. You do not regret growing up in another culture.
- MKs have the privilege of traveling both to their passport country and many other countries en route between their two homes. Their worldview is impacted heavily by so many different cultures, values and a deep love for the Lord.
- So many people are fearful of growing up in unsafe countries – as we highly value safety in Canada. MKs get to see firsthand how God delivers. MKs treasure and value what they have, particularly, relationships.
- Home is a broad concept for many MKs.

What are some of the misconceptions that we may have about the MK experience?

- We often look at MKs as weird. In many ways, that is correct, because they have grown up as “hidden immigrants” – they look like Canadians, but at heart, they have other customs and colloquialisms that are different from people how have been raised in Canada.
- We think that MKs are poor – they have missed out on a lot of things and have lived in impoverished countries. Many MKs don’t feel poor or bad about being MKs. Overseas MKs are typically some of the wealthiest people in their neighbourhoods. But also, they have rich relationships and rich experiences. MKs don’t feel disadvantaged by their MK experience. Many MKs say they wouldn’t give up their MK experience.



How does transition affect MKs, both positively and negatively?

- Transition is a difficult thing, but it is a strengthening thing. It makes MKs more resilient as they can deal with change and ambiguity.
- In transition, you learn to say good bye. Grief is a big part of an MK's life and they don't always have time to deal with their grief. This can result in the explosion of emotions. The average number of moves for an MK in the first 18 years of their lives is 8 – most of which are inter-country moves.
- Lifelong friends are hard to come by for MKs because of the constant transition. Transition comes with quite a price tag.

Rebecca, how has transition affected you?

- I identify with a lot of the things Paul has said. Friends come and go. Your family is on a different furlough cycle than your friends' families, and so you have a new best friend every year. Moving to Canada when I was 15, I attended a school where many of the students had been together since kindergarten. Sometimes it was hard to not be jealous of their lifelong friendships and their stability of living in the same place their whole lives.
- As an adult, I feel that I am very adept to change and have the ability to move somewhere and jump right in and make friends. I'm able to make any place home.
- Being an MK has been a very great experience, one that I wouldn't change.

Paul, what are some of the greatest hurdles that MK face when they return to their passport country?

- Knowing that they are only in Canada for a short while, there is the temptation to not develop deep relationships. It can be tempting to check out or treat the experience as a holiday. Saying good bye is hard, so they avoid getting attached.
- The long term transition can be difficult as they have to learn new cultural norms – slang words, what is appropriate, what isn't. It can result in embarrassment for MKs, because they don't necessarily pick up on everything.
- Simple things that we take for granted, like filling up a gas tank, are new experiences for many MKs.
- MKs tend to go deep fast and sometimes it can seem like MKs overshare. The problem with going deep quickly is that MKs don't always seem to know who to trust.
- When parents stay overseas, the returning MK might have no family nearby – no place to store your stuff between school years, no place to go for holidays and birthdays, resulting in them feeling like they have no home in North America.

What are some of the practical ways that we in churches here in Canada can support MKs effectively?

- Learning about the MK experience is important.
- MKs experience depression, anxiety, and grief in much higher levels than their peers.



- Helping MKs learn to navigate transition well is what the Canadian MK Network does. They provide MK retreats for MKs returning to Canada for university. These retreats are called Reboot.
- If families in Canadian churches are aware of what MKs are facing, they can better help MKs navigate the transition. We can help them connect, introduce them to friends and help them connect to activities through the church.

What is the goal of Reboot, the retreat that you offer to MKs?

- The goal is to help MKs who have recently repatriated to Canada to acculturate well – to come to understand more about Canada and learn to navigate and connect with the church, community and university.
- The retreat is 7 days long. It gives them the opportunity to build friendships with other MKs going through the same experience.
- We do a lot of teaching, focusing on identity, help them unpack who God has made them to be, we focus on grief and loss and we help them understand finances, banking accounts and insurance, and other practical items like this.
- By the time they have finished the retreat, they have new friends, new resources and a stronger understanding of Canadian culture and they are better equipped to enter into the workplace or post-secondary education here in Canada.

Who can attend Reboot?

- This is for MKs between the ages of 17 and 20.
- We also want to start a focus on MKs between the ages of 12 and 16 that focuses on relationships – dating, sex and how the Western culture views these topics as compared to the countries they have grown up in.
- MKs from all missions organizations are welcomed to attend.

What is the cost of the retreat?

- The overall cost is \$1,100. We look for churches and missions organizations that help pay for the cost. Parents will often pay the registration fee of \$475.
- The MK Network also does support raising across Canada to help pay for those MKs whose families don't have the resources to send their MK to this retreat.
- Families who want to support MKs might consider donating money for MKs to attend Reboot.

What do MKs want Canadians to know about them?

- They would start by saying thank you. They are very aware that their overseas experience is a result of God's generosity through hundreds of people in Canadian churches.
- They want to be able to share their stories. They want to be able to talk about what they love of about their country.



- They want to invite you to consider becoming invested in the work that their families' are doing overseas.
- MKs who have landed well become our future missionaries, missiologists, leaders and caretakers, both overseas and here in Canada.

How can our listeners learn more about Reboot or the resources you offer?

www.canadianmk.net

Email: pdyck@outreach.ca

Phone: 778-549-6063

