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How To Use This Tool

Think of this as a toolbox.

Over the course of several years, about 40 InterVarsity staff assembled and filled this toolbox. Most were Asian Americans, a handful were non-Asian American ministry partners invested in our ministry to Asian American students. Some were old...older, like Donna Dong and Paul Tokunaga, some were newer staff like Irene Eng and Jon Tran.

In 1994, the Asian American Coordinating Team of Jeanette Yep, Susan Cho Van Riesen, Brad Wong, Collin Tomikawa, Paul Tokunaga and Sam Barkat, met to ask the question:

“What *one thing* could we focus on—highlight and provide resources for—that would make our ministry to Asian American students even stronger?”

We unanimously felt that the one thing was *leadership development*. We wanted to enable and equip our students to become better leaders on campus and later, in the church. Each time we met, we worked to figure out how to best do that. We developed a Strategic Focus Statement.

When the Asian American staff family met in March 1996, we worked in task forces to add flesh to the skeletal Strategic Focus Statement.

During Summer 1998, Paul Tokunaga and Collin Tomikawa put the finishing touches of editing, writing and formatting. Collin worked with InterVarsity’s webmaster, Deb Perkins, to make it available on InterVarsity’s web page.

Think of this as an open toolbox.

If we’ve left out critical things, we’re open to adding more “tools.” The immediate changes will show up on the web page. This is not the last nor exhaustive word on any of the topics tackled. Rather, it is our collective effort to provide some help, as there is little literature

out there in these areas for young Asian American Christians wanting to develop as leaders. While we wrote this for our fellow InterVarsity staff, others are welcome to adapt and use it.

We do not intend this to be a “read from cover to cover” handbook. Rather, as you encounter different areas you want a little help on, you can flip directly to that section. We wrote this so each section will “stand alone.” Because each chapter is written by a different team of staff, you’ll notice different styles of writing. And because a different group wrote each section, there will be some overlap.

We produced it in a small enough format to fit into your backpack as you go on campus. Each chapter ends with a “Resources” section for further exploration. At the end of the handbook are Asian American resources that Paul recommends.

At the end of the Appendix are questions for discussion groups or personal reflection for each chapter.

We’ve used a few symbols to set some ideas apart:

☑ *something to do*

💣 *a volatile issue, a hot potato, a bomb*

? *a question to think deeply about*

Additionally, when discussing Asian American qualities and tendencies, we walk the fine line of stereotyping Asian Americans. We’re taking this risk so that we might be as helpful as possible to Asian American students and staff. Our apologies where we have missed the mark and offended anyone.

Stylistically, we chose to speak as “Asian Americans working with Asian American students.” We welcome our non-Asian American colleagues to use this as a way to “walk in our shoes with us.”

Feel free to be creative in how you use this handbook. Talk about sections as a staff team. Photocopy a section for an Asian American chapter leader you are discipling.

Thanks to all who worked on this. Special thanks to David Scott, long-time InterVarsity board member and supporter of multi-ethnic ministries, for paying for the printing and mailing of this handbook.

Our collective hope is that it will be a useful tool in developing Asian American students for the glory of Christ.

Asian American Coordinating Team

1994-1998 Version:

Sam Barkat	Susan Cho Van Riesen
Paul Tokunaga	Brad Wong
Collin Tomikawa	Jeanette Yep

Asian American Ministry's Strategic Focus Statement

Asian American Ministry affirms its commitment to the purposes of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

To best fulfill the purposes of InterVarsity, we are making a strategic commitment from 1996 to 2001 ***to better develop a generation of Asian American leaders.***

The fruits and benefits of focusing on leadership development are:

- * a broader base of mature disciples who can equip fellow students for chapter leadership and disciple other students.
- * a broader base of mature disciples who can effectively engage new parts of the campus with the Gospel.
- * preparing our students and staff for more effective service in the local church.

Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who:

1. *...embrace the excitement of being totally committed to Jesus Christ.*

The joy of knowing Jesus is the best foundation and motivation for an enduring life of faith and risk-taking.

2. *...receive grace, forgiveness and healing in the discovery of their unique self-identity.*

Many Asian American students struggle to love themselves as God loves them and to know what it means to be American and Asian.

3. *...receive grace, forgiveness and healing in their relationships with their families.*

Many Asian American students agonize over how to give their lives fully to Christ will honoring their parents at the same time.

4. *...gain confidence in their giftedness and their ability to lead others, both Asian Americans and non-Asian Americans.*

Being of a minority culture, it is often difficult to believe in one's gifting for ministry and to believe that God can use them to lead others. The ability to lead others to Christ is especially critical to develop.

5. *...pursue gender wholeness, reconciliation and equity.*

We must help Asian American women in developing their leadership gifts that will be effective within InterVarsity and Asian American churches.

There is also a deep hunger and need among young Asian American men for godly male mentors.

There is often misunderstanding and confusion in Asian American communities on gender issues. There is significant brokenness between Asian American men and women, sexism towards Asian American women and unclear role expectations for both men and women.

6. *...are prophetic in their communities, who stand up to and speak out against the idols of fellow Asian Americans: careerism, 'chapterism,'* materialism, excessive pride in their own people, family and achievements. Leaders must instead have lives that model social concern and integrity.*

Being prophetic may mean initiating conflict, not an enjoyable task for many Asian Americans. Championing these biblical values must be done in Christian community.

*unique InterVarsity idol of allowing the fellowship to become your entire life.

7. *...are equipped to play a unique role as agents of ethnic and racial reconciliation.*

Today, there are deep rifts between Asian Americans and other ethnic communities that need to be bridged. God has also given Asian Americans special qualities that can serve in bridge-building in combating today's race wars: reflective minds, peacemaking spirits, conciliatory hearts and bi-cultural experiences. Asian American leaders must also lead in repentance and social justice.

8. *...love and serve the church and become change agents and leaders within the church following graduation.*

Many Asian American students, women especially, are frustrated with the Asian American church and their role within it.

Another key challenge that must be overcome is the inter-generational gap within many Asian American churches.

“Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who...embrace the excitement of being totally committed to Jesus Christ.”

The joy of knowing Jesus is the best foundation and motivation for an enduring life of faith and risk-taking.

What keeps Asian Americans from being fully committed to Jesus and experiencing the joy of total devotion to him?

We recognize three major factors: our parents, Asian American culture and idolatry.

Following Jesus, Honoring Our Parents

Parental expectations and hopes

What they expect from us regarding our education, career, monetary success, status and marriage is ever-present. Our succeeding is often a condition of our parents' approval and love. At the very least, it feels that way.

The impact of failure goes beyond the individual; it shames the whole family. This causes at least two problems.

First, it forces us to choose between our parents/family and God. While all parents carry hopes and dreams for their children's lives, this is usually a more painful decision for Asian Americans. When an Asian American child chooses a path decidedly different from her parents' wishes, it can bring her immense shame.

Secondly, it leaves us with a fear of failure that can hinder us in risk-taking and trusting God. When an Asian American fails, he not only lets himself down, but senses he has let his community down.

Parental authority

Many of us feel like we must obey our parents *without question* in order to please them or even to be acceptable to them. Sometimes, we project this same

dynamic into our relationship with God, viewing him as a stern taskmaster whose main concern is to make sure that we are fulfilling our duty and obligation to him.

As a result, the emphasis of our relationship with God is *servicing* him, almost as a slave or hired hand. There is little of a love relationship with a Father who loves us unconditionally or who works for our best.

Non-verbal communication

Compounding the two problems of parental expectations and hopes and their authority in our lives, is the lack of verbal affirmation in many Asian American families.

The language of love spoken by many first and second-generation parents is providing the material needs of their children and to sending them to a prestigious university.

As we watch our non-Asian friends embrace, confide in and joke with their parents, our relationship with our parents often comes up lacking. *Our parents do love us...it just feels so different.* As Asian American children, we may find ourselves without a category for a love relationship, especially with an authority figure.

One older staffworker reflected, *“Growing up, Dad wasn’t a hugger. Years later, I remembered his father, how unemotional and stoic he seemed. His only display of emotion seemed to be an occasional outburst of scary anger.”*

“Then it hit me: Dad is his father’s son. That was his model. Today, I am a father to a teenager. My mind says, ‘Hug him and tell him you love him,’ but it’s a struggle to spit it out, as much as I do love him. I am my father’s son. He was my model. Realizing this

has helped me to be more accepting of Dad’s parenting.”

Honoring vs. obeying our parents

Many of us who have committed our lives to Christ find ourselves in a double bind. In the Scriptures, we are commanded to honor, even to obey our parents. But, at times, what they want seems to conflict with other commands of Scripture.

How do we reconcile the command to put Jesus first and “hate” our mother and father together with the admonitions to honor our parents and look after their welfare? Especially difficult is the fact that many Asian parents invest in their children as their *retirement plan*. If the children take a different career path, it’s more than an embarrassment to the family—it may put their means of future support in jeopardy.

Because each person’s family situation is different, we cannot give a standard across-the-board answer. Here are a few guidelines we suggest:

- ✓ Study various Scriptures that relate to family life. Don’t cast the whole weight of your decisions on one or two verses. See our Resource section at the end of this chapter for suggested passages to study. Try to study them in a group or with another believer instead of just on your own. Lean on the body of Christ to help you understand the Scriptures clearly and in applying it to your situation.
- ✓ Along similar lines, have one or two valued mentors who will help pray and think through your specific situation. Be sure they have some understanding of Asian parent/child relationships.
- ✓ Be careful not to “throw the baby out with the bathwater.” Listen and look hard for your parents’ care for you. If they speak a different language of love

than your “Western” side is used to hearing, work hard on your “translating skills.”. Try walking in their shoes, appreciating their past and their hard work on your behalf, *even if their dreams for you don’t seem to square with Scriptural values.*

☑ Choose your disagreements wisely. Some are worth “going to the mat” for more than others. If you fight over every difference, your voice on the real important issues won’t get much of a hearing. Look for “win-win” solutions. It may mean you don’t get everything you want, but it shows your attempt to honor them as you try to follow God.

☑ All that said, there may be one or two major issues you sense would be disobeying the Lord if you followed your parents’ wishes. Pray hard, check it with your mentors, pray some more, approach your parents with the love of Jesus in your heart, choose your words carefully so they don’t come back to haunt you 10 or 40 years later, keep praying.

☑ Check out Chapter 3 for more help on relating to parents.

understanding of the role shame plays with Asian Americans), projecting an image of success and

Never forget: God gave you your parents, not for your harm but for your good.

3 Potential ‘Joy-Busters’ of Asian American Culture

There are aspects of Asian American culture that can drain the joy out of being a Christian. Here are three:

Ichiban [1] To avoid *the shame of failure* (see the article in the Appendix on “*Shame & Guilt*” for an

happiness leads many Asian American Christians to hide their struggles and sins. In time, they find themselves going through the motions without experiencing the joy and power of God.

Ni-ban [2] Likewise, a high value on *fulfilling one's duty and obligation* can lead Asian American Christians to plow forward in obedience to God, even as they nurse resentments and bitterness. This is not a prescription for a long-term joy-filled relationship with him.

San-ban [3] A third 'joy-buster' is the internalized value of *deference and submission to authority* which has left some young Asian Americans uncertain of what their own desires and hopes are. All they know is what is expected of them. Under these circumstances, joy is not only lacking, but may not even be an expectation they have for themselves.

Some Asian Americans whose self-identity is deeply rooted in their 'Asianness' find the practice of Christianity in this country culturally foreign. The differences in language and style may put them off or leave them wondering if they have to give up their cultural identity if they joined a non-Asian American church. This fear is exacerbated by the dearth of committed Asian American Christian role models.

Idolatry: when it's not 'all about God'

An idol is a person, object or ideology to which we choose to give our lives.

Education, career, money, status, and the like are not just expectations that our parents put on us. Their expectations mixed in with plain old American materialism ('it's all about stuff') and self-centeredness ('it's all about me'), have taken root in us.

Let's own our sin: many of us have bought into the program wholeheartedly, and are pursuing the security, freedom, power, and pleasure that these things promise. And why not? A good number of us have been successful at these things, and have

received a lot of strokes from parents and our ethnic communities as a result.

The downside is that an Asian American's self-image is often rooted in these things, leading to an arrogance on the one hand and insecurity on other. You feel you are just one failure away from being unacceptable or unlovable.

Possible Solutions and Responses

We suggest these:

☑ *Increase our personal awareness of how both Asian American and family values might be impacting us.* Sometimes, it's hard to see these on our own because it's been our way of life for so long. It might help to discuss these values with an Asian American friend.

☑ *Do solid biblical teaching on several topics:*

- Our motivation for what we do and choices we make
- Family
- The Lordship of Jesus
- Relationship with God
- Forgiveness of sins and dealing with shame

Tom Lin's *Losing Face & Finding Grace* (IVP) Bible study guide written for Asian Americans is an excellent resource for this.

God's Word is the foundation and authoritative measure of all of life, including our cultural identity and values. While we desire to honor and respect Asian American culture, it's important to remember that God will call into question some of the customs and values that we hold dear. Thus, biblical teaching will provide affirmation and encouragement in some areas, challenge and rebuke in others.

☑ *Be a part of a biblical community* Being in community with other like-minded believers will offer us:

- a safe place to share secrets and struggles,

- verbal affirmation and blessing, especially from older believers or those in authority;
- an environment for risk-taking where failure is acceptable..

✓ *Have Asian American role models* We are not suggesting hero-worship, but it helps a lot to have people *who look like us* who have gone where we'd like to go. They are living reminders of God's faithfulness and ability. They can model joy, risk-taking and leadership for us. Be looking for such role models who can provide direct mentoring or discipling for you.

Because such role models aren't always in abundance where we live, they might be in other regions. Encourage your Asian American students to look for them in their home church and perhaps use e-mail to keep in touch. As staff, avail yourself of cross-regional and national events. Those role models are out there!

Resources:

Books:

☞ *Desiring God*, John Piper. This book tackles the issue of *motivation* in a clear, thorough way. Piper's key assertion is we were created to glorify God by enjoying him. His corollary is if we don't have joy in our relationship with God, we rob him of glory. Challenging and thought-provoking. For Asian Americans, it speaks to our tendency to be motivated by service rather than by enjoying God.

☞ *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby and Claude King. Subtitled 'How to live the full adventure of knowing and doing the will of God.' Blackaby and King encourage Christians to press on to know God in a richer, more personal way by knowing, loving, hearing, joining, believing, obeying, and experiencing him. Again, a book that points Asian

Americans in a different direction regarding what truly motivates us in our life with God.

□

□\ \ *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, Jeanette Yep, et al. Don't let the title fool you: this is a discipleship book. Check out Ch. 9: Spiritual Growth.

□\ \ *Hinds' Feet on High Places*, Hannah Hurnard. A spiritual allegory that chronicles the journey of a would-be Christian from fear into a loving, victorious relationship with the King.

□\ \ *Magnificent Obsession*, John White. In this major revision of *The Cost of Commitment*, White tackles the issue of total commitment to God and the joy that can be found in it. (For an excellent primer on the Christian life, check out White's *The Fight*.)

□\ \ *The Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozer. A rich treatise on how God can be intimately known. Amazingly, written by a pastor of a bustling Chicago church. Tozer puts his finger on what intimacy with God looks like. Would be a great book for Asian Americans to study and ask, "Can we know God like Tozer did?"

□\ \ *Return of the Prodigal Son*, Henri Nouwen. This book, based on the Rembrandt painting (not as directly on the parable) tackles motivational issues in one's relationship with God in Nouwen's reflective style.

Movies:

**Brother Sun, Sister Moon* Tells the story of the life of St. Francis of Assisi in a stylized way. It's a powerful portrait of one man's conversion and how it affects his family and the broader community. Excellent discipleship film.

**Dead Men Walking* About a convict on death row, befriended by a nun who demonstrates Christ-like love to him. It is a great picture of God's mercy and grace affecting someone, which brings freedom and forgiveness.

**Joy Luck Club* The film version of Amy Tan's bestseller is entertaining and insightful. The story line follows the lives of four Chinese American women and their mothers, illustrating many Asian American family dynamics and personal struggles. Excellent as a primer on Chinese American culture or as the starting place for a discussion on family and identity issues. Warning: This is a 'crying' film. It can bring up a lot of painful issues and memories for Asian Americans.

**Searching for Bobby Fischer* Not a film about the former child chess whiz kid. It is about a chess prodigy which raises issues of parental expectations and approval. Non-chess playing Asian Americans will still "get it."

Audio Tape:

☪ *Parenting: How God Does It*, Karen and David Mains. 12-part series on seeing God through new eyes, especially as a father who may be quite different from our earthly fathers. Comes with helpful study guide. Put out by Harold Shaw Publishers, Box 567, Wheaton, IL 60189. Asian American Ministry has the tapes that can be borrowed (but not the study guide).

By Jean Chen, Irene Eng, Jerry Hariguchi,, Jenny Kim, Barry Wong, (coordinator).

Notes:

Notes:



2“Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who...receive grace, forgiveness and healing in the discovery of their unique self-identity.”

Many Asian Americans struggle to love themselves as God loves them and struggle to know what it means to be American and Asian.

Background

As students and staff discover how God made us—with both the inherent strengths and weaknesses of being both Asian and American—our development as leaders will be strengthened. In turn, we will be able to follow Jesus more wholeheartedly. We will know more of what we can offer as Asian Americans.

As staff, if we work with other Asian Americans, we will be able to better identify with their unique issues. With non-Asian Americans, we may have contributions that others aren't able to make. Being bi-cultural is a unique gift we bring to the body of Christ.

Many Asian Americans struggle to love themselves as God loves them. The result is low self-esteem or self-worth. In one of their studies, Iwa, a ministry focused on helping Asian Americans be more effective in evangelism, discovered that of all ethnic groups in the country, Asian Americans have the lowest self-esteem.

Although there are some less common issues associated with self-identity (e.g. pride), our primary concern is with self-esteem and self-worth.

Causes for feeling inferior

We have identified five possible causes of low self-esteem or self-worth:

● *Conflict between Asian and Western values*

What careers tend to get the most visibility and recognition in the U.S.? In the late '90s, it's the

sports megastars (Michael Jordan, Mark McGwire, Venus Williams, Evander Holyfield, Mia Hamm), performers in the entertainment industry (Harrison Ford, Julia Roberts, Master P, Oprah Winfrey), political leaders (vice-presidents, House and Senate leaders, governors and mayors), and daring business entrepreneurs (Bill Gates, Ted Turner).

Where are the Asian Americans in these fields? One has to look pretty hard.

We're there but with the exception of a small handful--Tiger Woods, Michelle Kwan, Michael Chang, Yahoo! CEO Jerry Yang, James Iha of Smashing Pumpkins, Assistant Attorney General Bill Lann Lee, Today Show's Ann Curry, Washington Governor Gary Locke--we're usually not at the top, attracting attention.

Why are we not there? Bamboo ceilings? Career paths not blessed by Asian American parents? Genetic and cultural makeup?

Yes. Yes. Yes. Or at least, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps.

Causes may be discussed and disagreed over, but

In the fields that are highly esteemed in America, Asian Americans are not the visible leaders and achievers, the movers and shakers.

the reality is this:

Perhaps it began with our parents and their parents, who taught us, "*The nail that stands up must be pounded down,*" meaning, conformity is better than individual notoriety. For the Japanese Americans, the internment camps of World War II brought such immense shame and embarrassment (over nothing done wrong), two generations kept their heads down and noses clean, trying hard to not be noticed.

Then, what *are* our values?
How are we perceived by the
dominant culture?

In a nutshell, it *sometimes*
feels like this:

We are strong in technical,
'left brain' areas like computer
programming and engineering.
We don't draw attention to
ourselves and are hesitant to be
the center of attention or the life
of the party (unless it's an Asian
American party! That's
different).

We are dependable, hard-
working and loyal. We
sometimes lack the verbal
acuity of our Western
counterparts, so we avoid
arenas where such talent is
requisite. We come across as
introverted when what we are is
more reflective. We have an
exceptionally strong tie to our
families. We are very
materialistic. Some of us are
crack musicians.

Some of our values above are
mainstream and esteemed,
several are not. All to say,
having values that separate us
from the values of the dominant
culture, creates an inner
tension. We want to fit in and
internally feel that *I'm as good*
as the next guy, but it's hard to
when values collide.

John Connor in *Tradition and Change in Three Generations of Japanese Americans* helpfully shows some differences in Asian and Western cultures:

Asian Value: Situation Centered	Western Value: Individual Centered
Collectivity	Individualism
Group identity-----→	Autonomy
Achievement of goals-----→	Achievement of individual goals
Obligation to group-----→	Trained to be individuals
Duty & Obligation	Rights & Privileges
Relational responsibility--→	Responsible to self
Duty to others-----→	Personal rights
Motivation based on-----→	Motivation based on feelings
Hierarchy	Equality
Submissive to authority---→	Dislike for rules and control
Emphasis on positions-----→	Play down superiority/inferiority
Accepts rules and-----→	Questions authority propriety
Deference	Self-Assertion
Passivity & yieldedness---→	Aggressive & expressive
Adherence to social-----→	Assertive politeness
Emphasis on self-----→	Open and accessible to others

☛☛ *Not meeting society's standards.*

While we are trying hard to both be ourselves and fit into American society, we sometimes find we are being put into a box labeled *the model minority*. We've all heard it and felt it. "Those Asian Amer-

icans, they:

- do so well in school, especially in the hard sciences and math
- have overcome huge obstacles and still make it into the best schools
- are model citizens, they never get into trouble with the law or do drugs or get pregnant or...
- never make a scene, they just work hard, give their children the best, and keep their mouths shut
- yeah! Why can't *those other minorities* just work hard and pull themselves up by their bootstraps like those Asians?
- why, I'd almost let my daughter marry one!

Besides not being true (not to mention degrading to other ethnic minorities), the myth of the model minority brings with it enormous pressure to live up to our reputation.

When Asian Americans fall short of these lofty standards, we often feel we are worth less or even worthless. The watching Western world wonders, "What is wrong with *this one*? Why can't he excel like the rest of *his people*?"

☹☹☹ *Discrimination by society.*

The signs are everywhere...and increasing. Just over 50 years ago, 110,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast were yanked from their homes and put into prison camps for several years. Hate crimes against Asian Americans have become commonplace throughout the country and are on the rise.

College admissions quotas have been set in some universities, limiting Asian American enrollment. California's Asian Americans, adversely affected by Proposition 209, feel this acutely.

Because of our 'model minority' label, charges of discrimination by Asian Americans tend to be downplayed or even disbelieved. However, Asian American periodicals like *Pacific Citizen*, *A Magazine*

and *Asian Week* regularly document acts of anti-Asian American discrimination and racism.

☛☛☛☛☛ *Lack of Asian American Role Models*

As mentioned above, the conflict of Western and Asian values creates a vacuum for good Asian American role models. Since our values don't put us on the cover of *People* or get us coverage on Entertainment Tonight, we aren't exactly sure what Asian American role models should look like.

The media is inaccurate at best in its portrayal of Asian Americans. We have progressed from having white guys portraying us (*Kung Fu*, *Charlie Chan* movies) but we still seem to primarily be martial artists, computer geeks or Chinatown warlords. Our women are exotic and rarely get to display more than their legs. Rarely is an Asian American depicted; most characters are immigrants or visitors from Asia.

It's no wonder we get stereotyped so easily. It's easier to figure out what we *don't want* than what we *do want*.

While the church doesn't put us in boxes, it also doesn't provide many conceptual models of Asian American Christian leaders. On Christian radio, we hear Chuck Swindoll, Kay Arthur and Chuck Colson. On TV, we see Billy Graham.

Pop quiz: name five Asia Americans who are recognized within American evangelicalism as leaders.

As Asian American Christians, it is easy to interpret that in order to be a great leader, one must adopt Caucasian styles of leadership.

☛☛☛☛☛ *Not meeting parental standards.*

Our parents often set standards we can never meet as it seems they want more and more from us. Are we ever going to be good enough for them? It is very easy for an Asian American's self-esteem to be wrapped up in their parents' approval instead of Christ's.

Asian parents often show love differently than their Western counterparts. It is easy and natural for Asian Americans to look for Western expressions of love (by touch, by words, being transparent and vulnerable, etc.). It's all around them as they visit in their friends' homes or see it on TV.

When they don't receive it, they may feel loved less by parents, and consequently, loved less by God. (See ch. 1, *Following Jesus, Honoring Your Parents* section.)

All these raise the question for Asian Americans, "Am I wanted? Do I belong? Would this country be better without me?"

Some possible answers

✓ *As we mentioned in ch. 1, we need to know what Scripture says about our self-worth. God loves Asian Americans simply because we are his and not because we've done something extremely well and earned his favor.*

We probably need a steady diet of Bible studies that spotlight God's grace and his unconditional love for us (see Resources section at the end of this chapter for suggested passages).

✓ *We need to put ourselves in places where we can experience and better understand our ethnic identity. By seeing the gifts and wonderful things of our ethnicity and by affirming it, we can counter the ethnic shame that we may have. Intentionally putting ourselves in those places may be awkward but is well worth the risk.*

✓ *We can find Asian American Christian role models who are in touch with their ethnicity and are strong leaders in the church and society. It may take some searching, but they are out there.*

Within InterVarsity, there is a growing number of 'older' Asian American staff who fit the description

well of 'role models.' Asian American staff gatherings are great places to hook up with some of them.

✓ The following staff have served with InterVarsity more than 10 years (as of Fall '98):

Brenda Wong, Donna Dong, Barry Wong, Jeanette Yep, Lisa Sung, Harry Lew, Hollis Kim, Brad Wong and Paul Tokunaga.

These have served on staff more than five years:

Hon Eng, Allen Wakabayashi, Jerry Haraguchi, Henry Lee, Greg Jao, Marcia Wang, Kathy Tuan-MacLean, Susan Cho Van Riesen, Collin Tomikawa, Bora Reed, and Sandy Schaupp.

Avail yourselves of these "treasures in earthen vessels"!

✓ *As staff, we can entrust Asian American students with responsibilities, instilling confidence and trust that they are worthy.* It may take special sensitivity to ferret out the quiet ones, who nonetheless have exceptional leadership qualities.

✓ *Give feedback and affirm verbally and frequently.* Because they may not have received much from their parents, Asian Americans need to hear--often--that they have contributions to make. Affirmation that, to the giver, may feel like 'no big deal' or 'of course they know they do this well' may be huge to the Asian American receiver.

✓ *With some students coming from broken homes, invest a bit more like a surrogate parent, demonstrating that they are worth loving.* Some Asian Americans do come from broken homes; it may take well of 'role models.' Asian American staff gatherings are great places to hook up with some of them.

✓ *Create an ethnic student 'Listening Day,' where people of various cultures can be more affirmed and*

given voice. Where this has taken place in various chapters, students—mainly of the majority culture—

have been surprised to learn of deep-seated feelings and attitudes of their ethnic minority friends.

Resources:

Books and Periodicals:

☞ *Lion and the Lamb*, Brennan Manning.

☞ *Return of the Prodigal Son*, Henri Nouwen.

☐

☞ *Search for Significance*, Robert McGee.

☞ *The Blessing*, Gary Smalley and Robert Trent

☞ *Spiritual Depression*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

☐

☞ *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, Jeanette Yep, et al. Especially: ch. 1: “Performance, Perfectionism and Pressure”; ch. 5: “Relating to Others—Understanding Yourself”; ch. 11: “Gifts Asian Americans Bring.”

☞ *Bridges: A Cross-Cultural Quarterly*, Dr. Mary Lou Codman-Wilson and the Asian Community Team (mlcodman@aol.com).

Scripture:

Psalm 139 (“I am fearfully and wonderfully made”)

Isaiah 43:1-7 (Wherever ‘Israel’ appears, insert your own name to experience God’s love for you)

Mark 1:40-2:17 (Like with this trio of the leper, paralytic and tax-collector, Jesus

usually values and esteems the typically undervalued members of society)

Mark 10:17-31 (The Rich Young [Asian American?] Man)

Videos/movies:

✪ *Genesis*, By 2100 Productions. A four-video series covering Genesis 1-3. Especially recommended is *Genesis Worldview: Gen. 1:1-26* on the creation account). 11 minutes. \$14.95. To order: 1-800-828-2100.

✪ *Joy Luck Club* The film version of Amy Tan's bestseller is entertaining and insightful. The story line follows the lives of four Chinese American women and their mothers, illustrating many Asian American family dynamics and personal struggles.

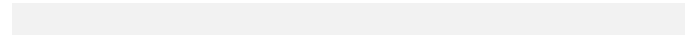
Excellent as a primer on Chinese American culture or as the starting place for a discussion on family and identity issues.

Warning: This is a 'crying' film. It can bring up a lot of painful issues and memories for Asian Americans.

By Bum Yong Kim, Amy Asaki, Mylene Foo, Allen Wakabayashi, Young Choi, Donna Dong, Tom Lin (coordinator)

Notes:

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3 “Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who...receive grace, forgiveness and healing in their relationships with their families. Many Asian American students and staff agonize over how to give their lives fully to Christ while honoring their parents at the same time.

A Tale of Two Gaps

Family is a key point of discipleship for many Asian American students and staff. Say the word “family” and questions quickly surface:

- * What does it mean to *honor* one’s parents?
- * What is the role of *obedience*?
- * How can one follow Jesus and still love one’s parents?
- * What if our parents are not believers?

These questions (challenging for anyone) become more complex as many Asian Americans deal not only with a *generation* gap, but a gap in *culture* as well. Which actions and attitudes reflect God’s values? Which ones simply reflect the values of American culture?—a culture which generally values the individual over groups and independence over family loyalty.

The good news is that Jesus has a great deal to say about family. In fact, the family was of utmost importance in first century Palestine, much more than what we experience today.

Households were not only a social unit, but an individual’s identity was defined in terms primarily of the household group to which the individual belonged (“Family” in *Dictionary of Jesus in the Gospels*, p. 226, and *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, p. 45).

People did not think of themselves as individuals with personal rights. Much more, they were a part of a family and a community with its set of socially prescribed norms and expectations.

Consequently, Jesus' words on this issue are very relevant to the experience of those who endeavor to be his disciple and *and* honor their parents. The weight and importance of this issue for many Asian Americans can give us new insight into Scripture that we can then offer to the larger body of Christ.

Why This Issue Is Important

Perhaps no earthly factor shapes our perception of God as our relationships with our parents. For small children, parents are to be a source of guidance, nurture, love and protection. Children naturally want to please their parents.

Asian Americans who feel pressured (real or perceived) by high expectations from their parents will often transpose these expectations onto their Heavenly Father. God becomes a parental figure who should not be disappointed. We feel his hand in our back as we strive for achievement, and a deep fear of failure if we don't meet his lofty standards. God's love is often perceived as being conditional to one's achievements.

“How can God love me if I don't get into the best grad school in the country?”

Students who struggle with a high sense of parental expectation or whose parents do not approve of their beliefs and/or activities as a Christian face the challenge of separating earthly parents from a God who loves all with a gracious and unconditional love, and is merciful toward us, even in the face of our worst failures.

The Importance of Honor

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you; that your days may be

prolonged, and that it may go well with you, in the land which the LORD your God gives you” (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

The Apostle Paul writes that this is the “first commandment with a promise” (Ephesians 6:1-2).

From an Asian perspective, honor often has to do with obedience and filial piety. The ancient Chinese philosopher, Mencius (371-289 BC), writes, “The actuality of humanity consists in serving one’s parents.” And when asked about filial piety, Confucius (551-479 BC) reportedly responded, “Never disobey” (*A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pgs. 23, 76).

The questions of honor and obedience in Scripture is much more complex. Jesus criticized people who used “religion” as an excuse to neglect their responsibility to their parents (Matt 15:4-6; Mark 7:10-13). And the Apostle Paul exhorts “Children, obey your parents,” citing the fifth commandment.

In fact, this commandment, “Honor your mother and father,” is cited at least eight times in the New Testament. (For an expanded discussion of this topic, see chapter three, “*Honor and Obey*,” in *Following God without Dishonoring Your Parents*.)

But Jesus also makes it absolutely clear that ultimate honor and loyalty belong to God. In response to Jesus’ call, the first disciples leave their nets and their father--symbolizing a turning away from both family allegiance and their known livelihood (Mark 1:16-20).

Jesus defines the true family as those who hear the word of God and do it (Mark 3:31-35). He makes it clear that being his followers will cause familial strife (Luke 12:51-53) and that the cost of discipleship sometimes involves painful choices (Luke 14:26).

Honoring Our Parents...Today

Practically speaking, what does it mean to both obey

the command to honor one's parents yet hold Jesus as the ultimate authority? For many Asian American students and staff, conflict with parents, particularly over the issue of being a Christian, is both threatening and painful. The two most common responses can be described as *outright rebellion* or *compliance*.

Outright rebellion against our parents' wishes often involves anger and a complete dismissal of parental opinions and concerns. This does not take into account the years of experience and wisdom that parents (even non-Christians) have.

Nor does it take into consideration the love and genuine concern that parents have toward their children, no matter how insensitively it may be expressed. Such attitudes and behavior do not honor our parents, nor do they help us grow as disciples of Jesus.

Compliance, on the other hand, seeks peace at any price. We may comply with a parents' wishes, but have no ownership over the decision. Compliance may lead to actions done behind our parents' back, and feed a general sense of resentment or bitterness. Such attitudes and behavior do not honor our parents, nor does it help us grow as disciples of Jesus.

The more difficult path is to honor one's parents by:

- * considering their concerns,
- * acknowledging their love and care, and
- * explaining in a gracious way what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Staying engaged in the dialogue, continuing to be peacemakers in the midst of conflict, and finding ways to care for parents in ways that are meaningful to them may be very painful. But as we endeavor to follow Jesus first and honor our parents, there will be healing and growth in our own lives as well as blessing upon our families.

Confession of a compliant outright rebel

“Because my following Jesus created intense conflict with my parents, I told them as little as possible about my InterVarsity activities, even though I was a leader in my chapter and it was where I spent gobs of time. When I went to two weeks of chapter camp following my sophomore year, I told my parents that I was ‘tied up’ for a while. They never knew where I was or even how to get a hold of me.

I did consult them about going to Urbana (since the bus left on Christmas, I thought I should clear it with them).

First, they said OK, but then, three days before I was to leave, they decided they didn’t want to go. I’m grateful I let go of that one. I figured there would be other conferences, I could miss this one if it bothered my folks that much. It helped my relationship with them the rest of that Christmas holiday and beyond. I was also glad my staffworker didn’t push me too hard to go.

Coming on staff was much harder. I asked Dad for his blessing (twice) and he couldn’t give it. I made the gut-twisting decision to come on staff anyway.

Because their feelings meant so much to me, I saw that it was like choosing between two gods—Jesus or my parents. At some point, I knew I had to make a choice. That’s where I chose to make my break and to trust God for a good relationship with my parents.

Though I’ve never denied it, I rarely bring up that I have to raise my own salary. It shames my folks enough that I am in ministry; to tell them how I get paid (especially in the early years) might have caused World War III. Why didn’t I? I was a coward. Period. Was I wrong?...I don’t know.

I do know they have noticed I have been able to support a family and my wife has been able to be a stay-at-home mom (her choice), that we have a

home, two cars and we send our son to tennis,

basketball and baseball camps.

I think I have honored my parents by choosing a path that takes care of my family and has allowed me to follow my own dreams.

I think I am a better son for having followed this calling of ministry...than if I had achieved their definition of success but grown bitter at them for standing in the way of my dreams.

In the end, I wonder if they would have felt guilty if they had talked me out of the thing I feel most passionately about...ministry?"

Slightly embarrassed anonymous Japanese American veteran staff living in the Southeast

What are some pressing pastoral concerns?

Asian American students and staff who are in conflict with parents over their faith (or their parents' disappointment or displeasure in general) need acceptance, prayer, and good counsel.

Here is a list of pastoral suggestions as you work with Asian Americans:

✓ *Don't underestimate or undervalue the importance of family for Asian American students (or staff).* Wrestling with whether to go to chapter camp or to go home and help out at the family business for the week may seem trivial, but it is a decision that needs careful and prayerful consideration.

What does this mean for the student? What fears and feelings are being raised? What does it mean for the family? Are there alternate ways to communicate care to parents?

✓ *Respond to students' decisions regarding family with both respect and honesty.* It is important to be honest about one's opinions and responses to students' decisions whether we agree with them or not. It is also important to communicate acceptance of the person and respect of their decision-making abilities, even if their "process" is different than our own.

✓ *Be a voice of compassion and hope.* Empathize with students in the midst of their pain. Weep with those who weep. Also be a voice that speaks of God's love, acceptance and power to change seemingly hopeless situations.

✓ *Meet their parents whenever it's possible.* When you hear "the folks are coming for the weekend," try to wrangle an invite to drop by and meet them. It doesn't have to be anything heavy or long or well-scripted. It just seems to help that "this InterVarsity thing my child is wrapped up in" has real, normal, likable people on their staff.

✓ *Pray for them.* "This kind can come out only by prayer," said Jesus, referring to casting out demons (Mark 9:29). While not demonic, some of the situations our Asian American students face are awfully difficult and complex. Prayer is a necessary ingredient to change "impossible" situations.

✓ *Consult outside resources:* books, movies or a Christian counselor in your area who has experience working with Asian Americans.

Resources:

Bibliography:

☞ Barton, S. *Family (article)*, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

☞ Chan, Wing-Tsit. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

☞ Herbert Musurillo. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Other Books:

☞ Lee, Sang Hyun. *Korean American Ministry*. Louisville: General Assembly Council, PCUSA, 1993. Especially helpful: Ch. 5-3: *Korean American Pluralism*.

The “1.5” Generation; Ch. 6-1: Second Generation Ministry: Models of Missions; Ch. 6-2: A Sociocultural Understanding of Korean American Youth “Caught In The Web.”

☞ Lin, Tom. *Losing Face & Finding Grace*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Especially helpful: Study 1/A: *A Party, For Me?*; Study 2: *Expectations*; Study 3: *Languages of Love*; Study 4: *Idolizing the Family*.

☞ Ng, David, editor. *People On The Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996. Especially helpful: Ch. 9: *The Church As Mediator Between Cultures*; Ch. 10: *Asian North American Youth: A Ministry of Self-Identity and Pastoral Care*.

☞ Yep, Jeanette, et. al. *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. While the whole book wrestles with the issue spelled out in the title, especially helpful are: Ch. 2: *Your Parents Love You, My Parents Love Me*; Ch. 3: *Honor & Obey*; Ch. 4: *Doctor or Lawyer?*

Movie:

☛ *Joy Luck Club* (especially for mother-daughter relationships).

By Pauline Chen, Jon Tran, Janice Rhim, Christine Loo, Brad Wong, Geneva Vollrath, Bora Reed (coordinator).

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4 “Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who...gain confidence in their giftedness and their ability to lead others, both Asian Americans and non-Asian Americans.

Being of a minority culture, it is often difficult to believe in one’s gifting for ministry and to believe God can use them to lead others. The ability to lead others to Christ is especially critical to develop.

What is a leader?

✓ It’s having **vision**, taking **initiative**, being **passionate**, displaying **humility** and living out **faithfulness**.

In our *Chapter Leaders’ Handbook*, Steve Stuckey helpfully discusses five qualities that appear in most of the leaders in the Scriptures:

✓ “Leaders are, first of all, men and women of **vision**. They believe that, by God’s grace, the impossible or at least the improbable can become possible.”

✓ “[Leaders] **take initiative** and motivate others to take action with them. Leaders are men and women of action who get things done. They don’t wait to be called upon.”

✓ “[Biblical leaders] were **passionate** in giving themselves fully to their calling. They threw themselves into their ministry and were willing to risk everything, including their very lives.”

✓ “Leaders in Scripture consistently displayed **humility**. (Take Paul, David and Nehemiah.) None these lacked ego-strength, yet they were still humble. They were humble because they saw themselves as men under God’s authority sent to carry out his will. They were servants before anything else.”

✓ **Faithfulness** is a characteristic that people recognize after the responsibility has been completed. Faithful people have stick-to-it-iveness. All of the great leaders in Scripture hung on to the cuff of the intruder like a junkyard dog. They persevered to the end. They were men and women who kept their word and fulfilled their obligations.”

Before we all go out and commit *hara kiri* after comparing ourselves to this list, keep in mind that none of us will score “10’s” with all five qualities of leadership.

The beauty of the body of Christ (and this applies to leadership teams) is we are at different places in our godliness and have different temperaments and gifting. We don’t have to have it all together or be “10’s.”

More than matching khakis

When a movement like InterVarsity decides to “go multi-ethnic,” that decision has huge implications. If a movement is genuinely open to becoming more diverse, leadership, among other things, will look different. “That’s not how it’s done here” will soon become yesterday’s adage.

This is why very few organizations—Christian and otherwise—are willing to pay the high price of becoming authentically multi-ethnic. The new adage has to include “We don’t know how, but give us some grace, cut us some slack and we’ll really try.”

Looking multi-ethnic is very hip. Watch a few hours of prime time TV geared towards youth and young adults. Most have a variety of skin tones represented. They’re smiling, they’ve got their arms draped over each other’s shoulders, they love being together. “We’re pals. Just put us in these khakis and man, we’re the best of friends.” While such commercials are a step in the right direction, the road to true multi-ethnicity is bumpy, long and full of dead-ends and cul-de-sacs. Long after the khakis are worn out, all parties must stay at the dance.

One critical ingredient for becoming a multi-ethnic movement is making space for ethnic minorities to become leaders in all kinds of roles and positions...and our students *will* notice.

Here are a few questions that get at creating spaces for Asian Americans (and other ethnic minorities) to develop as leaders:

Big Q #1 *What kinds of things do not bring confidence to Asian American students in leadership? Or take away from their confidence?*

Identity issues are often central to building confidence as a young leader. As we gain a greater understanding of our ethnic identity, it directly affects our ability to lead well. When our ethnicity is not acknowledged or affirmed, it says to us that being Asian American is either a detriment to leadership or at best, does not get in the way of being a leader.

Some of us observed that when Asian Americans were brought into leadership in an apprentice role (not given as much responsibility as their non-Asian American counterparts), their confidence as a leader did not grow. The subtle message was, "You do things differently ... your leadership style is not like ours...you don't have the right stuff for leadership."

InterVarsity is certainly growing in its ethnic diversity. But when a new student walks into a chapter meeting, looks around and sees only a few students who look like her, it sends a loud non-verbal

Not necessarily a compliment:
"When I see you, Jim, I don't think of you as Asian. I just think of you as...you know...one of us."
Possible interpretation:
"Being 'one of them' means leaving my Asian-ness at the door."

message that not much effort has been taken to reach people with whom she might be most comfortable. When

the leadership team is introduced and no Asian Americans stand up, it discourages her to volunteer for leadership or even to stay in the fellowship.

This lack of Asian American role models can be very discouraging for students and staff alike.

Questions run quickly through our minds:

Here are a few questions that get at creating spaces for Asian Americans (and other ethnic minorities) to develop as leaders:

“Why aren’t there Asian Americans involved with this InterVarsity group?”

“Why aren’t they in leadership roles?”

“They talk about being multi-ethnic, but what do they mean by it?”

“I know I am a leader, but my style of leadership is different from what I’ve seen here. Is my style of leadership welcomed or is there just one acceptable style of leading?”

Big Q #2 *What are our models of leadership in InterVarsity? In our leadership selection process, what do we look for in prospective leaders? What are the standards of leadership that affirm or hinder Asian Americans?*

Stop for a minute. Take a mental snapshot of your leadership team. What stands out to you? Passion for God, godly character, recognized as a leader even without any titles or positions, gifted. So far, so good.

Expectations: Often more implied than stated

Are there other qualities we look for in our leaders, perhaps not quite as tangible or perhaps just simply assumed? Do these qualities subtly rule out some candidates for leadership?

? Do we expect our leaders to speak up in group settings, to share their ideas confidently?

? Do we expect our leaders to take the lead or at least get involved in contact evangelism?

? Do we expect our leaders to pray in a certain “style?”

? Do we expect them to be extroverts?

? Is spontaneity a high value? Is it sometimes even synonymous with “being led by the Spirit”? Are those who are quick on their feet with comments more highly valued than those who would rather chew on it and “get back to you tomorrow” with their feedback?

Medium-sized Question:

Is there an ‘InterVarsity culture’ that keeps others from being fully accepted members and doesn’t make room for leaders who have different “cultural” values?

Our desire is for InterVarsity to be a place where different cultures and different styles of ministry will be welcomed and blessed. Additionally, we believe there are aspects of Asian American culture that are God-affirming and help students to lead well.

How Asian Americans are often gifted

In *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, five “gifts” that Asian Americans in particular offer the body of Christ are highlighted: deep friendships and being the community glue, hospitality evangelism, being bridge people for racial healing, our wealth and education and the “gift” of pain [pgs. 161-172].

In addition, Asian Americans are often more reflective by nature. We aren’t too prone to fly off the handle or lead a cult (with the exception of one *sunny*-faced guy...).

We process things well...sometimes to death. We’re team-oriented. Someone once quipped, “If you get one Asian American, you’ll get ten.” We tend to travel in packs.

At the same time there are aspects of our culture that are a result of the fall and sin and make it much harder to pursue and love God. Some of them are the qualities mentioned above...but gone overboard.

We can reflect and reflect and not draw a line in the sand and take a stand. While we may not fly off the handle, our stoicism can make us hard to read at times. It's easy to hide behind our community or team orientation and not be decisive or be willing to be singled out as an individual.

While we need to own such tendencies, it also helps to have mentors (staff and more mature believers) who can learn our languages of love and speak tough love to us in ways we can hear and act upon.

Creating places for evangelism—Asian American style

Evangelism can often be a lightning rod for Asian Americans. We lead great Bible studies, we plan good programs, we're good worship leaders, but evangelism? Sticking us with a few acupuncture needles is less painful.

Sometimes there is a model of evangelism that feels confrontational and overly aggressive to many Asian Americans (i.e., open-air, contact). Such styles often cut against the grain of most Asian cultures, where indirect, non-confrontational communication is more effective and normative.

Choosing between sharing something so personal as our relationship with Jesus *with a total stranger* or jumping off a cliff makes the cliff look pretty inviting.

When Asian Americans backpedal from confrontational evangelism, it often suggests we don't care about the lost. Not so! Many Asian American believers are passionate about evangelism.

What are some new models of evangelism--bold and risky in nature, but affirm a more indirect approach?

What models utilize strengths of Asian Americans and provide a more user-friendly environment for evangelism to take place? In *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, "hospitality evangelism" is suggested as a natural wedding of many Asian Americans' ability to provide gracious hospitality with the sharing of the Gospel in a safe, familiar context (pgs. 165-166).

Another model is telling our story.

The power of story

Asian American cultures are often narrative in nature. Story-telling works better than an approach of “The Gospel is X, Y and Z and in that order.”

What situations can be created for Asian Americans to share the story of God’s work in our lives? How can we train our Asian American students to tell their stories in ways that powerfully point to the God who has changed their lives in deep, profound ways?

Storytelling is not only powerful in evangelism, but hearing stories also allows Asian Americans to have words put to our deep, hard-to-articulate feelings. When we hear stories of suffering for the gospel or someone who exercised great faith, it affirms our choice in following Jesus.

The stories of our “older brothers” and “older sisters” in the faith are immeasurably important. Some of us come from communities where ministry through InterVarsity is not understood or not validated.

We feel we are “out there” on our own, paving the road. Sometimes, we are made to feel we have completely missed the road.

When we hear from someone who has made the hard choice to follow Jesus *even against the wishes of their parents and is alive to talk about it*, we aren’t so alone when we make our own hard choices.

We encourage our “elders” in the Asian American staff family (right now, all who have served 10 years or more is certainly an elder!) to tell us your stories of how you took steps of faith and how God came alongside you at the moments of greatest fear. You may feel like it’s bragging to talk so much about yourself; just consider it “braggin’ on Jesus”!

The process of individuation (becoming our own person apart from the influence of our family and/or communities) is a slower process in Asian Americans, where adulthood comes later than in our Caucasian counterparts. Because it is slower, we may need extra

The power of story

help in growing emotionally, having feelings named, categories given to evaluate who we are as individual creations, and not just evaluating ourselves in the community setting.

Where ‘Seinfeld-ese’ doesn’t work

Are there ways that non-Asian Americans communicate that we deem “correct” or healthy (especially in the area of conflict resolution) but can be actually hurtful and alienating to Asian Americans? What feels honest, straightforward, candid and transparent for, say, Caucasians may feel far too “in your face” for many Asian Americans and may cause us to retreat. The acceptable confrontational style of communication is often threatening. It causes a loss of face when we see that others are aware of the ‘attack’ on us. Because it is a style many of us don’t practice regularly, we are taken aback when confronted.

One senior Asian American staff who does a good bit of public speaking, said, “When I’m in a group with more than about eight people *and I have not been asked to speak*, that group is too big for me to comfortably speak up in. I shut down. I become a listener. I shut up, unless someone directly asks me what I think.”

On the popular syndicated show, “Seinfeld,” four close friends in New York City are constantly working through their relationships with each other (when they are not helping each other work out their relationships outside the foursome!).

George screams at Kramer. Kramer, sliding into Jerry’s apartment, helps himself to anything in the refrigerator (a no-host, non-Asian approach to hospitality!). Elaine shoves Jerry, telling him to “Get out of here!” Jerry, his face inches from George’s, tells him he’s a lunatic.

As Asian Americans, at times we may wish we could communicate like those four, but few of us can and do.

When we open our mouths, we not only have our parents and their parents and their parents' parents standing behind and looking over our shoulder, we also have our entire communities not far behind them. I dare not say or do something that would bring shame to my people.

Large group Bible studies or discussions that only provide space for expressive and excited responses can be disempowering to Asian Americans who come from a culture of deference and are more introspective in processing material.

Asian Americans need to go against what might be uncomfortable for us if we have a valuable verbal contribution to make. Post-meeting, non-Asian Americans might take their Asian American friends aside and ask what they thought about this and such. They are more likely to get input one-to-one than in a group. At the same time, they might add, "That's a great point! I wish you would have shared it with the group. They could have really benefited from your thoughts."

Affirming ethnicity

How is it that we affirm ethnicity? What are the characteristics of Asian culture that need to be welcomed in our leadership mix? Along with the five highlighted in *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, here are two more: graciousness and peace making.

Why these two? Can't they be found in non-Asian Americans?

These two because they are becoming less apparent within our greater American culture. Civility, or graciousness, is fighting a losing battle. We are raising warriors—people protecting their turf—not peace-makers. And yes, they can certainly be found in non-Asian Americans but to a lesser extent, sometimes, much lesser.

We're Not in Kansas, Toto: Leading, Inter Varsity-style

Helping students define themselves is an elementary step in pastoring and developing Asian American leaders.

In Asian cultures, people in authority (parents, older siblings, aunts and uncles) define limits and boundaries.

This works well for them back home, but when they enter the university—and the InterVarsity chapter—with their distinct limits and boundaries, uncertainty abounds.

The key role staff can play

We as staff need to help students in defining these new limits and boundaries. Without them, they enter leadership and do everything, and eventually grow weary.

Staff sometimes see this as a blessing: “Our Asian American students are such hard-working leaders...sure wish the other students would work that hard!”

But what Asian Americans really need is help in defining their roles. Asian American students are often dependent on an authority figure to help structure their involvement.

These students need help in understanding they have power and ability to make their own decisions.

A different view of adulthood

In many Asian cultures, adulthood happens several years later than it does for their Caucasian counterparts. Ask a Caucasian when they become an adult. They might say “At age 21,” or for some, “When I left home to go to college...about 18.”

For Asian Americans, the answer is likely to be, “When I get married.” Others might even say, “My parents will always see me as a child.”

One single Ivy League Asian American student recently said, “When I finish med school and start my residency, wherever I end up, I will have my parents live with me. They want to do that.” How many of our Caucasian students are making similar plans?

InterVarsity asks a lot of its student leaders. They are given true responsibility for their chapters as well as the spiritual welfare of its members. For many Asian Americans, this may feel overwhelming and awkward. Staff can play a critical role in their development as leaders.

Recognizing the very different world they came out of is an important *first* step. Going slowly is a *second* step. *Third*, encouraging them to lead and helping them do so comes next.

Affirmation, as baby steps are taken, creates security. The next risk taken will be a tad easier.

Staff with Asian American students “Have I ever done this?” checklist:

- met their family members
- been a guest in their home (be sure to bring a gift!)
- asked them to take you to their favorite restaurant (food is very important to us!)
- attended their church, especially if it's an Asian American church
- asked them what *their* hopes and dreams are for the rest of their lives
- asked them what *their parents'* hopes and dreams are for them for the rest of their lives

Staff should know that when they ask an Asian American student to assume leadership, the student may be saying “Yes” without clear role models. Thus, affirmation from the person asking them to lead (you!) goes a long way. They may be pioneering new ground.

We need to build up, bless and multiply the Asian American leaders God has blessed us with.

Resources:

Books:

☞ *Korean American Ministry*. Edited by Sang Hyun Lee and John V. Moore, PCUSA, 1993.

☞ *Leadership Is An Art*, Max DePree, Michigan State Univ. Press, 1987 The former CEO of Herman Miller, Inc. has written a very humane, relational approach to management and leadership. Refreshing. Seems to fit Asian American sensitivities. The chapter, “Pink Ice In The Urinal” *drips* with wisdom.

☞ *Leadership Jazz*, Max DePree, Currency Doubleday, 1992. Follow-up to *Leadership Is An Art*.

☞ *The Making Of A Leader*, J. Robert Clinton. Intriguing approach to leadership development. His chapter on thinking through one’s “sovereign foundations”—the work God does in us long before we assume leadership—is worth the price of the book. A great exercise to go through with potential Asian American leaders who may think they don’t have what it takes to lead well.

☞ *People On The Way, Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community*. Edited by David Ng, Judson Press, 1996. Community is the centerpiece of this stimulating work. The place of community calls for at least a nuancing of our traditional views of developing leaders. Two good chapters on

understanding Asian American youth; one deals with their relationship with their parents. Two more helpful chapters on Asian American women.

*By Suzy Gaeddert, Priscilla Luming, Junko Iwasaki,
Jason Jensen, Pauline Chen, and Collin Tomikawa
(coordinator)*

Notes:

churches where they can no longer use the gifts they once used freely on campus. We acknowledge the two theological camps who both claim their

5 “Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who...pursue gender wholeness, reconciliation and equity.”

We must help Asian American women in developing their leadership gifts that will be effective both within InterVarsity and the church.

There is a deep hunger and need among young Asian American men for godly male mentors.

There is significant brokenness between Asian American men and women, sexism towards Asian American women and unclear role expectations for both men and women.

We are addressing three primary issues in the statement above.

1 *Helping Asian American women develop their leadership gifts both within InterVarsity and the church.*

A big dilemma exists: we can nurture and encourage Asian American women to lead within InterVarsity only to have them be denied substantive leadership in their churches.

While there is some diversity, it seems most of the churches InterVarsity's Asian American students come from lean towards the theologically conservative side. In most of these settings, women are not allowed to hold all of the same leadership positions as men. In InterVarsity, there is rarely a dichotomy.

Frustration develops when women go back and forth between their InterVarsity and church worlds. Further frustrations continues when upon graduation, women leave InterVarsity and often go back to

approach is biblical. We respect those who have worked through their position thoughtfully, open to having the Lord change their positions if not aligned with Scripture. We honor integrity like that. However, too often we come to our positions with less than satisfactory reasons:

“My church teaches it. If I believe differently, I’ll just make waves. I’d rather go with the crowd.”

“It’s how I was raised.”

“It just makes sense to me.”

Frankly, we need to do better than that. There is too much at stake to treat an important issue so cavalierly.

In InterVarsity, men and women minister equally.

We don’t take an official position on how the church should handle the issue, but we’ve always tried to influence the evangelical church to be more open to the exercise of gifts by all members.

Developing Asian American women leaders

Having said that, here are some of the ways we can help Asian American women develop their leadership gifts both within InterVarsity and the church:

✔ *Continue our practice of the equality of men and women in ministry.* Keep working on eliminating glass ceilings for women within InterVarsity. Help InterVarsity, as an organization, model equality for the church and other organizations—Christian and non-Christian—to see.

✔ *Continue to build alliances between InterVarsity and Asian American churches.* Pursuing change by subtle influence versus in-your-face confrontation often works best.

✓ *Be strategic.* Figure which churches allow women the exercise of certain leadership roles. Is there a pattern within Asian American churches (i.e., Sunday School teaching, being deacons, leading worship, serving on committees, serving communion, leading home fellowship groups, occasional guest preaching, etc.)? Focus on what is *allowed* instead of banging our heads over what is *not allowed*.

✓ *Asian American men need to become advocates for their sisters in Christ.* For example, one prominent Asian American pastor, when he speaks around the country, always mentions the equality of women as an important issue for him. It is important for men to bone up on women-in-leadership issues in becoming good advocates for women.

✓ *We need to have realistic expectations when involved in immigrant churches:* women will not be allowed to lead in most cases.

✓ Along with any Asian American PromiseKeepers-type movements being developed, *we should also focus on intentionally mentoring women.*

2 *The need for godly mentors for Asian American men.*

“I was getting ready to get on the big boat that would take us all to Campus-by-the-Sea on Catalina Island. Doug Schaupp, who was directing the weekend conference for UCLA and Occidental students, took me aside. ‘By the way, Paul, the guys are really looking forward to your speaking and just being here.’ I smiled as Doug went on, ‘There are just not many older role models who look like them.’ After getting over the ‘older’ in Doug’s comment, I was amazed by what happened in the next 48 hours.”

When I wasn't in my room catching my breath, I didn't have five minutes to myself. I had conversations with students beginning in the bath house at seven in the morning, until way late at night. Most of them were guys. I saw in them a hunger to learn from someone older, who had walked the road they were on. Maybe I just reminded them of their father.

It was this experience at this conference that got me thinking about re-focusing my ministry. Soon after that, I started spending more time with Asian American students.

-Paul Tokunaga

Mentoring? Lacking a category for it

Mentoring is “hot” inside and outside the church. Anyone who wants to get ahead or kept on task is looking for a mentor.

Mentoring is what was called discipling in days gone by, but now it's discipling with a twist: perhaps with a bit more accountability and future-looking involved.

Some possible causes for the lack of such mentors in Asian American churches include:

- First-generation Asian American churches often didn't include discipling/mentoring as part of their mission. Thus, it lacks history.
- In many Asian American families, the father's presence was strong (even when silent). Unfortunately, while his presence was strong, there was often a lack of nurturing of their sons (and daughters) by fathers. This seems especially true in first and second-generation fathers, where much of their focus and energy was given to working hard and providing well for his family.
- In the church, there is often an unwillingness for the older generation to let go of the leadership

baton and hand it off with assurance and blessing to the next generation. This seems especially true between the immigrant and second generation, where significant change might take place, and thus is threatening.

- Leadership in “immigrant” churches is often based on one’s personal prestige in the community. The younger generation, in contrast, puts higher value on authenticity in their leaders’ lives.
- The older generation of church leaders is often intimidated by the younger, college-educated generation, especially those with masters’ and doctorate degrees.
In addition, they can be threatened by those returning from leadership roles in parachurch organizations who want to bring their “new” ideas into the church setting.
- Often, in Asian cultures, 25-35-year-olds are considered too young to step into significant leadership. In addition, pastors are frequently the total power brokers/decision-makers for the church.
- Conversely, there is often a lack of patience and appreciation from the younger generation for the different leadership style of their elders. Even though they might have done things differently, they need to honor and esteem the ministry of those before them.
- Culture and language are barriers to effective communication and relationship-building, especially when the older generation clings to their *Asian* identity and values and the younger generation grasps with equal intensity their *American* identity and values.

- Out-marriage and inter-racial socializing can be a fly in the ointment. The older generation generally wants to preserve the ethnic church and is often not very excited to pass the church reins to those in the next generation that look different or have different-sounding names.

Answers: think long-term

What are the answers? How can godly mentors for Asian American men be developed?

Essentially, the answers are not short-term, but long-term. The long-term response is to develop among young men today a generation that will lead well when called upon.

On a larger, institutional scale, InterVarsity might spearhead a movement (or join forces with others already doing so) among Asian American churches to “mentor and develop the next generation” and to deal faithfully with the reality of the church today. We might learn from African American men who have a keen sense of this need.

MESA (Ministries for English Speaking Asians), for example, sponsors regional Asian American Men’s Conferences.

Meanwhile, there are some things we can do now:

✓ Develop a “mid-generation” of men, say, between, 30-45, that can bridge the gap. We might look at Leighton Ford’s Arrow Leadership program curriculum (for approximately the same age group) in helping us develop a track within InterVarsity for such men.

We would then ask each of these men between 30-45 to be mentors to one or two young Asian American men between 18 and 25. Within InterVarsity, we could do this staff-to-staff. We could also recruit InterVarsity alumni and former staff as additional mentors.

✓ When as InterVarsity staff we consider both chapter leaders and those others they will disciple,

look below the surface of apparent quietness and reticence (if that's the case).

✓ Due to outside and possibly internal pressures, it is difficult for Asian American male staff to stay on beyond four to five years. We need to encourage staff work as a long-term option in order to provide older male leadership for the younger staff and students.

Adequate funding is often a problem. The Asian American Veteran Staff Subsidy Matching Fund aims to help staff (men and women) who have served at least four years and are significantly underpaid based on the staff salary scale. We continually look for additional funding for this matching fund.

InterVarsity's national leadership could encourage Asian American staff—male and female—to stay by developing specific area and regional director training plans that helped them see there was a place for them for 10, 20 and 30 more years.

✓ When regions put on conferences for Asian American students or in regions that are heavily Asian American, provide workshops and “space” for Asian American men to come together and talk through some of the above issues.

3 Begin recognizing then addressing the relational brokenness between Asian American men and women, sexism and unclear roles.

Writes Edward Iwata, a *Sansei* (third-generation Japanese American) in “*Race Without Face*,” *San Francisco Focus*, 1991, after undergoing facial plastic surgery to make his appearance more Anglo:

“Indeed, to many Anglos, the males of our culture are a mystery. Most whites know us only through the neutered image: Japanese

salary men. Sumo wrestlers. Sushi chefs. We're judged by our slant of eye and color of skin. We're seen only as eunuchs, as timid salary men. Sumo wrestlers. Sushi chefs. We're judged by our slant of eye and color of skin. We're seen only as eunuchs, as timid dentists and engineers. Books and movies portray us as ugly and demonic. We're truly a race of Invisible Men.

In the corporate arena, Asian American men find their cultural values and strengths overshadowed by ego-driven, back-slapping, hyper-competitive whites. And, while socially we may be more 'acceptable' than blacks and Hispanics, we are not acceptable enough to run legislatures, schools, corporations. Our women may be marriage material for whites, but our men are still seen as gooks. One the street, we're cursed or spat upon—even killed because of our looks.

It cannot be denied, either, that we're regarded as kowtowing wimps not only by whites, but by a lot of Asian American women—even those with racial and ethnic pride."

Hanh Hoang in *"Beyond the China Doll...the search for the real Asian woman," Transpacific*, Nov./Dec. 91, details some of the "so-called positive stereotypes" of Asian women: "These commonly assumed attributes include beauty and intelligence, along with many traditional values, such as loyalty, neatness, industriousness, sweetness, and a strong sense of family."

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston writes in *"The Geisha, the Good Wife and Me,"* (quoted by Hoang) that a woman who fits the entire range of stereotypes would possess quite contradictory qualities: subservient yet intelligent, sensual and sexual yet demure and pure. In short, writes Houston, "a geisha with wifely qualities."

"This is so because Westerners combine into one stereotype two distinctly different roles for Japanese women in Japan. From the geisha, we

have the romantic sensual, forever faithful, male-pleasing Madame Butterfly.”

These depictions by Iwata, Hoang and Houston may feel a bit over-the-edge to some of us while on target for others. The point is this: there is much work to be done to see each Asian American men and women as our Lord does.

In the “*The Gender Trap*” chapter in *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, Jeanette Yep concludes with some “simple, practical strategies and suggestions” for Asian American Christians:

- ✓ *Let's be quick to listen and hear before we move to correcting and amending our sisters' hurts and perceptions.*
- ✓ *Let's acknowledge the price men will (and do) pay as they attempt to live out a more biblical view of what it means to be male in a traditional Asian cultural framework.*
- ✓ *Let's recognize that there is a power dynamic in the relationship between men and women.*
- ✓ *Let's affirm one another in the family and in the life of the church.*
- ✓ *Let's work at honest and open communication between the genders.*
- ✓ *Let's form communities with like-minded friends who will support, encourage and pray for one another as we...attempt to discover the full meaning of being Christian Asian American men and women.*

✓ *Let's encourage men to begin the process of increasing women's partnership in the ministry of the church.*

☑ *And finally, let's be quick to acknowledge that learning to be Christian Asian American women and men is a lifelong journey and that we need each other as traveling companions. (unabridged version is on pages 115-117 in the book)*

Resources:

Ministries:

MESA (Ministries for English Speaking Asians), under the leadership of Louis Lee, sponsors regional Asian American Men's Conferences. For more information, Louis can be reached at 16089 Penn Ave., San Lorenzo, CA 94580 (510) 278-1000 AsianPK@aol.com

Books:

☞ *"The Gender Trap," Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, ed. by Jeanette Yep, et. al., InterVarsity Press, 1998. Pages 102-117.

☞ *Leaving Deep Water: The Lives of Asian American Women at the Crossroads of Two Cultures*, Claire S. Chow, Dutton, 1998.

All who care to understand Asian American women beyond the stereotypes and cliches should read this remarkable book. Supervisors of Asian American women staff are especially encouraged to read it. (Not a "Christian" book.) Here's the table of contents:

Growing Up Asian, Growing Up American

Coming of Age

One of Those 4.0, Piano-Playing Asians

Between Mothers and Daughters: Love and Guilt

Fathers and Daughters: Love, Power, and Control

Choosing a Partner

Marriage and Divorce: Coming Together, Coming Apart

How We Were Raised, How We are Raising Our
Children
On the Job
Blending in or Standing Out: Stories of Racism and
Discrimination
Ethnicity and Identity: What It Means to be Asian
American
Ethnicity and Identity: Creating a Sense of Self
Naming Names
Sense of Belonging: A Place to Call Home
Becoming My Own Person: A Woman in Her Own
Right
Grief and Its Aftermath
Immigration Stories
Growing Older: Looking Ahead, Looking Back

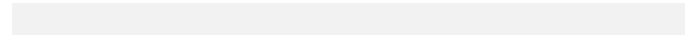
☞ *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in
Conversation*, Deborah Tannen, PhD., Ballantine
Books, 1990.

Another book not written from a Christian
perspective, but very insightful on how showing how
men and women communicate differently. Will need
to be nuanced some to fit Asian Americans, but worth
the effort.

By Shawna Campbell, Henry Lee, Nancy Lim, Ben
Chang, Jeanette Yep, Paul Tokunaga (coordinator)

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6“Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who ...are prophetic in their communities, who stand up to and speak out against the idols of fellow Asian Americans: careerism, ‘chapterism,’* materialism, excessive pride in their own people, family and achievements. Leaders must instead have lives that model social concern and integrity.”

Being prophetic may mean initiating conflict, not an enjoyable task for many Asian Americans. Championing these biblical values must be done in Christian community.

*when activity in the chapter or fellowship becomes a substitute for an authentic relationship with God.

The source of our witness

Students in general often lack confidence to speak prophetically in a relativistic and pluralistic culture. We need to be sure our *authority* is rooted in the Lordship of Christ. Our *message* must be rooted in the authoritative nature and teaching of Scripture as God’s revealed word.

Asian American students in particular lack cultural resources on which to draw upon to speak prophetically. Therefore, much of our training and teaching about prophetic witness needs to emphasize the following:

- ❑ Our *witness* must be delivered in the context of a community which tests our utterances against Scripture; supports, corrects, empowers, and encourages us throughout the process of seeking to be prophetic; and speaks with the power of the whole community;

- ❑ Our *cultural heritage* provides many examples of sacrificial action and integrity which grew out of obedience and love, such as the samurai acceptance of *seppuku* (ritual suicide by high-ranking Japanese

in lieu of execution or to avoid disgrace), the stories of parental heroism, etc.

The social and economic position of our respective community provides Asian American students with a unique platform. From this platform, we can prophetically address issues which affect our own community, the dominant culture, and the communities of other minority groups.

Because we are bi-cultural people, we can have a platform with both the dominant culture and minority groups.

To be truly prophetic, we first must come to terms with our upbringing and the economic values of our community. On the whole (with exceptions), we are a fairly affluent minority.

Some of us have experienced the shallowness of building our lives around huge houses, Lexuses or designer clothes. We know, first-hand, that these are not God's highest priorities.

Our responsibility to speak prophetically not only grows out of our biblical convictions but also arises from a sense of stewardship of our cultural positioning.

To witness powerfully, our students must learn to engage in 'double listening': with one ear, listening closely to God; with the other ear, listening to their cultures of their campuses, families, and ethnic communities.

In addition, the *experiences and world views* of our campuses, families and ethnic communities need to fall under the scrutiny of Scripture. All cultures are a mixture of godliness and godlessness. We must grow in our ability to evaluate these cultures, in light of our knowledge of Scripture.

The nature of our witness

Contemporary media and pop culture send different messages. At times, it encourages an “in your face” Jerry Springer approach with whom we disagree. At other times, it’s a “nobody is really wrong here; we just see things differently, so let’s leave well enough alone” Rosie O’Donnell approach.

Neither is wholly effective.

Might there be a place and role for a winsome or ‘subversive’ prophetic witness which does not compromise the message but may communicate in ways which utilize Asian American communication styles?

We encourage the development of a prophetic witness which takes advantage of the gifts inherent in Asian American culture, such as hospitality, appropriate deference and respect, responsibility and group orientation.

We grieve over the lack of compassion, humility, patience, integrity and love in many of our students as they return to their families and home churches, seeking to be a prophetic witness.

Often, their witness has been delivered in anger, arrogance, frustration, and with little understanding or care for the underlying cultural and personal issues which drive their particular Asian American community. When they return to campus, the stories sound too familiar. They remind us all too much of our trips home during our own college years!

The biblical prophets spoke against the sins and idols of their people but they also grieved over the lostness of their audiences.

They recognized that their message originated from a holy God—not from self-righteous anger or smug, moral superiority.

Though they yearned for immediate repentance, many of the prophets spoke over the course of a lifetime. They demonstrated an ability to trust the

God who is “slow to anger” for change in *his* time. Change in the Asian American community is slow. Our students need to understand their discipleship in this arena is a “long obedience in the same direction” and to affirm the sovereignty of God in the process of change.

The prophets also spoke from lifestyles which demonstrated their radical nonconformity to the prevailing social mores. They lived out what they were calling others to do.

A true prophet cannot judge a parent's Infiniti when they are in a field of study primarily so they buy a 4x4 4Runner or BMW Z3 Roadster.

We believe that the most powerful prophetic witness will involve affirmation of the recipient, thankfulness at God's provision of grace, and joy at God's faithfulness.

We “earn” a hearing when:

- our lifestyles are consistent with our message,
- we are able to affirm the person we are confronting,
- we recognize God's gracious work in our lives and how he took us in our sorry state and worked so patiently with us, and
- we are willing to allow those we confront to point out inconsistencies in our own lives.

The substance of our witness

Prophetic witnessing in Scripture is often both *forth-telling* (speaking God's word directly to a specific current situation) and *fore-telling* (predicting a future action before it happens).

Our witness would be strengthened if our forth-telling were accompanied by fore-telling. The strongest prophetic witness against careerism may be the testimony of individuals who have been consumed by their careers and who have discovered the futility of their pursuit.

When we can admit how we have been obsessed with a high grade point average, we have credibility telling a younger student how it was destructive to our own spiritual growth.

A younger cousin of careerism is *'chapterism'*. Our students often substitute chapter activity for an authentic relationship with God.

This happens when students are driven by the need to please authority figures (when they consciously or subconsciously transfer the parental role to staff), have a high performance orientation, a legalistic approach to justification, or have a weak understanding of God's grace.

Staff working with Asian American student leaders need to demonstrate and extend grace to those who may be excessively faithful to chapter activities in an attempt to win the favor of God and staff. Often this will entail encouraging our most faithful and gifted leaders to cut back on their chapter activities. While this may be costly to the chapter in the short run, it will benefit the kingdom over the long haul.

"Excessive pride in their own people, families, or achievements" has a dark side, often resulting in unhealthy male/female relationships, the worship of children, the distortion of family responsibilities, preserving face, people-pleasing, conflict avoidance, activism, risk-avoidance and the fear of being shamed.

Staff may want to (carefully) suggest a short-term small group focusing on this "excessive pride." Tom Lin's *Losing Face & Finding Grace* study guide deals with many of these issues (like studies entitled,

“*Idolizing the Family,*” “*Performance Orientation*” and “*Motivated by Love*”).

Another significant idol among Asian American students is *community*. Because of the situation-centered orientation of Asian Americans, community can easily become an idol in their lives. Students often expect and sometimes demand that their communities provide them with their identity, need for support, moral guidelines, authority, sense of significance and sense of security.

Though we rejoice that Christian communities often provide for the deeply-felt needs of students which their families were unable or unwilling to supply, Christian community can become an end rather than a means to honor God.

Idols represent those things, ideas, habits, or issues which control us, which provide our source of self-identity, and from which we expect provision.

The role of staff in bustin' idols

As staff, we have tremendous opportunities to go after the idols of our Asian American students. Some of them are easy to spot: academics/careerism, ‘chapterism,’ materialism, parents, ethnic pride, commitment to their church.

Because we either despise these idols or we love our students so much we don’t want them to settle for second-best, it is very easy to load our idol-bustin’ Uzzis and blast away.

Please put away your gun and grab a pea-shooter.

Guns make bloody messes and usually decrease the victim’s health. Pea-shooters are more effective, especially when used sparingly. They cause stinging that gives the recipient pause. Pause is what we want. Long enough for you to then *lovingly* explain why such idols do much more harm than good.

Know that your relationship with Asian American students may be a bit different than

with non-Asian Americans. If you are more than a few years older, you are their *elder*. You have their ear and attention. Enter into this sacred realm carefully.

Bustin' idols is sacred work. Those idols didn't take up residence overnight. They have histories, some going back several generations, some back to the mother country. When we take aim and fire, we must take care not to destroy people in the process.

When the "idol" is Mom or Dad, be extremely prayerful before you fire away. You are likely taking aim at the most important part of their lives.

Students who have "done battle with their idols" and have emerged victorious (if not a bit beaten up) are in a tremendous place to be a prophet with their fellow students. When a student sees a peer take a huge step of faith, it says to them, "*Maybe I can do it, too.*"

The media of our witness

Scripture demonstrates the diversity of media through which the prophets spoke. Prophetic witness involved spoken statements, drama, natural revelation, actions, lifestyle, and prayer.

Today, we have a wide variety of media and methods at our disposal. It helps to ask, "Who is our audience and how are they best reached? How can they best receive God's truth and then act upon it?" For some, a movie might be a powerful medium. For others, music. Verbal witness is still effective for many.

The resources for our witness.

Students need to be taught to ask questions which encourage them to speak prophetically (e.g., "What is the reputation of Christians on campus?" "What is

the nature of the “good life” for this or that people group?)

Students need to be given opportunities to see the paradigms through which they and others operate, and to see the idols inherent in each. Participation in InterVarsity global projects, urban projects, multi-ethnic meetings, Student Training In Missions-type simulations can be extremely helpful.

Staff need to rethink and possibly rework the ‘reward’ or ‘status’ structures in the chapter to encourage campus engagement (e.g., commissioning members who work within secular campus groups, as opposed to only commissioning chapter leaders).

Students need prophetic witness models from Scripture which demonstrate a multiplicity of methods, strategies and media. *The Word in Life Bible* is an excellent resource.

Students also need information about contemporary culture and its idols (see Resource section).

Resources:

Books:

☞ *Christ and Culture*, Reinhold Neibuhr

☞ *The Universe Next Door*, James Sire

☐

☞ *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman.

☞ *The Word In Life Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

By Ming Wei, Brian Fong, Clyde Ohta, Mark Phifer-Houseman, Pete Hammond, Greg Jao (coordinator)

Notes:

Notes:



7"Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who...are equipped to play a unique role as agents of ethnic and racial reconciliation"

Today, there are deep rifts between Asian Americans and other ethnic communities that need to be bridged. God has also given Asian Americans special qualities that serve in bridge-building to combat today's race wars: reflective minds, peacemaking spirits, conciliatory hearts and bi-cultural experiences. Asian American leaders must also lead in repentance and social justice.

We are all for multi-ethnicity. It was in our old Vision Statement and new one, too. But there first needs to be racial healing, which paves the ground for racial reconciliation that will hopefully result in multi-ethnicity. Here are a few of the quandaries we have when we talk about Asian Americans and racial reconciliation:

- There is not a clear picture of what racial reconciliation is and what it could look like in practical ways;

- There is some confusion regarding who the players are when it comes to Asian Americans and racial reconciliation.

Does reconciliation need to happen first among Asian American groups first before there can be Asian/non-Asian reconciliation? Should Asian Americans serve as bridge people in helping two non-Asian groups to reconcile?

- There is a lack of confidence among Asian Americans regarding our abilities and strengths in this area. Honestly, what do we have to contribute?

What we have to contribute to racial reconciliation

God had a purpose and plan in creating us Asians, living in America at the start of the 21st century.

Mordecai rebuked his cousin, Queen Esther, “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this,” (Esther 4:14)

As Asian Americans, is God saying to us, “For such a time as this” I am calling you to get into the racial reconciliation arena?

Here are several things we bring to the table of racial reconciliation:

- ❑ *Graciousness*: sensitivity to personal relationships, generally more easy-going in personality, a propensity to listen before speaking. When tempers flare, charges are made and everyone defends their own positions, it helps to have *gracious people* in the mix.
- ❑ *Commitment salted with perseverance*—this is a major requisite in any reconciliation work. Asian Americans are used to delayed gratification. We don’t expect overnight change. We try to make our yes’s be yes’s and our “you can count on me” to last for the duration.
- ❑ *Hospitality*—receiving each other in daily and “living together” ways.

An acid test of true reconciliation is when people socialize together in each other’s homes.

To be invited into a home dissolves barriers that stand tall if our relationships are left at the bargaining table or are simply professional. Asian Americans offer hospitality that disarms people and helps them lay down their defenses.

❑ *Historical power in being a mediating force*—historical in that we don't have the same history as whites and blacks in this country. There are Asian Americans (e.g., Judge Lance Ito in the O.J. Simpson case) who are being asked to play key roles in very tense situations. This reality should be used intentionally and strategically. James 3:18 states, "...a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace."

❑ *Understanding of shame*—reconciliation work calls for a gentle ability to let people have their say without losing face. Dignity must be maintained among all parties. Mediators who have an innate sense of shame dynamics will help create safety in the dialogue.

How can students and staff be raised up to be useful and to lead in this area?

Christians should be at the vanguard of racial reconciliation. The gospel message of one of reconciliation: between God and people and between people and people. To be an effective "racial reconciler," a believer needs to have a strong sense of identity *in Christ*.

God took it upon himself to initiate 'vertical reconciliation': "...in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us." (2 Corinthians 19)

To us, he gave the awesome responsibility to be both 'vertical' and 'horizontal' reconcilers—helping people be brought into relationship with their creator and to have healthy, 'God-like' relationships with each other.

Those relationships need to be with those outside our comfort zones. If all our social relationships are with people who look, think and act like us, we will

have little to offer. In fact, we will probably be a *negative* contributor because we either would expect all to act like us or our opinions will be based on stereotypes or speculation about others.

Where do we (students and staff) start?

InterVarsity's urban projects, usually composed of interracial teams, are a good place to get our feet wet. Living in an intentionally mixed community 24 hours of day will break down walls that easily stand up on campus, where differences are more easily ignored or brushed over.

As we step out of comfort zones and into the lives of people who look different and do things differently from us, we need to open our eyes for "God-values" in their culture.

Cultures are not "God-neutral." Parts of them may reflect the creator, while other parts may not. As we walk into them, with solid Scriptural teaching etched on our hearts, we will be able to sort some of that out.

To be trusted and respected, people must have first-hand experience in racial reconciliation. Book knowledge ("I read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*"—I understand black people") helps but is not enough. A little shed blood or personal safety risked helps more.

Asian Americans need to be grateful to God and at relative peace with him for making us Asian. This is important because part of the work of racial reconciliation involves helping people own and accept their racial identity. Unless we own ours, we can't help others to own theirs.

We need to be concerned for race relations *outside of our world as Asian Americans*. Do we know how Proposition 209 affects African Americans in California? Do we know how English required as a language affects Hispanic Americans in Texas? When our hearts and minds are branded with the things on God's heart and mind, justice is no longer a luxury of the liberals but becomes a given for all who name Jesus as Lord.

Some weaknesses, dangers and potential roadblocks for Asian Americans engaged in racial reconciliation

❑ *Ethnocentrism* is a racial reconciliation killer.

When we believe as Asian Americans that we are a bit better than other races—and we often do—we will have little to offer others. If we feel that we are better (read: smarter, better educated, wealthier) than others, we will do more harm than good.

❑ *Our materialism* stops us from caring. It takes time to earn money to buy all those things we own or dream of owning. And when we do finally own them, they often create more barriers between us and others.

“How can a Japanese American pulling up in his Porsche relate with integrity to the warring, barely blue collar ethnic groups who live 20 miles from his suburb?”

❑ *Classism and elitism*: why can't everyone else pull themselves up by their bootstraps like we did?

❑ *The 'victimized' minority person*: “I only have room for my own suffering and the pains of my own people. My people have been trampled on and I should focus on them, not others.”

Holy availability

When it comes to being helpful in racial reconciliation, we should not wait until we have it all worked out in our heads. We shouldn't wait until we can say, “I just love everybody of every color, praise the Lord!”

What is needed are people:

- who can own their own racism, prejudices and ethnocentrism,
- who are willing to take risks in developing relationships with people they are not initially drawn to,

- who are willing to move beyond stereotypes, bad history and cliches to find out the truth about people of other ethnicities,
- who are willing to work through the awkwardness, fear and uncertainty that accompanies racial reconciliation.

Resources

Books:

☞ *Cross Cultural Conflict*, Duane Elmer (IVP)

☞ *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, Jeanette Yep, et al. (IVP) Ch. 8 “Racial Reconciliation.”

☞ *Loving Across Our Differences*, Gerald Sittser (IVP)

☞ *More Than Equals*, Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice (IVP)

☞ *Reaching the World Next Door*, Thom and Marcia Hopler (IVP)

☞ *Theirs Is The Kingdom*, Robert Lupton (Harper & Row)

Articles:

☞ *Breaking Down The Walls of Racism* (study guide by PCUSA, Louisville, KY)

☞ *Biblical Hope in a Multicultural Environment*, Bob Fryling, IVCF

☞ *When Racism Flares Into Violence*, Student Leadership Journal, Paul Tokunaga, Fall 1992

By Bob Fryling, Migum Gweon, Prisilla Kelso, Marcia Wang, Carolyn Aoki, Harry Lew, Susan Van Riesen (coordinator).

Notes:

8“Our aim is to develop Asian American students and staff who... love and serve the church and become change agents and leaders within the church following graduation.”

Many Asian American students, women especially, are frustrated with the Asian American church and their role within it. Another key challenge that must be overcome is the inter-generational gap within many Asian American churches.

To really know our Asian American students (and staff) is to know something of the Asian American church they come from, if that's the case.

Some issues involved in Asian American churches are similar to ones we would find in other churches. There are other issues that seem to be unique to Asian American churches.

Here are some of the issues that InterVarsity students and staff encounter as they seek to work within and with Asian American churches:

- authority and church government
- hierarchical relationships especially across age and gender lines
- the role of women in ministry
- language and cultural barriers
- church-parachurch relationships and the need for mutual respect
- worship styles
- place of English-speaking ministry in the larger ministry
- role expectations of college students and graduates
- spiritual gifts
- body life

Some answers

Here's the most important consideration about being involved in an Asian American church: it needs to be a thoughtful, deliberate decision. Clear, candid

expectations can help prepare that person for some of the joys--as well as some of the difficulties, setbacks and disappointments--that will inevitably rise with so many complex issues involved. Such expectations will help them focus on the goals.

Rather than attempt to give short answers to complex issues, here are three levels of questions that would be good for anyone thinking of involvement in an Asian American church to consider:

1. Asian American churches in general
2. specific Asian American churches
3. personal involvement in that particular church

The resource list at the end will provide further sources of pertinent information.

Questions to ask about Asian American churches in general

Some questions for students (and staff) to consider in deciding whether or not to get involved in an Asian American church:

- What is the source of this interest?
- How familiar am I with this particular Asian culture?
- Will I need to do some work (reading, talking with someone, taking a course) to understand this culture better? Am I willing?
- What are my reasons for choosing an Asian American church versus a multiethnic or a primarily Caucasian church?
- What are my goals in church involvement?

Questions to ask about a specific Asian American church

- What do I know about this church's history?
- What is their vision both long-term and short-term?
- What is the role of the English-speaking ministry (if there is one) within the church? Does the church leadership value its existence and its contributions to the church as a whole?
- How is the church government organized?
- What are the limits of my influence in this church (e.g., can I become an elder, deacon or serve on committees in the wider church)? Can I live peaceably with those limits, if any?
- What is the relationship between the different generations and/or different language groups represented at the church?
- What are the values of this church? What does it want to stand for in the city? In the church community? In its ethnic community?
- Is this church solidly committed to biblical authority and teaching?
- What is the size and ministry to my age group like?
- What is the role of women in ministry here?
- How do the pastor and church leaders feel about parachurch ministries in general and specifically, InterVarsity?

- If an InterVarsity event and a church event were happening at the same time, how would they feel if you happened to choose the InterVarsity event? (Not an endorsement, but the question often arises and students should be prepared for it.)

If I do join, what will my involvement in this church look like?

- How long will be my initial commitment? One year? Three years? More?
- What are my goals and expectations? *Are they realistic?* (Work hard on articulating these, especially expectations. Expectations are often unstated, assumed, and even taken for granted but when they aren't met, cause lots of frustration.)
- How will I deal with disappointments and setbacks?
- With whom will I commit together?
- Where can I go for training and/or support if it is not available in this church?

involvement in this church look like?') will also help set guidelines and a framework in which to

The closer expectations and intentions intersect with reality, the more rewarding church involvement will likely be. Some students may need to think of Asian American church involvement as a cross-cultural ministry situation, and be willing to do all the work that's involved in such cases.

Asking some of the questions above at the very outset can help set realistic expectations. Specifically, thinking through the third set of questions above (*If I do join, what will my*

deal with problems. Meeting with church leaders, whether the senior pastor or an elder/deacon, can help to clarify as well as build trust from the beginning.

Meaningful church involvement while in college can help smooth the transition in the post-college years. Also, talking with both those who've had a very positive experience as well as those who have struggled in an Asian American church can help give a balanced perspective.

Inviting alumni to share their church experience and local pastors to speak in a large group can both raise awareness as well as prepare students for local church involvement. The staff's own perspective on Asian American churches will color the students' whether that is for positive or negative. Staff can help the process by networking with local pastors, getting to know them and the mission of their churches.

Roadblocks to a satisfying church experience

There are three major roadblocks of which to be aware: "dead end" situation, limits of change and danger of burnout.

"Dead-end" situations. A church that is unwilling to change, and has a history of such, will most likely be a "dead end" situation. In this case, if the student or graduate chooses to be there, they will serve without expecting much fundamental change.

Limits of change. Even with churches that show promise of change, the change may be limited. Assessing realistically the limits can help guide involvement and goals.

Danger of burnout. Finally, there is the danger of burnout. This may be especially keen in small churches where manpower is limited or larger churches where a competent young person can be pulled in many directions. In either case, the student

or graduate needs to set clear limits (and learn to say a gentle but firm "no").

Should all Asian Americans attend Asian American churches?

Clearly, not all will attend Asian American churches for a variety of reasons:

- there aren't any in town
- there are some but serving people of another ethnicity or the services are not in English and the student prefers a service in English
- they prefer to be in a church with folk of another ethnicity (i.e., African Americans or Caucasians) or a more multi-ethnic church

Each student is at a different place in their self-awareness of their ethnic identity. What is very comfortable for say, a Korean American may be very awkward and uncomfortable for another Korean American.

Choosing a church and a campus fellowship pose great opportunities for Asian Americans to get stretched out of their comfort zones.

With InterVarsity's emphasis on multi-ethnicity and racial reconciliation, some Asian Americans may want to attend a church different than their upbringing. Others, who have grown up primarily in the majority culture, might want to join an ethnic specific fellowship while in college.

The three articles in the Appendix ("Ethnic Specific Ministry: A Different Lens" "Why Two Fellowships?" and "Covenant Between Harvard-Radcliffe Christian Fellowship and Harvard Asian American Christian Fellowship") should provide some help in thinking through what fellowship and church might be best for your students (if there are indeed such choices to be made).

--Paul Tokunaga

Resources

Books:

- ☞ Bochner, S. *The Mediating Person: Bridges Between Cultures*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1981.

- ☞ Brislin, Richard W. et. al. *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide*. Beverly Hills: Publications, 1986.

- ☞ Casse, Pierre. *Training for the Cross-cultural Mind*, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: SETAR, 1981.

- ☞ Fong, Kenneth U. *Insights for Growing Asian-American Ministries*. Rosemead, CA: Ever-growing Publications, 1990.

- ☞ Fuller, W. Harold. *Mission-church Dynamics: How to Change Bicultural Tensions into Dynamic Missionary Outreach*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1980.

- ☞ Gee, Emma, ed. *Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America*. Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center, UCLA, 1976.

- ☞ Kim, Bok-Lim C. *The Asian Americans: Changing Patterns, Changing Needs*. Montclair, NJ: Assoc. of Korean Christian Scholars in North American, Inc., 1978.

- ☞ Lamb, Rich. *Following Jesus in the Real World*. IVP 1995. (Ch. 6 : “Strategies for Church Involvement”)

- ☞ Schaller, Lyle. *Change Agents*. (Solid material but needs to be nuanced to reflect Asian American culture.)

☞ Stott, John and Coote, Robert T., eds. *Gospel and Culture: The Papers of a Consultation on Gospel and Culture*. Convened by The Lausanne Committee's Theology and Education Group. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979.

☞ Tachiki, Amy, et al. *Roots: An Asian American Reader*. Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1971.

☞ Yep, Jeanette, et al. *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*. IVP 1998. (Ch. 10: "Finding A Church Home.")

Articles:

☞ Chang, Patty. "Koreatown, Youth and the Church." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982): 26-29.

☞ Chikahisa, Paul and Matsushima, Moreen Mokuau. "The Japanese American Family." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982) 11-14.

☞ Choi, Grace. "The Chinese American Family." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982): 8-10.

☞ Hanh, Phynh Thi. "The Vietnamese Family." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982): 20-23.

☞ Ito, Arlene. "100% American." *The Asian American Journey* 7:1 (1984): 14-15.

☞ Kim, Alice. "The Korean Immigrant Family in the U.S." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982): 18-19.

☞ Lee, Helen. "Silent Exodus: Can the East Asian church in America reverse the flight of its next generation." *Christianity Today*, August 12, 1996: 50-53.

☞ Phommasouvanh, Bounlieng. "Aspects of the Lao Family." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982): 24-25.

☞ Yap, Jocelyn. "The Filipino American Family." *The Asian American Journey* 5 (1982): 15-17.

☞ Yu, Eui-Young, "Korean Communities in America: Past, Present, and Future." *Amerasia Journal* 10 (1983): 23-52.

Other Resources:

Goette, Robert D. *Chicagoland English-speaking Asian-American Church Planting Project*. (Articles, diagrams, models for bilingual/second generation churches)

Catalyst, an Asian American ministry, sponsors an annual conference that serves as a platform for discussion of Asian American ministry issues and offers opportunities for networking and resourcing. For information: Dave and Helen Chae, P.O. Box 6436, Irvine, CA 92616, (410) 252-1875.

By Mark Hansen-Kahn, Brenda Wong, Grace Eng, Hon Eng, Geri Rodman, Kristy Baik (coordinator).

Notes:

Notes:

Appendix:

These articles are not part of our Strategic Focus Statement but they address issues frequently raised by staff and students. Feel free to use them in whatever ways helpful.

The three articles, *“Ethnic Specific Ministry: A Different Lens,”* *“Why Two Fellowships?”* and *“Covenant Between Harvard-Radcliffe Christian Fellowship and Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Christian Fellowship”* work as a three-part unit of information dealing with being an ethnic specific fellowship where there is also a multi-ethnic fellowship.

Shame and Guilt

Affiliating As An InterVarsity Chapter

Which Asian Americans Are We Reaching Through InterVarsity?

Ethnic Specific Ministry: A Different Lens

Why Two Fellowships?

Covenant Between Harvard-Radcliffe Christian Fellowship and Harvard Asian American Christian Fellowship

InterVarsity: Home Of Multi-ethnic and Ethnic Specific Chapters

Resources

Questions For Discussion Or Reflection

Shame and Guilt

“Shame on you, Paul!”

Hearing those words were...um, *electrifying*. It was like I was standing on a golf course, surrounded by my parents, my siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, third-cousins back in Japan whom I’ve never met, my grandparents no longer living, and feeling the lightning bolt zap me from head to toe. It was bad enough getting reprimanded for doing something wrong or not well enough. I could take the blame.

But transferring my failure onto my *family* was humiliating. You see, not only was I stricken by lightning. It also zapped all my relatives.

“Shame on you, Bob!”

My Caucasian pal down the street heard his mom, turned his back to her, smirked to himself, and off he went, onto a few more shame-full acts that he would forget by bedtime.

Same street, same age, same homeroom teacher, same baseball team. Different worlds.

I was pretty out-of-control as a sixth-grader. Lunchtime was great because I could talk with my mouth full, eat pudding through a straw, fill my empty milk carton with that awful spinach so I could go back for seconds.

All teachers rotated “lunch room duty.” On Mr. D’s shift, I must have gone overboard. Putting up with me in class and in the lunch room was finally too much for Mr. D. He grabbed me by the arm, took a chair on stage, threw me over his lap, and *in front of 400 first through sixth graders—including my younger sister and brother--spanked me again and again*. My friend, Kirk Gatsby, saved the day by giving me his baseball glove. I buried my face in it to hide the tears of utter humiliation. I was drenched, soaked, washed over by shame. Oldest brother Japanese sixth graders didn’t get spanked in front of the whole school

It was *years* before I could forgive Mr. D for what he had done.

My favorite hobby growing up was shoplifting. It was one of the few things I did well. I fancied myself a modern Robin Hood: take from the rich (any store, the bigger the better) and give to the poor (myself, I rationalized). It rarely occurred to me that I was doing anything *really* wrong (“They have so many of these; they won’t miss one”). What did get my adrenaline going was the fear of getting caught and the horrific shame I would feel as The Only Japanese American Kleptomaniac in The Universe.

I hated studying growing up. Boring and trivial. But what put true fear in my heart was a bad report card. “How can Mom and Dad face the relatives when they come over for Thanksgiving dinner?” All my cousins were disgustingly bright. “And how did Paul do this term?”

What disciplined study wouldn’t bring, an eraser and the right colored ink would. Better to intercept my report card and change the grades than to look bad on Cousin Comparison Day.

One week before the premiere of our high school musical, *Flower Drum Song*, in which I was lead dancer, I took the old stage adage “Break a leg!” too literally. As I rode my motorcycle *sans helmet*, a car ran a stop sign, ran into me broadside, hurtling me in the air and all over the road. My hard head managed to escape injury, but my right foot was shattered into 12 pieces. I spent two weeks in a hospital bed, receiving 12 pounds of chocolate and lots of sympathy. Among the other less tasty tokens of sympathy were letters from the president and vice-president of Dad’s company. Their notes expressed care from the entire life insurance company for whom my Dad had worked for years.

What should have been comforting was humiliating. *I had made Dad look foolish for allowing his son—Number One Son—ride a motorcycle! Without a helmet! What kind of father*

would do that? What kind of father—who sells insurance—would permit such irresponsibility? I felt

like everyone at the home office of Franklin Life Insurance Company in Springfield, Illinois, wherever that was, were ridiculing Dad.

My thank-you letters were loaded with personal contrition as I tried to get my father off the hook and lay all blame (for getting hit by a car breaking the law) on myself.

Mom, Dad and 24 aunts, uncles and older cousins spent the better part of World War II in concentration camps for 115,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Their crime? Their Japanese heritage.

My grandparents had been in the U.S. for about 40 years when they were sent to the camps. They were not allowed to become U.S. citizens. All of my aunts, uncles and cousins were born in the U.S. and were American citizens.

Two themes got them through that horrible period of their lives. *Shikata ga nai* means “It cannot be helped; it has to be.” *Giri*—“doing what has to be done quietly with an entirely stoic demeanor.” They didn’t fight it, start riots or burn any government buildings. From 1942 to 1945, they lived in barbed wire-surrounded barracks in desolate deserts and mountains. When they were released, much of what they had worked so hard for was no longer there.

Growing up, unspoken shame permeated our home. Not too often, the word “camp” would come up and I would watch Mom and Dad’s jaw and neck muscles tighten. The awkward silence would signal the need for a new topic to discuss. In our home, as it was with most other Japanese American families, we left it alone. It was like having a 400 lb. gorilla napping in your living room. You gently walked around it. You didn’t want to wake it up for fear of what it would do to you.

It wasn't until the early '80s when the government owned their actions, did Japanese Americans finally speak up about their experiences in camp.

55 mph shame

I'm driving on I-285, the "Perimeter" that loops around Atlanta. I'm doing the speed limit (well, close enough...). From back in the pack, a pick-up fills my rear-view mirror, passes on the right, then zips into my lane in front of me, and slows down to make his point about my love affair with 55 mph.

So badly, *so badly*, I want to "go thou and do likewise" with a hand gesture thrown in for good measure. As I accelerate and practice the gesture, I suddenly back off and keep my anger to myself.

"If I do it, he will think all Asian Americans are like me."

Resigned and seething, I resolve to buy a Caucasian Halloween mask for the next time I do battle on I-285.

Every person who is a racial and ethnic minority in the United States knows what shame is....Those who have experienced defeat in any sense have experienced shame. Shame is feeling disgraced. Shame is feeling "the eyes of the world" upon them. Shame is feeling unworthy. Shame is experienced when the dominant culture interprets silence as ignorance or stupidity. Shame is trying to hide one's ethnicity. Sometimes shame exhibits itself in working extra hard to be a United States citizen while not being treated as one.

David Hirano, chief executive of the United Church Board for World Ministries in "Shame and Racism" paper presented at the United Church of Christ Consultation on Racism, May 2, 1989.

Shame and Guilt

If you have worked with both Asian American and European American students, you've probably noticed *something* is different. It's hard to pinpoint, but it is different.

Much of the difference may boil down to this:

Asian Americans are often affected more by shame, European Americans more by guilt...especially those European Americans brought up in the church.

European American morality finds its roots in Puritanism and in some biblical principles (the Ten Commandments, the "Golden Rule," Proverbs, and to a lesser degree, the Sermon on the Mount). Throughout our country's history is the sense of "right is right and wrong is wrong." Only until recent years, when a strong wave of relativism has threatened to wash away these standards, there has been a universal code of behavior. Today, they are often referred to as "traditional values."

Stan Inouye, president of Iwa, a ministry to more effectively reach Asian Americans for Christ, writes, "While guilt occurs when an absolute standard is violated, shame occurs in a relational context."

"For the Japanese [or Asian American], shame is experienced when a person in a given situation fails to behave in a manner considered appropriate by others. This failure is usually attributed to a lack of character and poor moral development. And because of the sense of collective identity found in Japanese [or Asian American] families, any shame brought to one family member is often felt by the entire family." *The Kaki Seed*, Winter 1984

Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, distinguishes shame and guilt cultures:

"True shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behavior, not, as true guilt cultures do, on

an internalized conviction of sin. Shame is a reaction to other people's criticism. A man is shamed either by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by [fantasizing] to himself that he has been made ridiculous."

"In either case it is a potent sanction. But it requires an audience or at least a [person's] fantasy of an audience. Guilt does not. In a nation where honor means living up to one's own picture of oneself, a [person] may suffer from guilt though no [person] knows of [their] misdeed and a [person's] feeling of guilt may actually be relieved by confessing [their] sin."

Benedict was writing about the people of Japan in 1946. As a nation, especially one recovering from a humiliating defeat in World War II, their sense of corporate shame was widely and deeply experienced. Asian Americans today cannot be called a shame culture to the extent of Japan 50 years ago. We are both Asian *and* American. Our heritage is a shame-based culture, while we live and breathe in one that is guilt-based. Nonetheless, our shame roots produce some shame fruit. It's in us.

Tom Lin writes in *Losing Face & Finding Grace*, "Shame is interwoven into the fabric of the Asian family. Because our actions affect not only ourselves but entire generations of relatives and family, Asian Americans have a tough task ahead when they make mistakes and try to 'fix' it. Friends and family respond with 'You're not good enough!' or 'Why can't you do this as well as X does it?' or 'How could you shame us like that?'

"Instead of feeling guilty that we have made a mistake, suddenly shame makes us feel like we *are* the mistake. As a result, trying to 'fix' the problem becomes a daunting task because we are the problem. We feel isolated and alienated from others."

Tom Lin, *Losing Face & Finding Grace*

J. Isamu Yamamoto tells of some Caucasian Christian friends who had developed a friendship with a young Asian American man: “Although they socialized together, and he even attended church with them, they could never persuade him to become a Christian.

“They finally realized that his parents thought such a decision would bring shame to their family—not because they belonged to another religion, but because they wanted him to pursue a medical career.

“They thought that becoming a Christian meant he would become a minister or missionary when most of their friends’ children were becoming doctors, lawyers, or engineers.”

“Although the young man also aspired to become a surgeon, he did not want his parents’ friends to think he might become something else and thus bring shame to his family.”

“Therefore, he resisted conversion although he wanted to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Not until these Christians also befriended his parents and assured them that a devout Christian can serve Christ in any profession did the young man publicly commit his life to Christ.”

*“Sharing Your Faith With Asian Americans,”
Christian Research Journal, Fall 1992*

Postmodern guilt: not quite the same ol' same ol'

Tale of Two Exams

1968: My high school calculus final exam. Here’s my story: “Whoops, forgot to study hard. I lean over to sneak a peek at my brainy friend one row over. Can’t let her see me. She’ll turn me in without a thought. Oh no! Caught by the teacher! Drat! Caught red-handed! Sent straight to the principal’s office. Two weeks detention and an automatic “F” on the exam.. Major bummer. I got what I deserved.”

1998: My daughter's high school calculus final exam. Let's hear her story: "Whoops, chose shooting hoops with 'ol Dad instead of cramming for the exam. All looked pretty Greek to me...and this isn't even Greek class! Har, har. My friend one row over senses my predicament, shifts his exam to the edge of his desk. He winks. I wink. Bingo! I score a 92! Playing hoops with Dad was important. I knew it would all work out.

This *totally fictitious* story makes the point: Western culture has done a spin move on sin and guilt. What was once a "Wrong! Guilty! Go back to Go! Don't pass Go! Collect nothing!" is now "Hey, I messed up...kinda. But, I didn't hurt anyone. And, I spent time with Dad. Who can argue with that?"

It's no longer 1968. Absolutes have been replaced with "sorta/maybe/kinda's." Additionally, the stark individualism of modernism has much of its edge chiseled away. Frank Sinatra sang, "I did it my way." Today's students say, "We'll do it our way...or not at all."

Today's Generation X is more community-based, less individualistic. Gen X is also becoming more shame-based and less guilt-based. Some of the same approaches you take with non-Asian American students *may* also work with Asian Americans.

(For a more thorough discussion of the shift from guilt to shame, see *Adopted Out of Shame Into God's Family* in Jimmy Long's *Generating Hope* (IVP), pgs. 99-113.).

Toxic Shame and Healthy Shame

Is all shame...shameful?

Dr. Ken Fong, pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles distinguishes between "healthy shame" and "toxic shame."

"Healthy shame is an intermittent, proper awareness of being a limited flawed human being. It

leads to the acknowledgement of your need for help from a higher power. It is the source of creativity. It is the core of true spirituality. It is the healthy sense of sin that led many of the tax collectors and prostitutes to Jesus to receive forgiveness. *Asians being shame-based can be a real spiritual positive, not a negative, if it creates an ongoing need for Christ in us.*"

He references three biblical passages:

- "Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O Lord." [Psalm 83:16]
- "Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" [Exodus 15:11]
- "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." [1 John 8-10]

Toxic shame, on the other hand, "is the dark feeling that you are flawed as a human being. In spite of your efforts to change, deep inside, it feels hopeless because you do not believe that genuine change is truly possible. After all, you did not just make a mistake, *you* are the mistake."

"It is the reason we do not tell the truth about ourselves. It leads to portraying yourself to be a shameless person. It leads to spiritual bankruptcy that is camouflaged by practiced piety. It is the sin that kept the Pharisees and Sadducees from acknowledging their need for Jesus Christ. It is what prevents our churches [and InterVarsity chapters] from becoming true communities of grace, mercy, holiness and justice."

- "Their people, drained of power, are dismayed and put to shame. They are like plants in the field, like tender green shoots, like grass

sprouting on the roof, scorched before it grows up." [2 Kings 19:26]

- “If I am guilty—woe to me? Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction.” [Job 10:15]
- “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?” [Luke 9:25]

Insights for Growing Asian-American Ministries,
Kenneth Fong, 1990

In *Good Guilt, Bad Guilt* (IVP), Becca Cowan Johnson helpfully charts some distinctions between healthy and toxic shame:

Healthy Shame	Toxic Shame
occurs when we disobey God	→ occurs when we attempt to obey people & ways of world
convicts-----	→ condemns
involves remorse and repentance-----	→ involves regrets and repetition
forgiveness is accepted and received-----	→ no forgiveness is accepted or received
offers grace-----	→ offers judgment
is releasing-----	→ is restrictive
is time-giving-----	→ is time-consuming
result: a contrite heart ----	→ result: a defensive or hiding heart

Ken Fong: “To be driven by toxic shame is like having a hole in your soul, i.e., we do not know who we really are because we have been taught to be ashamed of who we really are by other toxically shame-based people that we trusted to tell us the truth about ourselves.”

Signposts of Toxic Shame

What signs or hints inform us that someone is struggling with toxic shame?

- When your assessment of a student’s capabilities (very high) and their self-assessment (very low) don’t even come close.
- When you tell them, “What a great job you did!” and you get back, “No, no, I messed up with several parts of it.”
- When one’s personal piety seems “too good to be true,” because it probably is. There is so much shame that a “spiritual cover-up” attempts to hide their true spiritual condition.
- When there is a reluctance to talk candidly about their family, especially their relationship with their parents.
- When they have a hard time looking you, an authority figure, in the eye.
- When admittance to grad school at Cal or the University of Michigan or Emory feels like rejection of their personhood because Harvard and Stanford turned them down.
- When their public prayers are “I’m such a worm” offerings: filled with remorse, guilt, shame, and total unworthiness. Translation: “How can God stand me? He probably can’t.”

When there is a reluctance to “own” their ethnicity. “I’m American (period, end of conversation, how’s the weather?).”

What Makes The Shamed Feel More Ashamed

Without even trying, we can heighten the shame Asian Americans feel by:

- forcing them to choose between their family or the fellowship (weekend conferences, summer missions projects, InterVarsity staff), making it seem one choice is godly and the other is not.
- with nothing but good intended, forcing them to do things “the white way,” like contact evangelism, direct and frank conflict resolution, directly asking family and friends for funds for summer missions.

Pastoring shame-based folks well

Help them to understand that perfectionism is not a Christian concept. Yes, we should work hard and strive for excellence, but not to earn God’s favor. If we are his, we have his favor.

No amount of sweating/grunting/pushing will increase his view of us one iota.. Teach and train how ...like on an inner tube floating down a gentle river on a beautiful spring day...to bask in God’s love and acceptance.

If they are already active in the fellowship and taking their responsibilities seriously, *don’t push them to excel or do more*. Pastoring them well might mean encouraging them to back off on something, *maybe even to miss a conference*.

Accept and appreciate the respect they show you as an “elder.” If you have any gray hair, put away that Grecian Formula! Authority figures generally garner greater respect from Asian Americans. It may feel awkward at first but you will grow to

appreciate it. You will honor them by allowing them to honor you.

✓ *Model face-losing.* They know, live and breathe face-saving. Be a walking model of someone who is willing to lose face. Be vulnerable. Share your weaknesses as well as your strengths. Talk about your struggles with temptation.

✓ *Understand and accept the group-ness of Asian Americans.* See the positives: they really care for each other rather than being individualistic, if you recruit one to come to fall conference, you'll probably get five, their decision-making process is done in community instead of by themselves.

Finding Grace

More than anything, people from shame-based cultures need to know and experience God's unconditional, unearned love. If shame causes them to feel they are a mistake, major spiritual surgery is needed to help them know that God loves them like this:

"Fear not, I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ...Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you and people in exchange for your life." [Isaiah 43: 1-4]

"No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame." [Psalm 25:3]

"Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame." [Psalm 34:5]

"Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." [Romans 10:11]

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." [Hebrews 12:2]

Jesus is the shame-saver. He "scorned" (or "disregarded," NRSV) the shame of the cross by

voluntarily climbing it, taking upon himself the utter humiliation of the spiritual death we deserved.

Where does that leave us? Unashamed. Grateful. Joyful. Even a bit giddy.

One of the best things you can do to help your hard-working and ultra-responsible Asian Americans grow, is to *help them make their personal relationship with Jesus their top priority*. Speak and teach frequently about God's grace. They know the "work" part of the Christian life. Studying together verses like those above and helping them wrestle with them is good "open- heart surgery."

References:

Books:

☞ *The Chrysanthemum and The Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, Ruth Benedict, New American Library, 1946. Now dated, but considered by many the best guide to understanding Japanese culture.

☞ *Good Guilt, Bad Guilt*, Becca Cowan Johnson, InterVarsity Press. Strongly recommended by Tom Lin, especially chapters 13 and 14 on shame and guilt.

☞ *Insights for Growing Asian-American Ministries*, Kenneth Uyeda Fong, EverGrowing Publications (out of print, but veteran Asian American staff may own a copy).

☞ *Japanese Patterns of Behavior*, Takie Sugiyama Lebra, University of Hawaii Press, 1976. I haven't read it, but is highly thought of and often quoted by scholars I respect.

Losing Face & Finding Grace, Tom Lin, InterVarsity Press. Tom has five excellent Bible studies in the section "Breaking Free": Performance Orientation,

Beyond the Image, Toxic Shame, Earning a Trip to Heaven? and Motivated by Love.

By Paul Tokunaga

Notes:

Affiliating As An InterVarsity Chapter

Thumbing through the university's guide to clubs and organizations, you instinctively go to "Religions Organizations." Time to sniff out our partners-in-ministry. Crusade, sure. Baptist Campus Ministry, always. Victorious Sanctimonious Turn-or-Burn-Til-You're Crispy Fellowship, oh well.

Then, Asian Christian Fellowship. Hmm.

You ask around, you slip into a meeting and slide out before new folk are introduced, you begin to wonder. "Might they become an InterVarsity chapter?"

Before you whisper, "Done!" here are a few tips and reflections from The Chapter Affiliation School of Hard Knocks.

Dating...an adequate analogy (until it breaks down)

The affiliation process, when handled well, is much like dating, when handled well.

Like dating, on the front end there is the stage of *acknowledging the other party's existence*. We know each other is out there.

Our staff gets to know their staff (or person in charge). We talk about our ministries. We walk away feeling, "Nice person—glad she/he is on this campus."

As we bump into each other in the snack bar and chat a bit between appointments, *we notice things our fellowships have in common*: we're both involved in the campus-wide outreach, the all-campus prayer meetings, they like InterVarsity Press books, they send a few members to Urbana, personal friendships develop between members of each group.)

We like what we see in each other's group. Mutual admiration sets in. Our students are also developing friendships with some of their folk and invite them to attend our large group. They reciprocate and invite a few of us to theirs. Some of the songs are the same,

their speakers are very good. We admire the evangelistic zeal amongst their members.

You check your phone messages. One stands out, “Hey, Susan, can we get together soon to talk? Our students are talking about becoming an InterVarsity chapter. Call me right away, OK?”

Wisdom from the trenches...or Jao to do it well

STOP!! Drop the phone! This is the point to put away your (parents’) “Kumbaya” and “We Are One In The Spirit” background music and call your supervisor. Even as the hint of somehow working together with this fellowship wafts into your nostrils, there are bigger, deeper, more long-term questions that need to be dealt with.

Here are the main ones (courtesy of U. of Chicago multi-ethnic chapter staff Greg Jao):

- ☑ Bringing an Asian American fellowship into InterVarsity is an area-wide and possibly region-wide decision. If your supervisor (team leader or area director) says postpone or kill the idea, trust them.
- ☑ Across our movement, each region has worked hard at the management level, to carve out a philosophy of ministry that brings the national values of InterVarsity to bear on their region, and in some cases, each area within the region.
- ☑ Within that philosophy of ministry, having an Asian American fellowship may or may not be the chosen avenue for reaching Asian Americans. We have worked hard to respect and honor each region for their approach towards ministry. Discuss it at length with your supervisor (who will probably discuss it with their supervisor and...)

- ✓ Greg sites at least three good reasons for having key directors in your region behind the decision to pursue affiliation:
 - helps overcome possible negative reactions among other staff;
 - creates flexibility and awareness at the conference/training event level;
 - provides support to the Asian American student leaders as the process unfolds.
- ✓ “Are there Asian American staff in the area or region who can help me do the cross-cultural interpretation that might be necessary or who can at least help provide an Asian face for students to relate to?”
- ✓ When an area or region decides to make reaching Asian American students (or other specific people group on campus) a priority, it usually involves a staff orientation and training program. When a non-InterVarsity fellowship considers affiliation, they want to know that they are *wanted*—not just accepted--throughout the area and region.
- ✓ Be aware that adding an Asian American (or any other ethnic specific) chapter will not necessarily help your area and region grow in becoming more multi-ethnic.

The strategic value of an ethnic specific fellowship is missiological—it hopefully enables us to reach another part of the campus with the Gospel, namely Asian American students who likely would not be as easily reached by non-Asian Americans.

ministry to Asian American students a priority. They like the idea of their Asian American students

Having done all that, back to Susan and The Phone Call. The meeting happens and it goes quite well. They like InterVarsity because we seem to be making

getting resources and training than they are able to provide.

We make it crystal clear: we aren't thinking of "merging" their group into our fellowship. We respect their desire as a fellowship to reach Asian Americans and want to see that continue.

We set up a meeting with our exec and their leadership team, "to build on our partnership," as we put it. The conversations there are natural and warm.

It's like a comic strip with a room full of people, with each having one of those "thinking not speaking" bubbles over their heads: "This is great! I really like these guys! Why don't we do this again!"

Now we sit on the precipice of decision: *do we date again?*

We could just shake hands (maybe a light hug) and say it's been fun and each go our own way.

Or (*The Big Or*), *they ask if we could see each other again*. There! I've done it! I've crossed that thick line! All I can do now is suck it in and wait for the answer.

If the answer comes back yes, and you begin to "date," there are a few things you as staff could do to see if the match is made in, that's right, heaven.

Like dating, there is an exit door. It is important to state upfront, "This may be a good thing...but it may not be the best for your fellowship and it may not be the best for ours, either. If that happens, it's not a failure. We're just exploring."

Keep in mind the element of *shame* in Asian culture. If the expectation is that it is a "done deal," and then it doesn't work out, the Asian American fellowship could lose serious face and relationships for several years between the two groups could become quite awkward.

Getting to know the Asian Christian Fellowship

- ✓ Get to know the fellowship—their staff, leaders and members.

Try to get a sense of their *raison d'être*, their reason for existence. Is it similar to InterVarsity's Purpose Statement?

Do you *like* the folk in the group?

- ✓ Picture the group as an InterVarsity chapter: do they already embody most if not all of our purposes and goals?

- ✓ Pray and ask your supervisor and a co-worker or two to join you in prayer. These affiliations are not slam-dunks and merit serious prayer. As you get to know their staff (or key student leaders, if they don't have staff), find out some of the basic information about the group (and share the same about InterVarsity with them as things develop).

- ✓ How did it begin?
Who were the founders and what was their vision for the group?
Are the founders still involved or connected to the group?

- ✓ Is the group well-resourced?
Are they tied into a regional or national organization or a local church, officially or loosely?
Do those leaders give their blessing for the group to consider joining InterVarsity?
As you get to know their leaders, are you comfortable with them?

- ✓ Is there a local "staff member" or a non-student

who leads or gives some leadership to the group? What is their role?

- ☑ Is it their expectation to continue in that role or some other role if the group becomes an InterVarsity chapter?
Would you be comfortable having them on InterVarsity staff?
Would you look forward to working closely together with that person?
- ☑ If the answer is “no, you wouldn’t be comfortable joining staff,” how will you break it to that person?
- ☑ Down the road, could you see their keenest leaders as InterVarsity staff or volunteer staff?
- ☑ Invite the Asian American fellowship *and their staff or designated leader* to your training events. Start with something small like on-campus Bible study training or a weekend conference. It’s important they *experience InterVarsity*.
Be sure to de-brief with their leaders afterwards.
What was good about the weekend for them?
What was uncomfortable? Make note of these things, because they might precipitate changes in how your conferences are done.
Would you be willing to make changes in your events to make them more comfortable for the Asian American fellowship?
- ☑ If their time at a weekend conference goes well, take the next step: invite them to your summer training. This is where the rubber meets road if there aren’t already skid marks moving through this process. Chapter camps and the like give students the best exposure to our *culture*.
Be sure you are there to “interpret” the camp

to them and to be there if difficulties arise. You may want to check in daily with several of their students on how things are going for them. For some, it may be their first in-depth exposure to non-Asian American Christians.

- ✓ If the group is directly affiliated or sponsored by a local church, what expectations does the church have, if any, for the members of the group? (I.e., lead the college group, teach Sunday School.)
- ✓ Does the group have a Statement of Faith or Beliefs?
Does it square with basic evangelical theology, as in InterVarsity's Basis of Faith?
Are there any beliefs or practices that might be problematic if they became a part of InterVarsity?
Are you equipped and prepared to deal with them?

In what possible ways might they suffer?

Before you pick out a ring...

Here are a few questions to reflect on. You may want to bring your supervisor in on the reflecting.

- ✓ What will the Asian American fellowship bring to your work with the multi-ethnic chapter (and any other InterVarsity chapter(s) on campus)?
Do they have strengths and qualities that will enhance the current InterVarsity ministry?
How will the Asian American fellowship impact the area and region?
- ✓ What will InterVarsity bring to the Asian American fellowship?
In what ways will that fellowship grow if they affiliate with InterVarsity?

- ✓ Are you, the area staff team, and the regional staff team in a good place to receive and responsibly incorporate the fellowship into the current ministry?
- ✓ What possible staffing changes in the next few years need to be taken into account as you think of this addition?
How much longer do you plan to be at that campus?
- ✓ What staffing resources can you *realistically* offer the fellowship?
If you become their staff, what will you give up in order to serve the fellowship well?
Have your supervisor and you agreed on that change?
If you plan to bring on another staff person to work with the Asian American group, it would be important to introduce that candidate to the fellowship and get their candid feedback.
- ✓ If the group has ties to a particular church, denomination, or network of churches, it is important to meet with them and to receive their blessing. This is generally more important in Asian churches than in Caucasian churches.
Simply ask the group's leaders: "Who else should I talk to about possible InterVarsity affiliation to make sure we have their blessing?"
You might find this ponderous, but it is an important part of the process. If the affiliation doesn't receive the blessing of key people, it likely won't or shouldn't happen.
- ✓ Be prepared for a s-l-o-w process. It may feel like feet-dragging to you, but if the process goes too quickly it may feel rushed to those deciding on affiliation. It is not uncommon for the process

to take up to several years. Because you know (and trust) InterVarsity, it's easy to assume everyone else should, too. Give them time to "ramp up."

- ☑ Put yourself in their shoes: "Do we want to become a part of this big (white) organization? What will we lose if we join? Will we get swallowed up? Will we be allowed to remain an Asian American fellowship or will we eventually be forced to merge with the "other" InterVarsity chapter?"

The Big Rub

In most every situation thus far, starting or affiliating an Asian American fellowship where a "multi-ethnic" fellowship already exists brings questioning and criticism. "Isn't our group good enough for them? I thought InterVarsity was for multi-ethnicity—this seems contrary to me. The body of Christ should be united!"

The staff plays an important—probably the most important—role in this process. There are several things the staff can do to best facilitate the process:

- ☑ Do your *biblical homework*. There is no text stating, "Thou shalt be an ethnic specific fellowship" or "a multi-ethnic fellowship." Know where you stand. Also, know that our current "position" in InterVarsity allows for both ethnic specific and multi-ethnic fellowships. While you may lean towards one, be aware (and fair) about the benefits of the other.
- ☑ *Listen well*. You may be doing this for hours at a time. It is important that you hear people out.

The answers are not easy. We mention it here so staff can be prepared for some intense and long discussions.

(For more in-depth treatments of this issue, read “Ethnic Specific Or Multi-ethnic Chapters?” in the Appendix and “Questions People Ask About Asian American Ministry” by Lisa Sung and the Asian American staff in metro Chicago. Lisa’s paper is available upon request from the Asian American Ministry office.)

If there are Asian Americans already in your chapter and an Asian American fellowship does affiliate on your campus, they will likely feel uncomfortable and awkward. All of a sudden, a spotlight finds them. If they prefer to stay with the multi-ethnic fellowship, they might feel like they are not being true to their “Asian side.” If they choose to leave and join the Asian American fellowship, they may feel like they are deserting their friends. If they become members of both, they’ll likely burn out.

Courtship, then marriage

The process is going well, relationships look good, God seems to be giving his blessing. Now what?

Kiss the bride, of course!

The ceremony of becoming an InterVarsity chapter should be a memorable activity. Both parties agree to “marriage”—that’s no small thing. It’s time to celebrate!

In 1994, a new Asian American chapter affiliated with InterVarsity at Harvard. Together, they drew up a covenant between the multi-ethnic and the Asian American chapter. It declared their commitment to each other and spelled out specifically what that meant: sharing a training event, holding several joint fellowship meetings, praying for each other. You’ll find this covenant in this Appendix.

On another campus where there was a multi-ethnic chapter and an African American chapter, one student (with high energy!) was on both leaderships and was a liaison between both groups.

In the first few years of “marriage,” between the multi-ethnic chapter and an *existing* Asian American chapter, it might be helpful to *not* have many joint

activities. This can allay any fears the Asian American group might have of merger and to give them time and space to develop their own group identity within InterVarsity.

This was done at the University of Chicago, reports multi-ethnic chapter staff Greg Jao, and it helped establish the incoming chapter.

Greg also notes that there are significant differences for an *existing* Asian American group to join InterVarsity than when we birth one ourselves.

Examples of the former are Northwestern University and U. of Chicago (came to us from Asian American Christian Fellowship, a separate organization based in Southern California), U. of Michigan, Cornell U., Emory U.

Examples of the latter are Harvard U., Boston U., Cal-Berkeley

Here's where the dating/courtship/marriage analogy breaks down: each year it would be good to sit down with the leaders of both groups (individually, then together might work best) to see the arrangement of separate chapters is working well for both groups. What changes might improve the relationships between each chapter? What changes might help each chapter be stronger?

Schools where we have multi-ethnic and Asian American chapters

Here is a list (for the '98-99 year) of schools with both kinds of chapters. You may want to pick the brains of the respective staff (check the back of your staff directory for campus/staff) and get their input on your specific situation.

Pacific

Univ. of Cal-Berkeley

Central

Washington Univ.

Southwest
Trinity Univ.

Great Lakes West
Northwestern Univ.
Univ. of Chicago
Univ. of IL-Chicago

Great Lakes East
Univ. of Michigan

New England
Boston Univ.
Harvard Univ.
M.I.T.

New York/New Jersey
Cornell Univ.
New York Univ.
Rutgers U-New Brunswick
Rutgers U-Newark
Syracuse Univ.

Southeast
Emory Univ.

by Paul Tokunaga

Notes:

Notes:

Which Asian Americans Are We Reaching Through InterVarsity? And Which Ones Are We Not Reaching?

Assimilation includes identification with majority white culture; integration into schools, workplace, social groupings; marital assimilation (marriage to non-Asians).

Ethnic Identity focuses on the retention of ethnic ways.

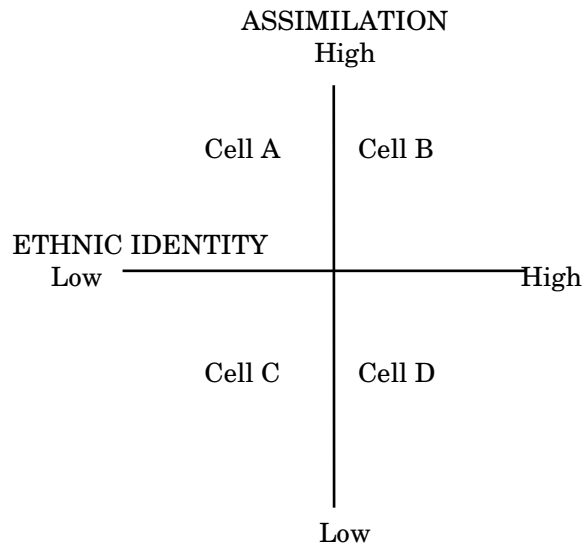


Figure by Harry Kitano and Roger Daniels
Description of Diagram by Jeanette Yep

Cell A—high assimilation, low ethnic identity

- person who views self as more American than ethnic; primarily identifies with the white majority; little interest in emphasizing/exploring Asian identity, language and lifestyle; expectations tend to be American

- friendships, social patterns reflect high number of non-Asians

- often 3rd generation-plus Asian Americans and have grown up isolated from other Asian Americans
- tends to feel completely accepted/assimilated; tends to feel out of place in a large gathering of Asian Americans as many non-Asians do
- many Asian Americans in InterVarsity are Cell A persons
- ethnic minority origin still visible

Cell B—high assimilation, high ethnic identity

- can be/feel as assimilated as the Cell A person, but retains a strong sense of ethnic identity
- fully/truly bi-cultural, moving back and forth between American and Asian cultures
- usually quite interested in keeping their ethnic heritage alive and is knowledgeable about it
- friendships, social patterns, membership in organizations tend to reflect bi-cultural perspective
- sometimes these are the bridge persons in InterVarsity who relate to both Asian American and multi-ethnic fellowships

Cell C—low assimilation, low ethnic identity

- have acquired little of American culture and also uncomfortable with an ethnic identity
- not at home in either culture; doubly marginalized
- not many Asian Americans in this category
- perhaps some Eurasians fit this cell

Cell D—low assimilation, high ethnic identity

- usually first-generation immigrants (especially of a more advanced age) or anyone identifying more closely to the ethnic community than an American community
- often spends much of their lives within the ethnic community enclave

- may include Asian Americans who feel the dominant culture will never treat them as equals

- marriage to non-Asian Americans is very unlikely

Some questions you might ask about your fellowship or campus

1. In which of the four cells do the Asian Americans in our fellowship fall into?
2. Do any nationalities in our chapter mostly fall into one particular cell?
3. How do the students in one cell relate to students in other cells?
4. Do leaders in our chapter seem to arise out of any particular cell?
5. To foster unity in the fellowship, are there ways to strengthen relationships between those in different cells?
6. For each cell, list what other campus organizations and enclaves of which students outside the fellowship would tend to be a part.

What avenues or strategies could the InterVarsity students in the same cells use to reach those folks?

7. Which of the four cells is least represented? Are there other Christian groups on campus reaching out to those in that cell? If not, could our group figure out ways to reach out to them (it may be socially awkward and quite stretching for your fellowship)?

Ethnic Specific Ministry: A Different Lens

"When you close your eyes and envision the Kingdom of Heaven, what will it be like?"

"In heaven, we'll all be Japanese American, won't we?"

One morning at my annual church summer camp, as a fourth-grader, I distinctly remember being asked this question. As we gathered for worship that day, I was awestruck by the beauty and majesty invoked by the chorus of 400 Japanese Americans singing praises to God. The melding of people, gathered together to proclaim one singular love and truth to our God was an amazing sight I had never experienced before.

So when I was asked to picture heaven and all the multitudes singing, this was the exact image that came to mind. I thought about all the people who will be worshipping God together and how amazing that will be.

When all of us die and go to heaven, from my 10-year-old perspective, you will be a new creation: *You will all be Japanese American.*

Jesus is the common goal as we, people of different cultures, pursue our faith--individually and collectively as a unified body. The truth of God is the same, but the way we understand this truth is often strongly shaped by influences that are unique to our cultural backgrounds.

Ethnicity is a powerful and influential lens through which we come to see and understand ourselves, our world, and our God.

There are vital questions, then, to be asked about the cultural lens through which we see our personal and faith development:

- * Do we all understand the same things when we study Scripture?
- * Are we limited in our view?

- * How does our cultural perspective enhance our understanding of God?
- * How does it inhibit it?

Ethnic specific ministry offers a strategy to redeem culture, equip and train minority leaders, and reach unchurched people. Ethnic specific ministry enables us to tap creative avenues to develop minority leaders who love, know and understand God and who love and embrace who God has made them to be.

As we learn to understand both the beauty of who God has made us and the sinfulness of who we are as disciples within our cultural contexts, we can speak God's truth to others.

Redeeming culture

InterVarsity has developed a strength in listening to and critiquing our current culture and offering a genuine and deep biblical response. Every people group, every culture, and every person, reflects the image of God.

At the same time, inherent within each culture, society and individual, is the influence of sin and the fall. As we search for truth, our eyes see through an ethnic lens, which offers both strengths and weaknesses.

Identifying differences of culture, their influences and then evaluating them in the light of Scripture is essential for growth and development.

Many Asian Americans place a high value on harmony of friendships in a relational circle. Having too strong of a voice or "rocking the boat" is not affirmed or taught in an Asian context.

Many Asian Americans have a stronger corporate understanding of the world around them (family units versus individuals). For Asian Americans, the opinions and beliefs of their families and commun-

ities are greater and more influential in the shaping of their identity than it generally is in the majority

culture. An ethnic specific setting offers a special opportunity to address some of these issues and forward God's sanctifying work.

In my experience, ethnic identity development is a key discipleship issue for many Asian Americans. Asian American students struggle to know who they are and how to process their ethnicity. All people face the fundamental questions of "Who am I?" but being in a minority culture complicates this process.

Burgers, fries, shoes on or shoes off?

I love a good burger and fries, but yet with most of my meals at home, I use chop sticks. As I watch my parents express themselves in their own way, and then compare them to models of non-Asian families around, I see many differences.

I want everyone who comes into my room to take their shoes off, but not everyone does. Do I confront them, or is it just okay? Being raised knowing the "nail that sticks up gets hammered", and also knowing that it's "the squeaky wheel gets oiled" confuses me. Why do these things cause tension in me?

Understanding who God has created us to be as individuals, as well as a people, is foundational in learning to love and accept ourselves, God and others. In the context of an ethnic specific fellowship, these issues can be targeted and worked on.

As we build leaders and fellowships, we want to explore how each person makes a unique contribution in their chapter. While an ethnic

Equipping and training leaders

specific ministry provides space for more specific issues of culture and ethnicity to be addressed, it also gives ethnic minority students a place to learn, grow and fail in a leadership position.

“I was the only Asian American in my otherwise all-white fellowship. There were very few Asian American students on campus, so I was a bit of an oddity in my fellowship. Because I am not an outspoken or loud person, I was seen as a weak leader. I believed I was a leader. I consulted with a senior Asian American staff leader, who encouraged me to become a volunteer staff in a region where there were several Asian American staff. So, I moved cross country to do that. I am discovering that leadership often looks different for Asian Americans. In this context, I’m beginning to see that I am indeed a leader.”

Asian American volunteer staff

As Asian churches experience a decline in membership and a transfer from older generations to new generations, there is a need for a new wave of Asian leaders to help lead the church. Being a part of what God is doing to raise up a generation of Asian American leaders who are both prophetic to the Asian American community and to the non-Asian American community is an opportunity we have today.

Evangelism

The truth of Scripture transcends time and culture. But in our current evangelism training in InterVarsity, are there ways in which we are not speaking about Jesus in the most relevant ways to Asian Americans?

While Asian Americans are by no means the only ones who can speak the truth of Jesus to other Asian Americans, doing evangelism *Asian American to Asian American* offers some distinct advantages.

Points of connections, familiarity, and the ability to role model and lead from a common context offer a unique perspective to other Asian Americans. As ethnic specific ministries help redeem culture and train minority leaders, they can also reach out to unchurched Asian Americans and proclaim the gospel that is contextualized for them as a specific audience.

Growth edges for Asian American ministries are: developing outreach strategies to Southeast Asians, South Asians, as well as other East Asians.

The Asian American population is very diverse socio-economically, culturally, and generationally. The immigration waves have all been very different. This makes for a less than homogenous group of people to reach.

As a body of believers we need to raise up leaders who are thinking critically and creatively about how to proclaim the truths of our faith in the most effective and relevant ways possible in the Asian American context.

Several years ago, Jess Delegencia was appointed to the UC Berkeley staff team with a special assignment: reach Filipino Americans. While the multi-ethnic chapter is heavily Asian American, the staff directors felt that a specific outreach to Filipino Americans would be even more fruitful. It is proving so.

Conclusion

Criticism for ethnic specific ministry has come from the perspective that ethnic specific groups are

exclusive and ethnocentric. This is a valid criticism and a danger for ethnic specific ministries.

As no person or collective body is free from racism and ethnocentrism, we need to repent of ways this is true in our fellowships, in our hearts, and in our minds. As a minority group historically excluded from settings on the basis of ethnic background, reversing the behavior would be particularly grieving.

We must ask God for help in knowing how to welcome others into our lives in trusting and meaningful ways and to be looking to Jesus to transform our hearts to love with forgiveness and compassion.

With respect to the larger multi-ethnic emphasis in InterVarsity, it is vitally important to understand that ethnic specific ministry is a part of a greater movement of God.

At Harvard University, the two undergraduate fellowships (one multi-ethnic, one ethnic specific) have a vital partnership with each other. The multi-ethnic fellowship and the Asian American fellowship enjoy a strong commitment to each other that is renewed and affirmed each year. Each fellowship is committed to the other in prayer and campus partnership.

(Please see the accompanying articles in the Appendix on “Why Are There Two InterVarsity Chapters At Harvard?” and “The Harvard Model of a Covenant Relationship.”)

The partnership brings each fellowship much joy and thankfulness for the greater body of believers on campus. Each year the partnership grows and matures. Each exec leadership team comes together to meet regularly to pray and plan. The fellowships always desire more and more time together, having at least six joint on-campus events a year in addition to a joint chapter camp, a pre-school retreat, and fall

conferences. For more information, please go to:
<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hraacf/about/covenant.htm>
(tm) on the Internet.

A common question asked about ethnic specific ministry is one concerning unity. Are we not all Christians and is this not the central commonality we should focus on? To this one responds with a resounding “Yes!” We are all disciples of Jesus and inextricably of the same body. This is indeed our common call. However, within the diversity of the body there is a unique call and place for ethnic specific ministry to minister, teach, train, heal, challenge and reach a generation of people in the context of their culture and experience.

By Collin Tomikawa

Notes:

Why Are There Two InterVarsity Chapters At Harvard?

In the fall of 1994, the Harvard Radcliffe Christian Fellowship (HRCF) planted the Harvard Radcliffe Asian American Christian Fellowship (HRAACF) as a sister chapter.

Leaders in HRCF saw a sister chapter as a positive way to respond to its own issues of growth and pursue its own mission of multi-ethnicity. Moreover, they viewed a fellowship focused on Asian Americans as a way to expand God's ongoing work among Asian Americans at Harvard.

At the same time, a significant set of Asian American leaders within HRCF felt called to pioneer such a fellowship and sought the blessing of HRCF. After much prayer and deliberation, the HRCF Exec Team blessed the planting effort.

The vision for the HRAACF is to engage the unreached Asian American population, to both affirm and challenge the Asian American culture from a Biblical perspective, and to develop future leaders for the Asian American church.

In order to carry out the vision, the HRCF Exec team and pioneering HRAACF Exec Team committed themselves to mutually serve and lovingly challenge each other in the mission of engaging Harvard's campus in all its ethnic diversity, particularly through a covenant relationship between the two chapters.

Using a written covenant as a minimum foundation for individual and corporate partnerships to develop between the two chapters, we as HRCF and HRAACF fully affirm and deeply value each other and its ministries.

Greg Fung '95
HRCF

Ed Park '95
HRAACF

The Harvard Model Of A Covenant Relationship

To help facilitate unity and growth in the body of Christ at Harvard, the following covenant-relationship will hold between the two sister fellowships, Harvard-Radcliffe Christian Fellowship (HRCF) and Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Christian Fellowship (HRAACF).

These mutually agreed upon set of principles can only be amended in the future by mutual consent. Moreover, these principles are obviously not meant as restrictions against further cooperation.

Certainly, many good ideas for the chapter-chapter relationship may not have been included in the covenant (i.e. joint Mark Bible studies, common marketing system or logo, after large group activities, and social events, etc...).

HRAACF recognizes that its own vision must always be carried out in partnership with its sister chapter, while HRCF also recognizes that its own growth as a multi-ethnic fellowship is linked to an ongoing relationship with HRAACF.

In order to carry out this vision, both chapters are dedicated to mutually serve and lovingly challenge each other in the mission of engaging the campus in all its ethnic diversity. The chapters commit to both God and each other in the following ways:

- Both chapters retain some sort of common root name.
- Both chapters jointly draw upon the resources of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and be staffed by InterVarsity. It would be understood that InterVarsity would commit to a real working partnership between staff of the two chapters.
- A minimum of six joint events per year (i.e. large groups, concerts of prayer, retreats).

- ❑ Joint chapter camp with some sort of covenant renewal process each year.
- ❑ Conduct a joint exec review once per semester in order to assess faithfulness to the covenant relationship and self assess-with the other's accountability-each chapter's own faithfulness to its vision. This includes the yearly writing of the specific plans for that respective year, to be used as a reference in future years as well as a plan for the present year.
- ❑ Full partnership and coordination in new student outreach and campus wide evangelism events.
- ❑ Participate in joint InterVarsity missions, especially with a focus on missions that involve racial reconciliation.

June 2, 1994

InterVarsity: Home Of Multi-ethnic And Ethnic Specific Chapters

As I visit campuses where we have a lot of Asian American students in our ministry, the most asked question is, “Well, Paul, what is *your* view of ethnic specific ministry?”

After a few hems and haws, I try to give an intelligent answer.

Here’s what I’m thinking on November 18, 1998, subject to regular nuancing as I’m exposed to more fellowships and more data. It is a very complex issue and not answerable with a simple yes or no.

I know this sounds like a politician running for office, but *I support the existence of both types of fellowships within InterVarsity.* There is both room and theological logic for both.

The beauties of both

I have seen God powerfully use *multi-ethnic fellowships* where Asian Americans partner with other ethnic minorities and Caucasians to reach out to the campus and is one of the few places on campus where authentic racial healing and reconciliation is happening.

I have also seen *Asian American fellowships* provide places of common culture, as Collin mentions in his article, *Ethnic Specific Ministry: A Different Lens*, as well as a means to reach more Asian Americans with the good news.

What I most appreciate about both approaches is how each springs from a hunger to be faithful to their understanding of ethnicity in the Scriptures.

When I visited the UC-Berkeley fellowship last fall, I watched Asian Americans provide solid leadership. I’m moved by their deep commitment to multi-ethnicity.

I see how the horizons of non-Asian Americans are broadened as they partner shoulder-to-shoulder with Asian Americans.

Over the years, staff like Bora Reed, Jason Jensen and Dana Cunliffe have written excellent, comprehensive papers on how they approach multi-ethnicity and racial reconciliation.

When I visited the Chinese Christian Fellowship (CCF) at the University of Michigan the same fall, months before they affiliated with us, I witnessed a group with a deep, deep desire to see fellow Asian Americans come to know Christ.

The week before, they had sponsored an evangelistic coffeehouse with many Asian Americans in attendance. When I visited their large group meeting, there were a number of those same folks in attendance.

I'm convinced the comfortable setting of being with other Asian Americans helped "set the table" for the evangelistic invitation. When I left Ann Arbor, I thought to myself, "I sure hope they join us. They are so alive, evangelistically. We have so much to gain from them."

I have read and frequently passed around Lisa Sung's (and other Asian American staff in Chicagoland) impressive, in-depth theological work on ethnic specific ministry.

Upsides and downsides of both

So, I like both approaches and affirm both. And both have their upside and downside.

The multi-ethnic approach encourages fellowship with any and all who bear the name of Jesus. It reflects the inclusivity of the body of Christ. It makes a statement to the campus that something unique is going on because it brings together people who don't normally hang together. It forces us to deal with our prejudices.

The ethnic specific approach is a "Welcome" sign to those who may not feel at home in a multi-ethnic

setting. For first and second-generation ethnic minorities, this is often the case. There may be language barriers and certainly cultural differences.

This approach should help us reach a part of campus that the multi-ethnic fellowship probably will not. And just as majority culture folk have so much in common with each other that doesn't need explanation when they are together, so it also goes for some ethnic minority folk when they are together.

It's a place where they don't have to explain themselves. Culturally, it's home.

As I've spent a lot of time with both multi-ethnic fellowships and ethnic specific fellowships, some questions pop up that might be helpful to think about.

For staff of multi-ethnic fellowships:

- Does your fellowship provide ways for *all* members to explore their ethnicity?
- Is the ethnicity of Asian Americans affirmed by the chapter leadership or is ethnicity a non-issue in plans for outreach, discipleship training and leadership development?
- Does your fellowship attract, even go after, a variety of leadership styles, so Asian Americans would feel comfortable and even encouraged to use their unique gifts and style of leading?
- Can you affirm Asian American fellowships on your campus...and encourage some of your Asian American students to belong to it, if it seems best for them?

For staff of Asian American fellowships:

Are your members regularly inviting Asian American non-Christians to your fellowship?

How would your members articulate their *raison d'être* (reason for existing)? Are you comfortable with their reasons? Is reaching Asian Americans non-Christians at the top of the list, or at least a close second?

Do you have some sort of agreement or covenant (like at Harvard) that requires certain things to happen between the two fellowships? This is especially important when there is staff turnover.

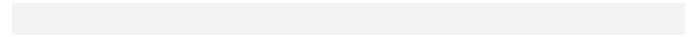
Do your members have any close non-Asian American friends?

When they are sharing their faith with a non-Asian American, do they have a place they can invite them to and be discipled if they become a Christian?

Can you affirm multi-ethnic fellowships on your campus...for some of your Asian American students if it seems the best place for them?

By Paul Tokunaga

Notes:



Some Good Resources (From Paul Tok)

Church Ministry:

Fong, Kenneth Uyeda. *Insights for Growing Asian-American Ministries: How to reach the increasing number of "Americanized" Asian Americans for Christ*. Rosemead, CA: EverGrowing Publications, 1990. We need to mount a crusade to get this out-of-print volume back into circulation!

Originally his Doctor of Ministry dissertation at Fuller, *Insights* had been a valuable tool for understanding many of the issues we encounter in our work with Asian American students.

Lee, Sang Hyun and Moore, John V., ed. *Korean American Ministry*. Louisville: Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., 1987. I found this book very helpful in understanding history and some key issues with Korean American Christians. Decidedly Presbyterian but still helpful to non-Presbyterians. Originally written as a leadership handbook for Korean American lay leaders.

Ng, David, ed. *People On The Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996. Format: "each chapter begins with a story followed by questions, analysis, and an invitation for readers to join the contributor 'on the way' by thinking of similar stories and situations from their own experiences."

An almost equal number of male and female writers gives book insight and balance when written by men only. A good single volume to understand issues for Asian American churches.

Discipleship:

Yep, Jeanette, ed. *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. Working with Jeanette,

Peter, Greg and Susan was one of the highlights of my life.

Lin, Tom. *Losing Face and Finding Grace: 12 Bible Studies for Asian Americans*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995. Tom developed 12 studies that offer solid biblical and cultural truths to wrestle with. A real gift to our Asian American students and their staff.

Evangelism:

Iwa Evangelistic Leadership Training Series. Iwa, a ministry devoted to reaching and serving Asian Americans (with a focus on Japanese Americans), is headed by Stan Inouye, a very close friend of InterVarsity's Asian American ministry.

For more information about Iwa, contact them directly, or correspond with Collin Tomikawa, who is an Iwa board member.

Iwa is currently producing a seven-part series designed to help us more effectively share Christ with Asian Americans:

Unit One: Incarnational Theology: Biblical Foundations for Asian American Ministries

Unit Two: Audience Identification Process

Unit Three: Ministry Evaluation and Development

Unit Four: Cultural Dynamics

Unit Five: Bicultural Dynamics

Unit Six: Process for Introducing Change

Unit Seven: Leadership Identification Process

The series will be completed in the near future. For information: Iwa, 3436 N. Verdugo Road, Suite 200, Glendale, CA 91208. 818/541-9089; iwarock@aol.com; webpage: www.iwarock.org.

History:

Asian Americans:

Chan, Sucheng. *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991. From

1840's to present. Helpful chronology and Asian American film list included.

Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers From A Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1989. My choice for one-volume history. Combines traditional history approach with oral histories. Professor at UC-Berkeley. Has also written excellent multi-cultural history, *A Different Mirror*.

Cambodian Americans:

Criddle, Joan D., and Butt Mam, Teeda. *To Destroy You Is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family*. New York: Anchor Books, 1987. Gut-wrenching. One family's terrifying ordeal at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. Includes helpful historical overview and time line of Cambodia.

Japanese Americans:

Hosokawa, Bill. *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*. New York: Wm. Morrow, 1969. A ground-breaking book in Asian American studies. Was so instrumental in my understanding and owning my history, that when in Denver in 1992, I made a special trip to the *Denver Post* editorial office, where he worked, simply to thank him for getting me through a difficult period struggling with my identity.

Nagata, Donna K. *Legacy of Injustice: Exploring the Cross-Generational Impact of the Japanese American Internment*. New York: Plenum Press, 1993. Part of The Sansei Research Project which explored the impact of the World War II internment on the third-generation, the *Sansei*. Scholarly, statistical-laden work.

Identity Issues:

Chow, Claire S. *Leaving Deep Water: The Lives of Asian American Women at the Crossroads of Two Cultures*. NAL/Dutton, 1998. A superb book.

Supervisors of Asian American women would greatly benefit by reading and perhaps discussing it with them.

Hong, Maria, ed. *Growing Up Asian American: An Anthology*. New York: Wm. Morrow, 1993.

Lee, Gus. *China Boy*. New York: Plume Books, 1991. I loved this book! Had me chuckling, rolling, wishing it wouldn't end. (Fiction) story of Kai, a young boy from an aristocratic family in China that has fled Mao's cultural revolution to San Francisco. There, he fend for himself on the mean streets with not enough Mandarin nor English to communicate well with anyone.

Great insights into being of two cultures but struggling with both. Last month, at an outlet mall in Arcadia, Louisiana, I scooped up Lee's two follow-up novels at a warehouse book store. Can't wait!

Mura, David. *Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*. New York: Anchor Books, 1991. On a fellowship, acclaimed poet Mura, a third-generation Japanese American, spends a year in Japan to explore his "Japanese side." Full of deep insights, the book is also raw at points. *Turning Japanese* made me uneasy but was glad I read it.

Tajima-Pena, Rene. *My America: Or Honk If You Love Buddha*. This film is instructive and at times hysterical. It chronicles the director's road trip around the country in search of what being Asian American means.

We showed it at our 1998 Asian American Staff Conference and it was well-received. Unfortunately, the film is not available to rent. Rene suggests that when it occasionally gets shown on PBS, that we get the word out and have everyone tape it off the TV.

Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. New York: Putnam's, 1989. Fiction. Made into a must-see movie in 1993. Da bomb.

Tan, Amy. *The Hundred Secret Senses*. New York: Ivy Books, 1995.

Narrative/Oral History:

Hong, Maria, *Growing Up Asian American*. New York: Wm. Morrow and Company, 1993. Divided into three sections: First Memories, The Beginning of Identity, Growing Up.

Hong rounded up some of the most well-known authors: Gus Lee (*China Boy*), Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (*Farewell to Manzanar*), Amy Tan (*Joy Luck Club*), Maxine Hong Kingston (*The Woman Warrior*), Toshio Mori (*The Chauvinist and Other Stories*).

Lee, Joann Faung Jean, *Asian Americans*. New York: The New Press, 1992. Much breadth: goes beyond Chinese/ Japanese/Koreans to include other Asian minorities. Major section (51 pages) devoted to inter-racial marriage.

Yep, Laurence, ed. *American Dragons: Twenty-Five Asian American Voices*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1993. For ages 12 and up. A very fine anthology, not just for children. Includes essay from former InterVarsity staff in Hawaii, Becky Honma.

Racial Issues and Asian Americans:

Park, Andrew Sung. *Racial Conflict & Healing: An Asian American Theological Perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

Theology:

Koyama, Kosuke. *Waterbuffalo Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974. While this is not written by

an Asian American, I'm included it because it is a bona fide attempt at contextualizing

faith and an Asian culture. Though I read this over 10 years ago after hearing Koyama speak, I still muse over his ideas and images.

As a theologian/missionary in Thailand, he reflects that "...the people to whom I am to bring the gospel of Christ spend most of their time with these waterbuffaloes in the rice field. The waterbuffaloes tell me that I must preach to these farmers in the simplest sentence-structure and thought-development. ...'This morning,' I say to myself, 'I will try to bring the gospel of Christ through the medium of cock-fighting!'"

Yung, Hwa. *Mangoes or Bananas?: The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology*. Oxford, England: Regnum Books, 1997.

Books On My Shelf I Haven't Read But Look Pretty Darn Good:

Freeman, James M. *Hearts of Sorrow: Vietnamese-American Lives*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1989. "The vivid life stories told in their own words—of fourteen refugees from the devastation of war." Winner of 1990 Book Award of the Association for Asian-American Studies and American Book Award of the Before Columbus Foundation. Rave reviews from *Washington Post*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Choice*.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. New York: Vintage Books, 1975. Winner of "The best book of non-fiction published in 1976," by The National Book Critics Circle. Considered a classic in Asian American and women's literature.

Lee, Jung Young. *Korean Preaching: An Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

While I know next to nothing about Korean preaching, I bought this because of the chapter: "The

Authority of the Korean Preacher. The Korean American experience seems and feels so different from my experience, I thought this chapter and hopefully the book would give me some insights.

Lebra, Takie Sugiyama. *Japanese Patterns of Behavior*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976. Suggested by some as a must-read to understand Japanese culture. Chapter titles include: Belongingness, Empathy, Dependency, Occupying the Proper Place, Reciprocity, Suicide.

Lim, Shirley Geok-lin, Tsutakawa, Mayumi and Donnelly, Margarita (Managing Editor). *The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Women's Anthology*. Corvallis, OR: Caly Books, 1989. Winner of 1990 American Book Award. Includes 55 pages of book reviews, bibliographies of books, films, periodicals by and about Asian American women.

Matsuoka, Fumitaka. *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches*. Cleveland: United Church Press.

Park, Andrew Sung. *Racial Conflict & Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996. Divided into four sections: Problems In The Korean-American Community, Towards Solutions, Methodology, An Emerging Theology.

“In the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots of 1992 and the ensuing violence against Korean-Americans, Andrew Sung Park seeks a theological model that will help transform a society of oppression, injustice, and violence into a community of equity, fairness and mutual consideration.” (from back cover)

Two Great Sources for Good Resources:

Asian American Curriculum Projects has the most extensive stock of Asian American books made accessible by mail order. Florence and Mas Hongo

“are” AACP and do it voluntarily as a love offering to Asian Americans. They bend over to serve their customers (drove eight hours round-trip to our Asian American staff conference—at their expense—to sell books for half a day!). Ask for their extensive catalog.

Located at 234 Main St., P.O. Box 1587, San Mateo, CA 94401. 800/874-2242 by phone; 888/252-4558 by fax. Website: <http://www.best.com/~aacp/> E-mail address: aacp@best.com.

Intercultural Press is another good resource. Their line covers both cross-cultural issues in the U.S. and abroad.

Address: P.O. Box 700, Yarmouth, Maine, 04096.
800/370-2665 by phone; 207/846-5181 by fax. Web site: <http://www.bookmasters.com/interclt.htm>
Email: interculturalpress@internetmci.com.

Other Great Resources I Promise To E-mail To Paul:

Questions For Discussion Or Reflection

Because this handbook is primarily to help staff in their ministry with Asian American students, *these questions are written to help facilitate discussion with one or several Asian American students*. Assumed is that both student and staff will have read the chapter before meeting. Feel free to photocopy individual chapters.

You might consider using these chapters in your discipling/mentoring of present and future Asian American leaders in your fellowship.

For the Appendix, only the “Shame and Guilt” article has study questions. The other articles are more for staff than for students and most of them have questions built in or are self-guiding.

With a little nuancing, the questions can also be used for personal reflection.

6. Of the “Possible Solutions and Responses,” which ones might you work on? (p. 12) How can I be of help to you?

1 Totally Committed To Jesus Christ

1. Of the “three major factors” cited that keep Asian Americans from being fully committed to Jesus—our parents, Asian American culture and idolatry—which one gets in the way the most for you? (p. 7)
2. What would you say are your parents’ greatest expectations for you and from you? How do these expectations make you feel?
3. What are the hardest areas for you to both honor your parents *and* follow Jesus?
4. Do you believe that “God gave you your parents, not for your harm, but for your good”? (p. 10)
5. Of the three “joy busters” of Asian American culture, which one most drains the joy out of being a Christian for you? (p. 10)

2 Discovery Of Our Own Unique Self-Identity

1. On page 19 is one expression of what it feels like to be Asian American. Which things do you think are pretty accurate? Which things aren't as accurate?
2. Take a look at John Connor's chart on page 20. On each line, try choosing the trait (Asian or Western) that *best* describes your leaning (i.e., group identity or autonomy). Overall, which way do you tend to lean—Asian or Western in your values, or a pretty equal combination of both?
3. Where have you encountered (if at all) the myth of the model minority? How did it make you feel? (p. 20)
4. In what ways have you been discriminated against because you are Asian? How did you handle it? (p. 21)
5. Do you think your parents are proud of you? How do they show it? In what other ways do you wish they would show it? (p. 22)
6. Do a quick study of Isaiah 43:1-7 and perhaps Psalm 139 (p. 25). Have them read through the Isaiah passage aloud, inserting their own name wherever "Israel" appears.

3 Relationships With Our Parents

1. How have your parents voiced their expectations of you as their child? Do you feel you are living up to their expectations? (p. 29)
2. How do your parents feel about your commitment to Jesus? Are they supportive, neutral or opposed to the way you live out your faith? (p. 30)
3. *Outright rebellion* and *compliance* are mentioned as two ways we often respond to our parents when we are trying to both honor them *and* follow Jesus. Which of the two ways do you lean towards? (p. 31)

4. What are some practical ways in which you can honor your parents? (See if they can come up with one or two things that they can work on in the next few weeks. Be sure to follow up with them.)
5. What is your parents' "language of love"—their way of showing their love for you? How well do you receive their expressions of love? Can you accept them for how they show their love for you?
6. If you had it your way, how would you want your parents to express their love for you? What would it look like? What keeps them from showing their love for you in that way (i.e., how they were brought up, goes against their values, etc.)?
7. Spend some time in prayer for their parents and their relationship with them.

4 Gifted To Lead Others

1. Of Steve Stuckey's five qualities of a leader (p. 37), which ones describe you well? (Add which ones you see in them, too.)
2. How do you see those qualities helping others in the fellowship? (Again, add where you see others helped by their exercising these qualities of leadership.)
3. Which of these qualities do you wish you had in greater measure? Why?
4. Do you feel your "style" or strengths in leadership are valued in our fellowship? Are some "styles" more highly valued? Is there a certain "leadership model" in our fellowship—even if it's just implied? What does it look like (p. 39-40)
5. Talk through "Expectations: Often more implied than stated." (p. 40)

6. Talk through the “Medium-sized Question” on page 41.
7. What “style” of evangelism are you most comfortable with? Is it a style affirmed and supported within the fellowship? (p. 42)
9. What can your fellowship do to help create a biblically accurate and culturally in-tuned view of Asian American women and men? Use

5 Gender Wholeness, Reconciliation And Equity

1. How do you think Asian American women in your fellowship are treated? Are they given the same ministry opportunities and positions as the men or are they treated differently? Why?
2. In your fellowship, do *you* feel men and women should be treated the same or differently regarding ministry opportunities and positions? How would you substantiate that biblically?
3. Looking at the list on pages 51-52, what things could you/we do to help women in our fellowship develop as leaders? Pick 1-2 and discuss what tangible steps could be taken.
4. What unique ways can men in your fellowship encourage women as leaders? Are there ways they can advocate for women? (p. 52)
5. In what ways can women help their Asian American brothers develop as leaders? What do these brothers most need from their sisters? (p. 55)
6. Read through Edward Iwata’s commentary on Asian American men (p. 56-57). Which of his descriptions ring true to you about how Asian American men are treated?
7. Hanh Hoang and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston write about how Asian American women are viewed. What things ring true to you? (p. 57-58)
8. What can your fellowship do to destroy some of these distorted perceptions?

Jeanette Yep's suggestions as a starting point. Take some of her suggestions and amplify how your fellowship could make them happen. (p. 58-59)

6 Prophetic In Our Communities

1. Read the gray-boxed statement on page 62. Which of the "Asian American idols" listed do you personally struggle with? Specifically, what can you do so you can stop worshipping these idols in your life?
2. On page 65 is the statement, "A true prophet cannot judge a parent's Infiniti when they are in a field of study primarily so they can buy a 4x4 4Runner or BMW Z3 Roadster." Is there any truth in that statement for you?
3. Back to the gray box on page 62: which of these seem to be idols for other Asian American Christians you know? How might you help them stop their worship of their idols?
4. Are careerism or "chapterism" (p. 66-67) idols for you? For others in the fellowship? What causes these respectable values (having a career, building a strong chapter/fellowship) to go awry?
5. Take a look at the section "The role of staff in bustin' idols (p. 67-68)." Ask, "In what ways can I as your staff be more sensitive, more helpful in helping you and other Asian Americans 'bust their idols?'"

7 Agents Of Ethnic And Racial Reconciliation

1. Describe what racial reconciliation would look like in American society, on your campus, in your fellowship and in your own life. (p.71) Do your descriptions reflect biblical teaching on racial reconciliation?

2. Do you think racial reconciliation ought to be a major or minor value (or not a value at all) in the life of our fellowship? Why?
 3. Four things are mentioned that Asian Americans can bring to the “racial reconciliation table”: graciousness, commitment salted with perseverance, historical power in being a mediating force and our understanding of shame. (pgs. 72-73) Which of these stand out to you as being true for the Asian Americans in your fellowship?
 4. “An acid test of true reconciliation is when people socialize together in each other’s homes.” (p. 72) To what extent is this happening across racial lines with members of your fellowship? How can you help your fellowship do better in this important area?
 5. Which of the “weaknesses, dangers and potential roadblocks” (page 75) are true for you? What can you do to remove this/these as roadblocks?
 6. (If the chapter is an ethnic specific fellowship): One of the hardest aspects of being such a fellowship is working on racial reconciliation. The natural tendency of such fellowships is to “stick to ourselves.” What can your fellowship do—practically, not theoretically—to be agents of racial reconciliation on your campus?
3. Three roadblocks to a satisfying church experience are mentioned on page 82: “dead-end”

8 Loving And Serving The Church

1. (If the student’s current or home church is an Asian American church): What is your church like? What do you most like about it? What do you dislike about it? (You can use the lists on pages 78 and 80-81 to stimulate discussion in some specific areas.)
2. How did you go about choosing this church? What criteria did you use?

situations, limits of change and the danger of burnout. Are any of these true for you? What can you do to overcome these roadblocks?

4. How do you make decisions about church involvement and involvement in your campus fellowship? Are you satisfied with your decision-making process and the decisions you've made? (Helping Asian American students think through their current church involvement is often very important. Use the questions in this chapter to guide the discussion.)
5. What specific experiences and skills used within your fellowship will enhance your service in a local church in the future? (Help the student think through how "InterVarsity leadership skills" transfer to ministry within a local church, i.e., leading a small group, serving on the leadership team, worship leading, community service, evangelistic outreach, etc.)
6. What kind of church do you think you will be involved with following graduation: nationality specific (i.e., a Korean or Korean American church), ethnic specific (an Asian American church), a predominantly white church or a multi-ethnic church (keep in mind there are few authentically multi-ethnic churches in America)? Why this kind of church?
7. What are the plusses and minuses in being involved in an Asian American church? In being in a predominantly white church? In a multi-ethnic church?
8. What will you have to offer this kind of church in terms of leadership? In what specific ways will this kind of church help you develop as a leader?

Shame And Guilt

1. Can you relate to any of the "shames" mentioned: Paul shame/Bob shame, cafeteria shame, report

card shame, motorcycle shame, camp shame, 55 mph shame? (pgs. 89-92)

2. The “Shame and Guilt” section (pgs. 93-95) gives visual images of how shame manifests itself in Asians. Focus on Tom Lin’s (boxed) working definition on page 94. Ask: does that fit you?
3. What “shames” you? What activities that you engage in invariably cause you to feel intense shame?
4. What’s the difference between “healthy shame” and “toxic shame”? (p. 96)
5. Walk through the “signposts of toxic shame.” Ask: do you resonate with any of these?
6. Work through the “Finding Grace” section. Read through the passages together. Make sure they really understand what grace means in everyday life (very important!). (pgs. 101-102)