

Asian Mission

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Special Focus: Cross-cultural Training



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ASIAN MISSION is a journal published twice yearly by Asian Cross-Cultural Training Institute (ACTI). ACTI provides an intensive post-seminary and pre-field training course designed for cross-cultural missionaries. Subscription to the journal is by freewill offering. Suggested amount is S\$15 per year for local readers and S\$30 per year for overseas readers. This will help cover cost of printing and postage. Cheques should be made payable to ASIAN CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE in Singapore Dollars only.

Editorial

This is a significant issue of the Asian Mission, as ACTI celebrated its 20th Anniversary. The articles in this issue focus on the direction that missionary training in Asia will be taking in the coming decade.

Dr. Joshua K. Ogawa, the first Dean of ACTI, in his article *Missionary Training in Asia for the Next Decade* brings our attention on planting and building up the church of our Lord Jesus Christ as the major essential focus for the training of missionaries serving in Asia.

Dr. Titus Loong, the second Dean and who has spent the longest time at ACTI, tells us in his article *Who are the trainers?* about the profile and quality of a 21st century cross-cultural worker. Then he presents eight qualifications for the trainers in Asia missionary training.

Kenneth Tan, former ACTI Board Chairman, shares his vision for ACTI in his article, *Some reflections on cross-cultural training for the 21st Century*.

In *Trends in cross-cultural training in Asia: an analysis of ACTI graduates, 1985-2004*, I write about the future direction of missionary training in Asia.

Andre De Winne, the director of SCEM, shares a very attractive article about the uniqueness of ACTI in his article *Tasting a spicy salad or The Uniqueness of ACTI in Asian Missionary Training*.

Daniel Jesudason in his article *What is a well-balanced cross-cultural training curriculum in the Asian context?* elaborates on three components — cultural anthropology and techniques for the effective cross-cultural adaptation, cross-cultural stress management and cultural contextualization.

Then, **Dr. Florence Tan** emphasizes the importance of the inter-personal relationship in her short article *Improving People Skill*.

All of these articles are written by individuals who have had key roles within ACTI. I am sure that these

articles will not only direct the future of ACTI, but at the same time guide others who are involved in cross-cultural training programs in Asia. May the Lord call His workers and train them adequately for His harvest field for Asia and for the world.

ACTI is going to develop a better cross-cultural training program that will match the needs of a changing world, taking into consideration the ideas generated from these articles.

ACTI will be offering three modules in 2005: First, a preparatory English language module for those who are not native English speakers; Second, a pre-field cross-cultural training module; and Third, an advanced cross-cultural training module for missionaries who require further training.

Trainees and their sending bodies will be able to select the modules that best meet their needs. In addition, ACTI will develop joint training programs with local churches in Singapore, offering relevant cross-cultural training to church members contemplating short-term mission work. Through this new partnership, we pray that more churches will become aware of the importance of cross-cultural ministries and raise up better equipped workers to go out into the field.

We end this issue with testimonies from the 27th batch of graduates.

Praise and glory to the Lord who has held ACTI for the past 20 years, and continues to hold ACTI in His faithful arms, well into the future.

Rev. Kim Chong Pae is the Dean of ACTI. He is a missionary sent by the Global Mission Society, Korea. Rev. Kim has served in Thailand for 4 years and in Singapore for 11 years. He and his wife, Mayuree, have three teenage children: James, Annie, and Sally.

Missionary Training in Asia for the Next Decade

Primary Focus on the Biblical Vision of the Church

Joshua K Ogawa

It is a real joy and privilege for me to write something on missionary training in Asia after so many years of ministry experiences both at home and overseas. My life and ministries were based overseas, such as in Indonesia, Singapore, India, England, or in USA for almost twenty years, and the years of my ministries in Japan will be the same after a few more years.

As I reflect on my past forty years of Christian service, many aspects of vitally needed missionary training come to my mind immediately, such as character training, gift training, physical and mental training, relational training, or spiritual training. They are all dynamically related to each other. But I have become convinced of one major essential focus for the training of missionaries serving in Asia. It is the focus on planting and building up the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherever it may be. All other trainings mentioned above and other more specific ones such as cross-cultural life including language, culture, worldview learning, communication of the gospel, spiritual battle, evangelism, theological and missiological studies, need to be done in close relationship with this major focus of planting and building up the church in any cross-cultural set up.

There is no need to reemphasize the reality of Asian challenges concerning a tremendous population explosion, political uncertainty, religious resurgences, socio-economic issues of poverty and hunger or injustice and inequality, cultural diversities, or concerning the spiritual plight of billions of lost people. What is needed for missionary training in Asia for the next decade is the focus on the biblical vision of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ to be realized in Asia to be ready for His return.

I will build my church

The foundation of the church has been Peter's confession, the rock. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matt. 16:16) God the Father revealed the truth to him. Jesus was willing to accept Peter and his confession even though he did not

understand nor was convinced yet of His cross at that time. Later after Pentecost, he came to a deeper understanding and experience of the cross through the work of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus says, I will build my church, it means that He Himself, not we ourselves, is the one who will build the church. Here missionaries and pastors have to understand 1Corinthians 3:6-7 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. Missionaries are often tempted to tell that the works were started by them, while God had long worked there through other people and means. Whatever the work may be, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over the work must be recognized and confessed.

To build the church is not just to plant an infant church but to build it up to be the holy and glorious church without blemish in His sight. My church means His church which should reflect all of His nature and character. The gates of Hades will not overcome it. The church has the promise of authoritative power and victory against evil spirits and Satan both in the visible and invisible worlds. The church is entrusted with the keys to the doors of the kingdom of heaven. This is a tremendous privilege and responsibility. Missionaries need to be trained in visualizing what Jesus told his disciples about his church.

I was called to be a missionary in 1969 when I was still in theological training in Singapore. After that I went back to Japan and was involved in two church plantings, one under a senior pastor, and another by myself. The area I served in was a so-called hard area against the gospel. But it was really an exiting experience to witness men and women from different social backgrounds coming to believe in Christ to be formed as His church even in those two and a half years. What I experienced and learned at that time about the biblical vision of the church was so precious in the rest of my life and ministries overseas.

Today when people have easy accesses to go to any part of the world within a day or two, Christian workers need to be trained to be useful both at home and overseas. For missionaries, the mission field may become the home field and the home become the mission field. As we know the fact that the average Christian percentage in Asia is only a few percent we have to regard both home countries and overseas as mission fields.

Be strong in the grace

Just as the justification by faith is only through the grace of Jesus Christ, the perfection of salvation comes only through the same grace. There is much emphasis on grace in the New Testament, as Paul was fighting against the Jewish legalists.

Missionaries need to be trained in sensitivity to grace. Paul himself tried to live a life sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit: 2 Cor. 12:7-10 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul's careful walk in Christ's grace could be observed when he challenged Peter in Antioch.

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. (Galatians 2:11-13)

Pursuing religious or even missionary accomplishment could be the enemy of the principle of grace. Luther fought against it in the Reformation as Paul did in the early church. Christian churches have to fight against any human thoughts, such as Enlightenment, which intentionally reject the principle of God's grace. We should grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2Tim.2:1)

The root of the problems of the churches in Asia can be found in the fact that they face tremendous difficulties in remaining in grace as they are surrounded by Asian legalistic religions, cultures and traditions. Missionaries in Asia need to be trained to be sensitive enough to this root issue. Their teaching and preaching should be made with full attention to the grace of the Lord Jesus. Their life and ministry should reveal clearly the secret of God's grace in Christ.

Unity in diversity

Missionaries must learn about the unity and diversity of the church both in the Bible and the reality of Asian churches. For example in passages such as Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 or 1 Peter 4 where the spiritual gifts of the churches are mentioned, we see clearly the unity and diversity of the church which can be kept and enjoyed only under the authority of Christ with the motivation of love for the use of spiritual gifts.

Evangelical Christians and churches have maintained unity in that they are firmly based on the doctrine of the authority of the Scriptures and that of justification by faith. In Asian countries as in other countries, however, there has existed historically, diversity of churches, denominations, and of Christian organizations. Each church, each denomination, or each organization has different spiritual gifts and traditions. Missionaries need to have a deeper appreciation of them.

The significance of the missionaries in Asia can be observed as they reveal unity in diversity among themselves whether they be Asian or Western, and in their evangelism and church ministries. They should always be serving to the Lord and His church so that biblical unity in diversity, not uniformity according to some foreign traditions, can be realized and appreciated in their church life and ministry.

Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy

One of the central themes of the Bible is that of sanctification. ¹⁹But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16) It is God's will that you should be sanctified. (1 Thes.4:3) If there should be any weakness in Asian churches, if there should be any delay in the advancement of

the gospel in Asia, it might be all because the personal and public lives of pastors, missionaries, and Christians with all their relationships in the family, the church, and in the societies are not really sanctified.

Asian missionaries should be well aware of this issue and pursue holiness in all areas of their life and operation. When this theme is avoided and ignored, the church will definitely become spiritually weak, and evangelism and missions can be hindered. In the west there has been a serious tension between those who insist that the perfect cleansing of the human sinfulness could be realized while we are still on this earth, and those who think that the human sinfulness remains to be forgiven repeatedly and that the perfect cleansing comes only when we get to heaven.

Whichever or whatever conviction they take, Asian missionaries need to pursue to be sanctified as they listen to the Word of God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. They need to learn how to be filled with the Spirit and to die to themselves. Missionaries could be the real agents for the spiritual renewal of national workers and their families as well as churches at home and on the mission fields.

Missions through personality

Missionary training in the West and in some other countries has put much emphasis on intellectual and academic training. It has been pointed out that quite a few Asian students who came back home from theological and missiological training overseas have lost their single-minded spiritual vitality and impact in their home countries. Of course the intellectual and academic training is necessary and important for missionaries in Asia, but what is much more important is their spiritual and personality/character training.

Essentially, church work is a work nourished and developed through Christ-like personality of the worker. While organizations, systems, or strategies are necessary, the presence of godly Christians is essential and central to any evangelism and church work. Missionary training, in the deepest sense, is the character/personality training through the Word of God and the leading of the Spirit. Vital are the trainings in the sanctified life, interpersonal concern

of love and forgiveness, a bold and yet humble sacrificial spirit, sincere enthusiasm for winning souls for Christ, and in the strong sense of God's call to building up of His church. Missionaries need to learn to be in constant search for and hunger for the Word of God through the Spirit.

As far as missions through personality of the worker is concerned, there is no difference between home missions and foreign missions, or in any form of Christian ministries.

Asian ecclesiology

It is now a common understanding that the Christian church must be indigenized and contextualized wherever it is planted. Indigenization or contextualization is in fact based on the nature of the gospel itself. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14) As Asian churches are indigenized and contextualized in their cultural, religious, and socio-economic circumstances, they seek to be self-theologizing as well as to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. This is where pastors and missionaries in Asia together with their churches should reexamine the so-called imported theologies. While they should learn and appreciate what has been done by senior Western theologians, they should constantly be involved in an even deeper understanding of the Scriptures, the triune God, man and woman, salvation, the church, and eschatology, as they live in and communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Asian context.

Suffering for Christ

Today, in many Asian countries, missions must be carried out in the midst of opposition and persecution, under hostile governments and fanatical non-Christian religionists. We have to refocus on the suffering aspect of the gospel as it is preached and taught. Theology of suffering could be better developed in Asia. The Lord Jesus said, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ...If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:22-23)

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Who are the trainers?

Dr. Titus Loong

Missionary training is a form of dynamic discipleship aiming to wholistically equip cross-cultural gospel workers. Before we address the quality of trainers may we first take a look at the profile and quality of a 21st century cross-cultural worker.

New faces in the frontiers

Watch out when people say the number of missionaries is declining. No, they are not. Rather, they no longer look the same to you. But you and I can discover them, care for them and train them.

Friendship Evangelism: This will be the main form, if not the only form of witnessing in CAN nations. Thus, gospel bearers need to befriend the nationals, listen a lot, and affirm rather than confront. An amiable person will do this naturally whereas a driver type of personality will need to tone down a lot.

Mercy Ministries : Orphans, AIDS patients and victims of human trafficking are examples of huge groups of people waiting to be cared for in many Asian, African and other countries. Agencies are building AIDS Orphanages and half-way houses.

Crisis Ministries: With the on-going threat of terrorists, ethnic wars, famine, earthquake, floods and other disasters due to global warming, nations are opening their front doors to medical and technical personnel. New opportunities call for new types of training and equipping of workers.

Education Ministries: While we are familiar with Doctors Without Borders, perhaps we should coin another term: Teachers Without Borders. China is opening their front doors to outsiders to help build non-government owned schools. These are golden opportunities to see lives transformed.

Mission Disciples: Short termers, usually in their early twenties, are quite reluctant to be called missionaries even though they are not in a restricted nation. They usually have no seminary or even tertiary education. They spend a year or two on the field following a senior missionary, or belong to an on-job training team (such as OM). These young

people are much happier and relaxed if we call them disciples of missions. Some agencies categorize them as mission apprentices.

Silver-hair mission partners: Fast paced technological advancement and vast economic transformation drives our generation to work longer hours, fly more frequently, cook less, and waste more. As a result people are planning earlier retirement for health, wealth or family reasons. Many middle-aged Christians are enrolling in seminaries and being challenged to do something new for the Lord. Certainly they consider missions. But are they ready? How should they be trained? Can they serve as servants after they have enjoyed being leaders in their area of expertise?

Third world mission partners: The Conservative Baptist Association of the Philippines (CBAP) has been supporting quite a few members serving in N. Asia, not to mention the high number of Christians being employed to work in Asian and Middle Eastern countries, places where doors are closed to traditional missionaries. Are churches catching up in training them?

Now, who can train our 21st century cross cultural workers?

One who is in step with changes

Are we willing to train non-seminary people and adjust our curriculum or format? Are we ready to travel as a mobile training and care-giving team? Should we require ourselves to walk a second mile, to re-train ourselves so that we are not outsiders to the working world? Today's cross cultural workers have all kinds of skin colors, worship forms, ages (seventeen to seventy), education levels, work experiences, and even marital backgrounds. Are trainers flexible enough to accept them yet at the same time earn their respect?

One who is good in one-on-one evangelism and discipleship

I have a student who has been an ordained pastor for a number of years and yet has done very little street evangelism. On the field he is quite reluctant

to be called by his first name, nor give rides to older folks. He misses his pulpit ministry and would not find satisfaction just teaching the bible one on one. Today, relationship means everything. Trainers need to be people-oriented, willing to spend time sipping coffee and listening to another's stories. Trainees need to feel they are heard before they are told. Life touches life, and discipleship making is still the basic ethos of training.

A Team player

It would be best if trainers are from a variety of ministry backgrounds. At least one of them should have significant market place experience. People trained in a traditional seminary do not naturally relate well with professional, non-seminarians. Yet, trainers should be willing to adapt themselves and serve as a team. Trainees will learn from us by observation. One of my coworkers has worked in a factory before, and she is good at demonstrating how to relate to grassroots people. I was a medical missionary before I became a missionary trainer. My background has added so much to my messages and has given me a great variety of opportunities to train cross-cultural professionals. Trainers should be willing to live together as a community, at least during the duration of training.

One who is willing to share his family life

As trainers we should model family life. This is not difficult if we are ready to share our weaknesses as well as our victories. It is hard to include our teenage children in a training community and it can be costly. Yet Helen and I have witnessed God's faithfulness to our children. There should be one single woman missionary trainer on each training team. When I recruit her, I look for one who has strong ties with her original family. She is more at ease in relating to trainees. Single or married, trainers demonstrate the building of a family on earth.

A problem solver

I also look into my potential trainers' ability to solve problems. This includes handling problems in regard to daily life, interpersonal relationships, crises, cultural issues, etc. I like to know whether he listens to reasonable suggestions or keeps to his own tunnel vision. Does he involve God in his decision making? Can he work with people and at the same time not overly dependent on others? Is he quick to

blame someone or is he willing to process the problem towards solving it? Does he handle his problems well and is he able to take good care of himself? Does he have valuable qualities to impart onto trainees' lives?

A care giver

During the past decade, missionary trainers have been alarmed at the high attrition rate among the new generation of cross-cultural workers. One followed another, and as a result each mission agency began to set up a new department called Member Care or missionary care. Psychologists and suitable senior members are recruited to provide holistic care to members. Training programs also strengthen the area of self awareness and provide personality profile tests and debriefing. Ideally, there should be one counselor on the training team. Each trainer should commit to nurturing and displaying personal care to trainees while guiding them individually. Setting strict office hours or strict personal boundaries does not work very well. A trainer is very different from a lecturer.

Real learning often happens outside of the classroom. We care, and they learn.

Strong cultural awareness and adaptability

Some people are very adaptive, and yet are not able to explain how and why. A Thai is different from a Cambodian. As trainers we not only need to live out culturally appropriate lives, but also to understand the thinking patterns of trainees from other cultures. We need to be curious, humble, and forgiving enough to truly get into another culture without constantly feeling betrayed or hurt. One who has a cultural superiority or inferiority complex may not be an efficient trainer.

Knowledge of spiritual warfare

When I started out to train missionaries I knew very little about the complications of spiritual warfare. Years later, alumni came back sharing what happened on the mission field and pointed me to a new area of learning: victory in Christ. A trainer should be very open to the Holy Spirit's power to transform lives: from bitterness to forgiveness, jealousy to love, being wounded to being healed, arrogance to humility, bondage to freedom,

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Some reflections on cross-cultural training for the 21st Century

Kenneth Tan

These reflections come out of ACTI's 20th Anniversary Consultation on Cross-Cultural Training, and are based on my vision for ACTI in the 21st century as:

A cross-cultural community of lifelong learners growing and going for God.

A cross-cultural training community is already a concept well established at ACTI. No more need be said about the unquestioned value of spiritual and character formation in a cross-cultural training community, which is foundational to ACTI.

However, I do not think ***lifelong learning*** is a concept or core value which is widely accepted, much less practiced in Asia, where formal education is still the most widely accepted model of training. Often this means a formal course of theological studies leading to a recognized degree. However, I do not believe that completion of a theological degree is synonymous with spiritual or character formation. That was why the founders of ACTI saw the need for a *post-seminary* pre-field missionary training course.

ACTI used to be described as a *post-seminary* pre-field training course. However, quite early on in ACTI's development, in the 1990s, the need for training tentmakers was recognized, and some excellent trainees without formal theological and missiological qualifications were admitted to the course. So, quite early on the *post-seminary* label had to be re-examined. This did not mean that ACTI abandoned evaluating the theological and missiological qualifications of applicants to its course, but it did mean being more flexible in the admission of trainees. ACTI's entry criteria need continually to be reviewed, given the changing needs for cross-cultural training. Adapting ACTI's training to cater for the increasing number of tentmakers would be vital as the majority of the remaining unreached people groups in the 21st century are in creative access nations.

As any Christian professional or tentmaker knows,

professional excellence can only come by continuing professional education or lifelong learning. So, the primary goal of ACTI must be to equip the cross-cultural worker with the tools for lifelong learning in whatever ministry situation he finds himself. The primary learning outcome at ACTI must be an attitude of lifelong learning. This attitude is the essential toolbox for every tentmaker and missionary, indeed for every Christian.

The Christian lifelong learner never stops growing both in the knowledge of God and becoming more like Christ. ***Growing*** (maturing or just growing older) is a lifelong process. Graduating from ACTI is merely another step in the gradual growth towards attaining *the fullness of the stature of Christ*.

In order to graduate from ACTI, not only should there be measurable growth in trainees during the course, there should be a discernible desire for ongoing growth and development. One measure of this desire is the willingness of ACTI graduates to host ACTI trainees and mission teams, and to return to ACTI for refresher courses or to teach.

A practical implication for ACTI may be to run refresher courses or modules for ACTI graduates. It is encouraging that some have come or returned to ACTI after a period of field ministry. This is a good example of the action-reflection model of lifelong learning and growth. It may be of great mutual benefit to ACTI and its graduates to encourage graduates to return to ACTI for a few weeks during furlough or home assignment. Their field experience could be valuable to new trainees and, although it will require a degree of self-disclosure and vulnerability, this process of reflection can be another valuable learning and growing opportunity for the graduate.

Conversely, an ACTI mission trip to ACTI graduates in their field of work would not only be beneficial for trainees, it could encourage graduates and encourage further growth in their lives. For practical reasons such trips would have to be to graduates

working not too far away from ACTI, but there are now numerous graduates working in nearby countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia.

Mission trips underscore the need for **going** cross-culturally. The ultimate goal of ACTI is to equip trainees to go, to cross borders and cultures in obedience to the Great Commission. Having gone, they need to keep going by lifelong learning of and growing in the host culture. Only then will they thrive cross-culturally and become effective cross-cultural communicators of the Gospel. Only then will they become worthy ambassadors for Christ.

ACTI does not only train those who go cross-culturally, but it also trains those who train others for the task. The Great Commission is not only about going cross-culturally, but also about making disciples cross-culturally, and teaching them how to fulfill that Commission in their own context and culture.

Learning as you go is a practical and effective training method, which requires a lot of work by trainers and trainees. Being less structured than a syllabus of classroom instruction, it will require

stricter supervision to ensure adequate preparation before the trip (e.g. logistics and prior agreement with the ACTI graduates as to the curriculum), good learning opportunities during the trip (including time for prayer and reflection, e.g. daily group meetings and journaling), and proper consolidation after the trip (e.g. debriefing and written reports).

In conclusion, I have reflected on the indispensable needs for lifelong learning, growth and going (learning as you go). In practical terms, ACTI itself and its leadership need to model these processes. Given the availability of similar courses, which have developed since ACTI's founding 20 years ago, such as Singapore Bible College's Diploma in Intercultural Ministries, ACTI needs to review its courses to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of today's cross-cultural workers, and of their sending churches.

Kenneth Tan is the Acting Director for Personnel at OMF International. He is a former OMF Singapore National Director. He has a long standing relationship with ACTI, being a former Chairman of the ACTI Board of Directors.

(Missionary Training...continued from page 5)

When I was called by God to fulltime Christian ministry some thirty eight years ago, it was through the words of Jesus in Luke 14:26-27. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters yes, even his own life he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. I left my every thing including my dear family, my friends, a possibility of marriage, my career as a physicist in my university, and my country to be trained in Singapore to serve the Lord. I have been thankful to the Lord since then for the fact that theology of suffering has been established step by step in my life.

Christian workers have both the priestly as well as prophetic mission. When pastoral and intercessory prayers are offered at home or on the mission fields there must be a deep sense of sharing the pains and sufferings of individuals and churches.

They should be willing to take the pains and sufferings of churches in Asia and the world. How deep can we get into them in order to understand the sufferings of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? It may be important to discuss the war responsibilities, but what is more needed would be to go to the people of the mission fields and to live with all their life sufferings. How much can we love each other in the sufferings?

We have had above a brief look at various aspects of the biblical vision of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ to be realized in Asia today and tomorrow. May missionaries in Asia be better equipped for this glorious task in their life and ministry even today.

Joshua K. Ogawa was the first Dean of ACTI. He is now pastoring an international church in Japan and chairman of the board of Japan Evangelical Alliance.

Trends in Cross-cultural Training in Asia: an Analysis of ACTI Graduates, 1985-2004

Rev. Kim Chong Pae

ACTI has trained 218 graduates through 26 batches during years between 1985-2004. We celebrated the 20th Anniversary of ACTI in May 2004 with the 26th Graduation Thanksgiving Service, a consultation on cross-cultural training for the next decade, a symposium of six sampling lectures and Celebration service and dinner.

Now ACTI becomes a young adult in training cross-cultural missionaries, tentmakers and professionals for Asia. In the 21st century, the gravity of the Christianity is shifting from west to some other parts of the world such as Asia, Africa and Latin America. Asia becomes a center of the world mission in this century. In this article, I'd like to do some survey on the Asian mission trends based on an Analysis of ACTI graduates between 1985-2004, so that we may foresee the mission movement in Asia for the coming decade.

Two decades ago when ACTI was launched, there was not much awareness about cross-cultural training in Asia. Missiology is only a small part of evangelism subject in practical theology. Later it became a subject of a curriculum, then now most of the bible schools have listed the cross-cultural studies as one of their degree program. There is even a school of mission. The idea is that so the Bible College trains for pastors as the school of mission trains for missionaries. Moreover, some of the independent churches and denominations have developed their cross-cultural training program for their own members. Whether institutional or non-institutional, all cross-cultural training programs will serve by pursuing the future direction of cross-cultural training in Asia. In such a rapidly changing mission trend, we all need to see the coming decade with the readiness to adjust ourselves to fit in the changes without remaining as marginal

1. Analysis based on the ACTI Graduates for the two Decades.

Some of the dramatic changes have taken place in the mission movement in Asia.

1-1 Analysis of the graduates based on their country of origin.

According to the Table 1, Korea is the most active country to send out cross-cultural ministry in Asia. They sent 85 missionaries to ACTI, 39% of all graduates. This is not strange at all because Korea is the first missionary sending country in Asia which has sent out 12,000 missionaries world-wide by the year 2004. Next to Korea is Singapore. Singapore sent 29 graduates through ACTI, 13% of the graduates. However if we count the ratio of the population, Singapore is the highest missionary sending country.

Asian countries		
1	Korea	85
2	Singapore	29
3	Hong Kong	26
4	Taiwan	14
5	Nagaland	10
6	Japan	10
7	Malaysia	9
8	Indonesia	7
9	Philippines	5
10	India	3
11	Myanmar	2
12	Thailand	1
13	Nepal	1
Non-Asian		
14	USA	3
15	UK	3
16	New Zealand	3
17	Norway	2
18	Australia	2

Table 1: Number of ACTI graduates by sending country

Since 1997, ACTI has not had any non-Asian graduates. This situation arose either because the number of cross-cultural missionaries from non-Asian countries has fallen or because cross-cultural missionaries are attending training programs in their home countries.

Countries like Nepal, Myanmar and Thailand aware the need of cross-cultural training for their workers to reach out to the cross-cultural ministry in their country. Once these countries were considered as

Years of graduating classes	1985-1990	1991-1994	1995-1998	1998-2000	2001-2004
Trainees from Mission Agencies	24	17	16	30	8
Trainees from non-Mission Agencies	11	8	4	6	19

Table 2: Number of ACTI graduates by sending body.

mission field. Now these countries send their Christian leaders to ACTI to be equipped as a cross-cultural trainer for their own people.

1-2 Analysis of ACTI graduates based on the sending body.

Table 2 provides data on the sending bodies of 143 of the 218 alumni. There is a possibility that the data may include some error due to the availability of documents.

Over the past two decade, ACTI graduates have come from 13 mission agencies and 6 non-mission agencies (including churches and denominational bodies).

Based on the analysis of Table 2, the majority of the graduates came from mission agencies until 2000. As we enter the 21st century, churches and denominational bodies in Asia send their cross-cultural missionaries to ACTI without going through mission agencies. The number from churches and denominations is two times higher than the number from mission agencies. This can be interpreted to mean that Asian churches are now sending cross-cultural missionaries directly to the field rather than sending them through mission agencies.

2. Cross-cultural Missionary trends (based on ACTI graduates)

2-1 Asian churches are sending more cross-cultural missionaries than ever.

20 years ago, most of the Asian countries were considered as mission fields. Nowadays many of these Asian countries such as Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, and even China, are emerging as cross-cultural missionary sending countries.

2-2 Third World country church leaders are becoming aware of the importance of cross-cultural training.

It is remarkable to observe that in the last two years, the Third World country church leaders have come

to ACTI to be equipped as cross-cultural trainer for their own workers. There is no way but emphasize the importance of cross-cultural training for the emerging mission movement in Asia. It is encouraging that church leaders in Asia are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of cross-cultural training.

2-3 The need for balance in the dramatic change in the growth of churches and mission movement.

For over 200 years, the mission movement has been a monopoly of the western churches and mission agencies. The mission movement in Asia is young, but is growing fast. Churches and denominational bodies are catching up to mission agencies in numbers. However, churches must learn from the mission agencies without totally depending on them.

2-4 Asian missionaries needing to develop Asian perspectives and strategies in missions.

Churches and the mission movement in the west is either stagnant or declining. Theologians from the East and West mention the limit of the Western Theology. Many Westerns are keen to learn from oriental religions. Christianity and mission movement must re-vitalize by Asian perspectives. An Asian approach to the mission movement will develop a matching strategy for the Asian field. We hope that the Asian perspectives and strategy can even revive the declining Western churches.

3. Future direction for ACTI to be one of the leading cross-cultural training programs in Asia.

ACTI has always been a cross-cultural living community. The following factors are the core area of ACTI from the beginning till now.

The dynamics of cross-cultural living — Staff and trainees are from diverse cultural backgrounds who live together, providing all with first hand experiences on cross-cultural living.

Small group dynamics—ACTI tries to keep the number of trainees in each in-take to about 10 trainees, to provide the best environment for small group dynamics to work.

Community living — Staff and trainees live together and learn from each other. The training program is not only head knowledge but practical lesson for daily living. One will understand the differences between members in the community, and each member will grow to accept and appreciate the role that others play in the community.

To move on to the coming decade, these are some areas in which ACTI needs to grow.

Develop partnership with Asian churches

—ACTI was started by one mission agency. Later, 10 other mission organizations joined and sent their staff for training. With the focus now of the East instead of the West, and from mission agencies to churches, ACTI will need to put more effort into developing partnerships with Asian churches without losing the firm partnerships with existing mission agencies.

Develop mission strategies based on Asian perspectives

—ACTI should be a channel to link the West to the East. Asian cross-cultural workers must learn from the experience of Western cross-cultural workers. On top of that, Asian missionaries must move on beyond the limit of the West cross-cultural missionaries. This is possible by developing Asian perspectives based on Asian mission strategies.

Combination of the training program in Asia

There are at least three types of cross-cultural missionary training programs in Asia, based on location. The first type has the training program in the home culture. The strength of this type of training is that the medium of instruction is the trainee's mother tongue and in their home culture. The second type of training program is located in the third culture. In this type, the trainees are from different cultures and the dynamics of cultural variety is the key factor. The third type is training missionaries in their mission field. This type can save time and allow cross-cultural missionaries to concentrate directly on the host culture.

The most ideal method of cross-cultural training would be the combination of these three types. First, they have an orientation of their own identity in their home country. Then they are sent to the third culture to be equipped by a practical cross-cultural training program. ACTI provides such training. Finally, as they arrive in their mission field, they must go through their specific cultural orientation on the field.

Rev. Kim Chong Pae is the Dean of ACTI. He is a missionary sent by the Global Mission Society, Korea. Rev. Kim has served in Thailand for 4 years and in Singapore for 11 years. He and his wife, Mayuree, have three teenage children: James, Annie, and Sally.

Tasting a spicy salad – or – The Uniqueness of ACTI in Asian Missionary Training

Andre De Winne

To claim that something is unique, one has to be very careful. In our crowded world of close to 6.5 billion people, it would not be surprising to find that others have similar ideas to ours; or that people, having looked at a particular challenge or problem, arrive at very similar conclusions about what needs to be done and how to do it, even though they have never been in contact with each other. For these reasons I hesitate to talk about uniqueness, and would prefer to use the term distinctiveness. The only truly unique factors about ACTI are its own history, which is not replicable, and its setting in the multicultural context of modern Singapore.

ACTI fills a gap in pre-field training, and it is interesting to note that the REMAP I and II research projects of the World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission (WEAMC) have established a close correlation between the amount and quality of training of missionaries and their subsequent staying power and effectiveness on the field. (see W. Taylor et al., *Too Valuable to lose*, 1997, W. Carey Library; Detlef Bloecher, articles posted on the www.WEAresources.org website).

ACTI's programme features more formal missiology combined with practical cross-cultural skills training, spread over four and a half months.

For those Asian trainees whose first language is not English, the course begins with an intensive English module, adapted to the needs of mission personnel. Some will lament this Anglo-Saxon, Western influence, but English is the de facto lingua franca in most of the world, with the exception of Latin America, Central Asia and the Arab world. Even there the use of English for trans-national communication keeps gaining ground. The globalization of missions has created a situation where cross-cultural workers from many different language backgrounds mingle and interact on the field. In the vast majority of cases, English is the default common language, so that a lack of basic proficiency in the language is a major handicap.

The most interesting practical aspect of cross-cultural training is the live-in requirement for the trainees, who, by design, always come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In a typical course one can find, for instance, a Chinese couple from Sarawak, a Singaporean single (maybe of Chinese or Indian origin), a trainee from Nagaland, Mizoram or another part of N.E. India, a few South Koreans, a Japanese trainee and perhaps someone from Taiwan or Indonesia as well. Each of these cultures is significantly different, and putting people with such different backgrounds together in a communal living arrangement for several months creates a truly unique (this time the word is truly appropriate) learning environment. The number of trainees is kept small enough (max. 12 to 15 people) so that genuine interaction takes place.

The interaction between trainees in this kind of setting tends to bring out both the best and the worst. Initially the trainee is likely to be somewhat overwhelmed to find himself or herself confronted with so many different ways of thinking, speaking and doing things. He or she may feel insecure, irritated (why can't they do it my way?). In time, such an overwhelming leads to a significant shaping of the trainee's life: it gives him or her an ability to begin to see his or her own culture in a different light and to take significant steps towards becoming better equipped for future cross-cultural living in an actual field assignment. It also gives the trainee a real experience of mixing with co-workers from other backgrounds, which is increasingly common in many field settings.

It should be added that the setting of ACTI in Singapore contributes in a unique way to this process. Singapore itself is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society, the cross-roads between at least three main Asian cultures: Chinese, Indian and Malay, with a sprinkling of other cultures added in. Apart from Kuala Lumpur, it is the only city in Asia to have these three unique strong cultural links, with a significant Western influence through

the colonial heritage and modern business culture infused into the whole. Contrary to parts of the U.S.A. or other settings, each culture has by and large retained its own distinctiveness, so that Singapore resembles a spicy salad of different ingredients, rather than a melting pot in which cultural distinctives tend to gradually disappear. The trainees do get a fair amount of exposure to this Singapore cultural salad by way of their involvement in local churches and in their free time.

It comes as no surprise then, that alumni often quote this multi-cultural residential experience as one of the more memorable life-shaping experiences they have had before arriving on the field.

The emphasis on a balance between formal missiological training, — some of it through residential staff, some through visiting lecturers — spiritual formation and practical skills acquisition makes the training truly distinctive, and in its Singapore setting, unique. Due to the rising cost of living in Singapore relative to the rest of Asia, it has

been more challenging for ACTI to attract trainees from all over Asia in recent years. The ACTI Board and reflection, e.g. daily group meetings and journaling), and proper consolidation after the trip (e.g. debriefing and written reports).

In conclusion, I have reflected on the indispensable needs for lifelong learning, growth and going (learning as you go). In practical terms, ACTI itself and its leadership need to model these processes. Given the availability of similar courses, which have developed since ACTI's founding 20 years ago, such as Singapore Bible College's Diploma in Intercultural Ministries, ACTI needs to review its courses to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of today's cross-cultural workers, and of their sending churches.

Kenneth Tan is the Acting Director for Personnel at OMF International. He is a former OMF Singapore National Director. He has a long standing relationship with ACTI, being a former Chairman of the ACTI Board of Directors.

(Who are the trainers?...continued from page 7)

weakness to strength, deception to illumination. When trainers and trainees pray for one another whole-heartedly, God honors and answers powerfully. One Korean trainee who is a pastor said to me, ACTI prayers are powerful! Indeed He is a good God and He cares for those whom He called.

Conclusion

The above is by no means a comprehensive qualification check-list for a 21st century missionary trainer. I have not mentioned the obvious qualities such as spiritual maturity, biblical and missions knowledge, skills, and such. Rather, my intention is to stimulate readers to think out of our traditional box. To be current and practical will sharpen a trainer. Usually we look for a dynamic lecturer or a church planter with good track records. Those qualities are important, but a committed trainer would certainly require more. Besides what he knows and what he can do, we ask, what sort of a person is he (being)? For further reflection into the matter, ask ourselves: are we (trainers) able to help produce workers for the new centuries challenge? If not, why not? Are

we being marginalized? Who are the effective ones and what can we learn from them?

Reference:

1. Preparing to serve: Training for cross-cultural mission. C David Harley, Wm Carey Library USA 1995
2. Establishing ministry training: A manual for programme developers. Robert W Ferris, Wm Carey Library USA 1995
3. Into the 21st century: Asian churches in mission, Met Castillo ed., AMC1998, EFA pp.55-61

Dr Titus Loong has served with CB International for 27 years, first as medical missionary in Taiwan and then as a missionary trainer. He is the former Dean of ACTI. During the last decade he has focused on training Chinese speaking seminary students and professionals in several Asian countries. Beginning this year, he and others run a WECARE center in HongKong providing on-going training and care for both new and experienced missionaries.

What is a well-balanced cross-cultural training curriculum in the Asian context?

Daniel Jesudason

Space travel is now being touted as the next frontier for human travel, with bookings on space shuttle flights even before such flights are feasible for tourists!

My trips into tribal work continued over 18 years, working in two isolated tribal communities in Papua New Guinea, helping them with linguistics, alphabet design, literacy, community development and scripture translation, so that they can hear from God directly in their own heart language. This trip was made possible through, Wycliffe Bible Translators; in some ways you can say that they designed a safe space shuttle for us to have a successful journey into outer space. Living among these isolated tribal communities was really like living in another world, especially since they are practically cut-off from the outside due to terrain, language and their spirit world. Having learnt their language to a good level of fluency and becoming absorbed into their culture as part of their kinship system made the experience even more limitless and exacting.

Through this I have come to appreciate many facets of cross-cultural life and also evaluated the pre-field training I had received. We have also been involved in training expatriates for cross-cultural work. We were also involved in designing curriculum to train nationals from many diverse communities, languages and cultures in Papua New Guinea. All this has helped us reflect on what aspects of cross-cultural training are critical, especially for Asians.

With this hindsight I would like to suggest what I feel would be a well-balanced cross-cultural training curriculum in the Asian context:

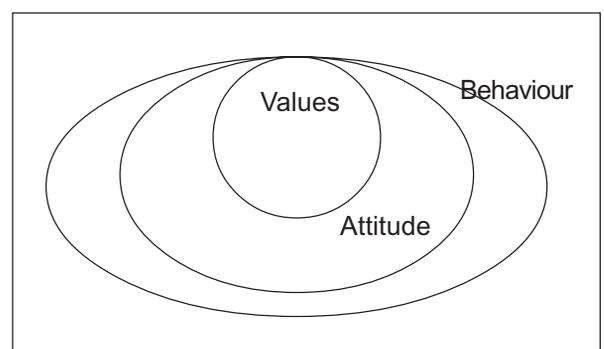
- There are three components which I feel are critical:
1. Cultural anthropology and techniques for effective cross-cultural adaptation
 2. Cross-cultural stress management
 3. Cultural Contextualisation

1. Cultural anthropology and techniques for effective cross-cultural adaptation

This component is essential so that basic understanding of differences in cultures, sub-cultures, the processes of enculturation, acculturation, logic, communication, kinship structures and etc. needs to be established as a foundation for cultural work.

These components can be taught in an Asian context highlighting aspects which can be considered core values for Asian cultures. Traditional core values of filial piety, honour, harmony, face-saving mechanisms, greetings etc. can be covered. How these values generate many types of behaviors and how it relates to individual personalities can be discussed. It can be shown that some of these patterns of behaviors have become norms and therefore characterize the Asian culture or subculture in contrast to other cultural groups.

In Asia, globalization is shifting many of these traditional values, the urban life has resulted in westernization. So there has been a shift in behavior, however their Asian core values and attitudes can still



be very Asian even though the pattern of behaviors have changed into western-style behavior. I believe, eventually Asian core values will also change because of the impact of western media and pop culture, especially when it is absorbed into the process of enculturation through the generations. This shift needs to be understood or else our witness

for Christ can become ineffective. That is why this component in the curriculum is critical. The model below can be used as a basis to analyze and make contrasts between major cultural groups such as Asian and Western cultures.

We also need to recognize that church mission work is now highly international with expats and Asians working in partnerships and networks. This trend has highlighted the need for understanding the contrasts between cultures. In fact many mission agencies and churches are finding that the cultural

differences between East and West, do create many conflicts and when there is no appropriate management of cross cultural conflicts it can often result in confrontation and disunity which hinders and delays the work of the Lord.

Below is an analysis of the contrast between two partnering organizations, which have had serious conflicts in the past years. This is an analysis which helped the organizations design a mechanism for conflict resolution which will help resolve and heal conflicts for both cultures.

Conflict styles (generalizations)

Note:

- a) These are only generalizations of the two types of cultures.
- b) There will be many exceptions.
- c) It is important to keep in mind that these two major cultures are made up of many minor sub cultures.

Asian

- Initial stages *expressed by becoming quiet* often less dialogue takes place sometimes they avoid each other to minimize opportunity for conflict
- If one party is older in age or has status/seniority in society or in the organization then approach to resolution will be different. Sometimes the lower person will feel incapable of making any approaches to resolve differences. In such cases resentment can build up among the peers at the lower level and create passive resistance to leadership etc.
- If one of the parties seeks to resolve then often advice is sought from a third party
- Mediation is often the preferred approach to confront the other party
- During the mediation process one and/or the other party might bring someone else with them to act as a 'buffer'. This person, at times, will speak for the friend, calm their friend's emotions, protect the friend from false accusations, or can be a witness to defend the truth.
- Confession needs to be verbalized, appropriately, however giving forgiveness is not usually verbalized (shown non-verbally).
- *Mechanisms to do face-saving* are very important to restore each other. These mechanisms will ensure *that due honor and respect are re-established* ('hormat')
- Usually complete *resolution and reconciliation* are affirmed and achieved by the efforts of the mediator.
- Actions and attitudes over the succeeding days will often be proof of complete restoration

Western

- Initial stages might include verbal confrontation with anger shown by raising their voices Some might withdraw from the confrontation and use silence and retreat Others might continue to escalate the confrontation
- When either decide that the pain of confrontation is greater than benefit of reconciliation then attempts will often be made to reconcile.
- Face to face is preferred, mediation is not preferred and seen as improper
- The process to restore needs to be agreed through discussion
- Issues need to be verbalized
- Apology and forgiveness need to be verbalized
- Age is not a consideration and does not affect the process much
- Both sides need to accept and verbalize blame
- For recurring conflicts, rules of acceptable ethical conduct related to conflicts of personal interest need to be clarified, affirmed and established
- For recurring conflicts it is important to discuss the way forward and make plans to ensure that conflicts do not recur. This is necessary to ensure safety and security in the relationship
- Normalization of social activities help to confirm complete restoration

Analysis

The other important aspect of cultural analysis is the need to help Asians know how to decide what values to adopt, what to substitute and what values to reject on Biblical grounds as they adapt to a foreign culture. This can only be effective if the Asian has an appreciation of what is good in his/her own culture and how it relates to Biblical principles.

2. Cross-cultural stress management

In the last 15 years there has been an increased emphasis on Unreached People Groups (UPG) and church planting movements. Therefore, increasingly, Asian churches are sending their missionaries directly to the field without going through a mission agency. This meant that many of the missionaries did not have a system of care in place for them on the field (which was traditionally provided by mission agencies who had been working in the field for many years).

This has resulted in a some what higher attrition rate due to burn-out , failed ministries, shortage of resources, as well as strategies which have limited sustainability.

This cries out for better cultural training which can be given in a short time for church missionaries going directly to the field, without the benefits of a mission agencies which is operating in that particular mission field area.

This component of stress management will also be essential for those who are preparing for tent-making types of activities or creative strategies which allow access into closed countries.

When church missionaries go into the field without the benefits of the help of experienced mission agencies which are on site, they will have to manage many of the following components on their own:

1. Visa/work permit and processing of legal papers
2. Rental, accommodation
3. Deal with corruption and bribery
4. Security issues
5. Administrative support and financial security
6. Language learning
7. Mentorship system
8. Crisis management

9. Health care network
10. Counseling member care
11. Fellowship with larger body of Christ
12. Develop relationship with national churches and relevant networks

This means that they will be facing increased stress levels, which can result in burn-out . If we take into account that the present generations in Asia are less resilient to hardship because of the increased standard of living experienced in most developing nations, then this increased stress can be quite overwhelming if they are not trained to manage it. This needs to be given careful thought to plan an effective curriculum. This curriculum should include a component on culture shock, which should help explain the stages of culture shock, such as:

Fascination → Rejection → Denial → Hostility → Flight → OR Adaptation → Incarnation??

It is important that they are taught to be realistic and develop stress management habits in their lives to handle the higher level of stress as they go through culture shock. It is also important to teach them to be vulnerable and admit their real needs to friends, leaders and prayer supporters and not go into denial to prove their spiritual commitment.

It is also important that they are helped in adjusting back to their home culture when they return. Re-entry shock cannot be underestimated, especially with the fast rate of technological changes occurring in the world. The Asian re-entry shock is significantly different because their home cultures are still developing and shifting rapidly in response to globalization and westernization. Asian re-entry issues are also significantly different because the Asian churches have a different perception of member care, authority, and expectations which affect the Asian missionary in a very different way as compared to most Western missionary experiences of re-entry shock.

3. Cultural Contextualisation

No cultural curriculum can be effective without teaching and training in cross-cultural contextualisation. However this needs to be based on real case studies and problem solving methods so that they struggle with issues and seek wisdom

from the teaching staff and the Lord during the training program.

One example would be the practice of the Lisu people in sacrificing chickens to show forgiveness of past sins. They will mark a line of the path with colored string and sacrifice the chicken over it. They will let the blood sprinkle onto the string, they then step over the string to leave their sins behind and be free from any demonic or social consequences of those sins. This could be something, which the Asian students can use as a problem solving exercise in contextualisation.

I know it might not work on the field because of other cultural factors, which might make such contextualisation offensive or deceptive or it might lead to serious misunderstanding of the gospel. However Asian students can be taught to investigate and test their contextualised teaching method and know if it can be attempted safely in that culture.

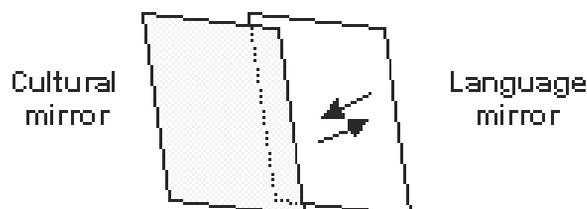
For example, I had tried to contextualise the concept of Karma in Buddhism. Once I witnessed to a Thai Buddhist explaining to him that Jesus died and took away the bad karma for all of us and so we can reach Nirvana through Christ without having to go through many cycles of suffering through reincarnation. However when I shared this with experienced missionaries they helped me see how the Buddhist worldview could misunderstand this contextualisation. However my attempt was still a valid effort towards contextualising the gospel for the Buddhist worldview.

One other component needs to be developed which will make a very great impact on the effectiveness of contextualised teaching of the Word of God. This involves the study of linguistic/semantic concepts in the language as a means of ACCURATELY understanding their worldview.

For example in our tribal work among the Daga people, we noted that they have many words for love, in fact they have over 6 phrases. Some of these phrases are synonymous with peace and from this we know that this culture appreciates peacemakers and anything which brings healing and love to relationships. Other cultural practices confirmed this.

They also see material possessions as part of the spirit world, one example of of a this in their language is their word for kingdom which is toemu. This concept in their language does not include only material possessions as part kingdom but it also the concept of dominion, which is influence of the ruler over the lives of the people in his kingdom. Therefore this concept toemu is actually closer to the Greek word used in the Bible as compared to English concepts such as kingdom (used in some English translations) and dominion (used in other English translations). So the Daga worldview has a similar concept to the Greek worldview. This could be because material possessions are seen as part of the spirit realm in both cultural worldviews. We confirmed this understanding of the Daga worldviews by examining other linguistic concepts in the Daga language, as well as certain cultural rituals, taboos and norms.

Therefore it is important to see that language and culture are both interrelated. One illustration I use to describe this relationship is to see both of them like two mirrors which face each other and therefore reveal infinite reflections of themselves in each other.



Conclusion

In space travel the pre-flight training and preparation is critical and its effectiveness could even determine life or death of the space traveller. It is important to know things like how to handle the stress of weightlessness and adjust to the different sense of distance, time and isolation. Even simple things like toilet needs and food intake have many implications. Only two days ago on 22 June 2004, the possibility of space travel has become more feasible for the common man as the first private space shuttle completed a successful flight into space and back.

In some sense Asian church are on a maiden flight with Asian passengers and Asian astronauts manning it. They are all relatively new to world

(continued on page 22)

It is said that in the secular world, fifteen percent of the reason a person gets a job, keeps a job or gets ahead in his job is determined by his technical skills and knowledge. The rest has to do with people skills or people knowledge. A similar observation can be made in Christian work. How often the main causes for break-ups in congregations and sudden or premature departures from the mission field include misunderstandings among co-labourers and poor interpersonal relationships.

The Creator-God made each individual unique (Psalm 139:13,14). People have different ways of thinking, feeling, acting and responding. Hence an expanded knowledge and practice of enhanced people skills allow for the Christian worker or leader to relate more harmoniously. Improvements in understanding oneself and the ability to accommodate others therefore become important features in missionary and leadership training curricula.

At ACTI, the trainees in each programme are exposed to at least one personality test instrument. Usually a workbook accompanies the instrument for further comprehension and application, offering a greater appreciation of the truth found in 1 Corinthians 12:18-21. Everyone has his contribution to make according to his own strengths. Each with his distinct personality has a part to play and has a role and the responsibility to fit into the whole scheme of things in the life of the church or organization. Each person also has weaknesses which means that others need to be accepting and try to adapt.

Situations where different ones interact, relate and work together, are platforms for potential or existing friendships to develop and fellowships to deepen. By God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:9) strengths are affirmed and weaknesses accommodated. With understanding, versatility steps taken and above all love which covers a multitude of sins, peace and harmony reign in place of anger, strife, suspicion and chaos.

The strengths of our co-workers should be highlighted or recognized. The outgoing is to be given opportunities to dream and promote exciting ideas whenever possible. The slow and steady is to be allowed to go at his own pace as he helps around. The conscientious and competent can be trusted to be left on his own to discharge his responsibility without people checking on him most of the time. The dynamic and eager individual should be given challenging projects for him to thrive satisfactorily.

On the other hand, no one is not without his flaws. The inspiring personality does need applause or verbal approval from time to time. The supportive, phlegmatic one may be stable but requires assurance that people around him are pleased with him or else he may be stressed out if he senses folks are at odds with each other or with him. The compliant's perfectionist attitude may drive some others up the wall. The quickness and impatience of the dominant personality may be off putting.

No two persons are alike. Textbook answers may not be applied successfully all the time when relating to people in the context of evangelizing, edifying or equipping. Nevertheless with growing understanding of personality types through observation and taking versatility steps, Christ's disciples can celebrate their differences. God's workers can gain valuable insights into and appreciation for all other parts of the body that are not just like them.

As serious-minded and sincere fellow-workers, we continue to improve our people skills. However, we must acknowledge that it is God who is at work in us, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

Dr. Florence Tan teaches at Singapore Bible College and is an ACTI board member. She served with Navigators for 30 years.

Testimonies Of 26th Batch Alumni

Kim Mi Sook

I am mi Sook from Korea. Even with three years of mission experience in Thailand, I could not build up a detailed strategy for my future ministry. I really concentrated my mission focus to serve only in the Khokcareon Church in North-East Thailand and followed my mission agency's strategies. So, before I finished my short-term mission, I read books on missions and went back to Korea to study Theology.



As I tried my best to prepare to go to Thailand as a long-term missionary, I thought of either studying theology or serving my home church as a mission director. But, finally, I realized that to be effective in my future ministry, I needed to recover my spiritual and physical strength.

By God's grace, I came to ACTI through the suggestion of my ministry supervisor, Rev. Kim Chong Pae. I received many ideas and understanding on missions from the lecturers, and recovered spiritual and physical strength.

In addition to the lectures, I realized that missions is not only my work, but is God's work, so I need to follow God's will as an obedient servant. I learned English, Cross-cultural communication, Cross-cultural church planting, Contextualization, Stewardship in Missions, Asian Religions and Missiology, etc. In reflection of my life at ACTI, I not only learned the theoretical study of missions, but also the practical study, through the good model of the lecturers and senior missionaries.

I want to extend my heart-felt thanks and gratitude to Rev. Kim and Mrs. Mayuree, who are like my parents. They always guided and taught me by their encouraging and inspiring behavior. From Rev. Kim I learned how to build up mission strategies and from Mrs. Mayuree I learned how to be supportive of missionaries.

Further, I would like to thank Rev. Henry and Mrs. Janet Armstrong for their inspiring and friendly

teaching. From Rev. Henry I learned how to comfort people and how to remember that I am a channel of blessing and from Mrs. Janet I learned how to use my gifts from God.

I want to thank all my lecturers and I want to apply what I have learned at ACTI in my future ministry. Lastly, I need to thank my friends, Simon, Jang Hyun, Shiva, Gun Hee, Eun Young, Jenny, and Mee Ping. I realize that we have so many different cultures, characters, and background among us, so we need to try to overcome that, but we are happy even though our mission fields are different, we can serve God together as co-workers with prayer and co-operation. By the grace of God I was guided to come to ACTI. I want to glorify the name of the Lord in my future ministry. Praise the Lord!

Jenny Lee Wan Juan

In my mind I had already painted my own picture for my future ministry with a tribal group in Sarawak, and coming to ACTI was not in my painting draft. I thought that my picture could be completed once I started working in my mission field, but I was wrong, because without proper training you can't draw a picture that is alive in everyone's eye, even in God's eye.



I am grateful that God provided His own best plan for me through the Evangelism Board of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference, who sent me to ACTI for cross-cultural training. While waiting to come here, I still had negative thoughts about what I could learn from ACTI that would benefit my future ministry. God has given me much in these four months of training.

First of all, God gave me a big family as I come from a small one. I worried about how to get along with others, especially understanding them. Living together under one roof with different characters, behaviors and lifestyles, coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds — was a double

benefit to all of us in crossing cultures with each other. I am very proud of this big family because we worked out differences, were sensitive to other's needs, and learned not to take things for granted. A family needs more than understanding — it needs love and care that comes from God, and willingness to share with each other. I am also glad that my team partner is here with me and that we have started to live as one family already.

Secondly, the whole ACTI course has given me a lot of insight into my future ministry. When I answered God's calling, I thought that I would teach whatever I can, but now the most important thing is that I should also teach what they need and try to help them to also grow spiritually. The training also led me into thinking how important discipleship is for continuing God's work, and the missionary role is not just to bring the gospel to them but to have them grow up spiritually and lead others to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Thirdly, the life in ACTI, including swimming, family night, outdoor activities and other fellowships were all fun times where we could enjoy ourselves in the love of Christ. We saw each other's weaknesses and this became a blessing to me because I saw how God works through us from our weakness to bring each other closer to God and become His witness and glorify His name.

Lastly, this four-month training will be one of the great pictures that God marks for me. It will be a living picture in my mind and I am sure that God knows what is best for all of us from now until the day He returns.

Ling Mee Ping

I was born and brought up in a Chinese Christian family in Miri, Sarawak, East Malaysia. My Christian life was normal, but as I grew in stature I became just a Sunday Christian. I struggled much with my faith in God and was going through different problems when Pastor Kiew came to our church. He started counseling me and through his tireless efforts I was



able to make my commitment right with the Lord. Then I had a chance to join a short-term mission trip to the Penan people of East Sarawak. Since that time, I started to realize that I needed to serve the Lord. Finally, I decided to go to the Penan Village in the deep jungle as a missionary teacher. So before going to the mission field, my church denomination, Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference, gave me a chance to join ACTI as a requirement to be a fully supported missionary. I am grateful to all of them for their prayers and support.

I came to ACTI to learn so many things on different subjects, but as soon as I reached here, I was stricken by culture shock, language problems, stress, homesickness, and so many other stresses, until I become physically sick at least three times in a week. The Dean and staff were so worried about me, always asking, Are you OK today? Praise the Lord, by the help of many people in ACTI, the church, cell group and Uncle Soh's family, I was able to get rid of all kinds of stress and today I am OK. I have learned so many things here, such as speaking English, handling stress, conflict resolution, communication skills, missions, and so many other things which will be greatly useful for my ministry and life.

It was nice to live in ACTI with friends from different countries in a cross-cultural environment, sharing the same table and flat. I had never had such an experience in my life before, but it was nice, and everyone was helpful and supportive. I could learn so many things through their life and testimony that they were willing to share with me. We had so many chances to get involved in different things such as swimming, which I could not do before, and now I learned with the help of friends and the Dean. I also enjoyed the food here and I have come to appreciate Auntie Alice.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heart-felt thanks and gratitude to the ACTI Board of Directors, the Dean, the Staff, lecturers, and supporting churches and Bethesda Pasir Ris Mission Church for making it possible for me to take part in the ACTI training program. May God bless you richly.

S'Simon

First, I thank God for giving me this great opportunity to study about cross-cultural and mission work at ACTI. I thank also the Dean of ACTI and staff, and all of my friends at ACTI.



By the grace of God, this is my first trip abroad, and also my first experience to have fellowship with foreign friends. God is so good. It is my new feeling that all of the people whom God created are brothers and sisters and we all are included in God's family. When I came to ACTI, my friends helped and guided me in everything as one of their family. As for me, I have to learn to cope with different cultures as each of us come from different countries. But because all the trainees are very friendly and willing to help me, I have not had much problem adjusting to life in ACTI.

I am also happy for our Dean and staff. They are good examples for me about life in my ministry field. Their humility, kindness, and spirituality strengthened me to become a good follower of Jesus Christ. Further more, Missionaries sharing their experiences also gave me spiritual strength and made me happy to be in my ministry. Their practical experience gave me lessons to obey God's command and to make my soul strong.

Last, my life in ACTI has given me a new life to overcome the new problems and the attacks of Satan in the mission field. I also received new vision and new strategies to win souls in my country and tribes. It is God's plan for my nation to guide me to be trained at ACTI. God is so good.

(Improving people skills...continued from page 18)

missions, and have been depending on the colonial model for many years, it is now time to seek out missionary training and strategies which will suite the Asian mindset to impact world missions in a new way. However this cannot be done in haste, rather time needs to be given to develop an cross-cultural curriculum which addresses the training needs of Asian missionaries.

This will ensure that that they have a safe journey and are fruitful during their stay on the mission field, just like a space shuttle flight needs to ensure effective pre-flight training and preparation for a comfortable and successful sojourn in space before re-entry and readjustment back to life on earth.

Daniel Jesudason is an Indian Singaporean. He and his wife, Wei Lei, with their son, Joshua, have served in Papua New Guinea since 1985, in Computer Programming, Literacy Consultancy, Curriculum Development, National Training and Bible Translation work. He is currently the Strategic Partnership Facilitator for the Asia Pacific Region for Wycliffe Bible Translators International.

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26th Batch Graduation / 20th Celebrations



The 26th Batch ACTI graduates, prepared to be sent forth



Dr. Titus Loong-the graduation speaker with wife, Helen, and daughter, Cindy



Farewell meal at ACTI with staff and trainees



Preparing for the celebrations-making banners



ACTI consultation meetings: looking into the past the present, and the future of ACTI



Participants listening to the consultation speaker