

Training people for working in Far East

(Paper prepared by Ok Yong Lee, Christian Training Institute, Korea, for the International Brethren Training Consultation at Emmaus Bible College, Iowa, USA. June 2005.)

In order to understand Asia's training needs we need to reflect on its cultures and religions.

A. Concern for the family

Respecting and understanding the Asian culture will involve an appreciation of a strong sense of family loyalty in the Asian psyche. There is generally a lesser sense of entitlement, but rather a keen awareness of the need to repay relational debt. However this trait may lessen as the cultural background changes with the onslaught of globalization and technological advances and as the emotional hold of family life breaks down. Even the missionaries continue to give their parents a regular base allowance while they are away. It represents a token of their gratitude for their parent's care and provision for them when they were young. Most parents expect this token even though they may not openly ask for it. It reflects well on the family when adult children express their gratitude in regular terms, as well as in frequent home visit and practical care.

If the adult child goes away for money-making purposes, advancement of career, or because of a lack of other work choices, it may be deemed prudent or necessary. In the case of missionaries, there may be a mutual understanding between them and family that they should compensate in the form of financial contribution or return when parents(for health or other reason) need their service.

B. Language Learning

There is a general consensus that Asians find learning another Asian language easier than Western counterparts.

A few mentioned feeling rather embarrassed when making language blunders and causing misunderstanding, being themselves sensitive to the Asian tendency of not asking for clarification or correcting someone's mistakes.

This Asian "politeness" is adopted so as to avoid causing the other person to "lose face". (experience shame).

Those who have grown up in countries where they had little exposure to English find themselves needing to learn the English language in order to become members of International organizations.

Apart from learning and working at mastering the national language, they need to continue learning and improving their English.

Otherwise, they will not be able to benefit as much at conferences and seminars and will be unlikely to move into leadership positions, even though they may be very competent.

C. Leadership style

The two preferred leadership styles seem to be the benevolent authoritative and consultative styles. Generally there is a strong loyalty towards and respect for the authority figure. It is often expected that the authority figure should have one's interests and welfare at heart. The Asian tends to avoid challenging a leader out of respect for both the person and position held. Therefore, Asians struggle when they feel that they have been wrongly treated or partiality has been shown towards

others. To deal with the issues directly may come across as challenging leadership, being self-seeking, or owning up to feeling of hurt. This may be considered too threatening and perhaps unspiritual. The affected individuals feel anger, disappointment, and guilt simultaneously.

They may berate themselves for having negative feelings and for harboring inner complaints towards the leader. It becomes an emotional and spiritual crisis for some, and they often try to process their feelings internally. They may be more open to talking to someone outside the system, or to another trusted person, rather than leveling with the leader.

There is a tendency to have high expectations about the character of the leader as well, that the person be mature spiritually and emotionally.

A high level of emotional control in public is expected, and if a person explodes in anger, it brings much shame and loss of face. There tends to be more willingness to forgive for incompetence than for perceived lack of patience, humility, integrity, or spiritual disciplines.

There has also been a shift among the Asians towards wanting a consultative leadership style. Some have felt hampered in their work because leaders had goals that did not take into consideration the gifting of a person and their individual goals. Here the feeling expressed was that leaders did not trust them in the pursuit of their ministry focus. This is particularly true for those who have to work closely as a team.

They feel that they have very little say in their own direction and job fit. Asians who are given free rein to develop in their ministry focus tend to express appreciation.

- Taken from Globalization of Mission Series

Doing Member Care Well

Edited by Kelly O'Donnell

Part 2: Regional Issues and Insight

Section1: Asia

How can we train for Far East

A. Our Principle

The first principle we have tried to apply in our training is that it is more important to make Full-Time Christians rather than Full-Time Workers(Pastors, Ministers).

- a. So we have placed emphasis on our students developing the habit of daily Bible reading.
- b. We try to teach them to apply God's word to their own lives, rather than to use it for preaching to others.
- c. We also encourage the students to grow in their prayer life so that they know how to talk with God over the things He is interested in.
- d. This includes praying about world mission, and the part they should have in it.

B. The training curriculum

In most of our cultures there are quite high ethical standards for guiding our behavior. But we have

mixed up understanding about the true and living God.

- a. So in our course we try to teach people to know God by studying what the Bible teaches about Him.**
- b. There are many different voices telling us about being free to live a lifestyle that suits us. But we teach our students to look for the guidelines of the Bible. Real freedom lies in obeying the word of God.**
- c. Focus to base our students thinking on Bible principles and to apply them**
 - (1) In church practices we have had many different views brought by different missions.**
 - (2) In our course, we try to encourage the students to base their thinking on Bible principles.**
 - (3) The students then try to apply these principles to the needs of their churches. This is a slow way, but safe way**
- d. We are preparing students for ministry skills in their churches. It is not easy to do this when in the Christian movement certain methods of preaching, praise, worship, public prayer and evangelism have been widely used, and made standards of work.**
 - (1) But we try to help students know the gift and skill God has given them individually.**
 - (2) In our training we try to open opportunities for the students to practice their skill.**
 - (3) We believe it is important to help the students to prepare themselves, but also for them to do as much ministry as they can.**

C. Our Aim

We wrote it into our foundation principles that we aimed to train the next generation, so that they would not forget what God has done, but that they would be able to carry on the work of God in the coming generation.

D. Conclusion

- (1) We are finding that the Holy Spirit speaks Korean, Chinese, Kmer, Thai, Mongolian, Vietnamese and Filipino languages as well as English.**
- (2) He understands our cultures well.**
- (3) He also gives us wisdom to apply the principles we learn from the Bible to our different cultural needs.**
- (4) Of course we can develop traditions, or even impose our own church traditions in missionary work, but it seems that the way to cope with these is to train our younger generation to know and apply Biblical principles to their work**