

THE TOP TEN LIST

for Preparing our next generation for missions

Helen Loong



(1) To be Daniels, Esthers, and Moses

Daniel and Esther were not specifically 'called' by God, but were to live in cross cultural situations. They had to live out lives that totally depended on God and thus brought forth His glory to nations. Another prominent cross cultural Bible character is Moses. In today's mission terminology, he would be classified as a Third Culture Person (TCP), one who grew up in two cultures yet still considered an outsider all the

time. To the Hebrews, Moses must have appeared to be an Egyptian (and probably spoke with some accent). To Pharaoh's family, Moses was not quite one of their own. Moses lived a tough and dramatic life, was truly 'called' by God, and was only ready when he saw the burning bush. Today, many Christian professionals live a cross cultural life style, travel to and work in other lands all the time. Can they follow the examples of Daniel, Esther, and Moses? Can they bear witness to Muslims and atheists alike?

(2) The First-generation Asian-Americans/Chinese Americans in North America

Do you realize that there is a hidden higher purpose of why so many of us were brought to this country and became Christians? Here we learn to live cross culturally; to get rid of our prejudice and pride; to gain biblical worldview and learn the essence of Christian family life. We no longer favor sons over daughters. We learn to stand up for our rights. By God's grace we are made new and strong and beautiful: look around in your churches, you see so many Moses, Esthers and Daniels. Would you not ask God to reveal to us His greater purpose for this precious generation?.

(3) The Youth, Your Children, the Americans

Take a close look at your children, who were born here in America. Note that they are different from you culturally, but they are very similar to those western missionaries: 1) In school and society they are trained to be independent, adventurous, sporty, responsible and know how to take good care of themselves. 2) At home and at church they follow Christ since their childhood and have been walking in God's grace. They stand on firm Christian heritage and foundation. All of the above are good qualities for missionaries. Our children are in the 'much is given' group, and certainly God may require them much more. They are made to be global servants, both here in America and abroad. What you need to do is to mold them with worldview and mission stories. Allow them to dream big. Instead of influencing them what you expect them to be, let them hear from God. All they need is your affirmation and 'let go, let God.' Most Western missionaries in the last century dedicated themselves at very early ages.

(4) Example of the Shaping of a Missionary

Three major factors contributed toward shaping me to be a missionary. First, my parents moved around and we did not have much to cling onto; second: I am quite willing to try new things and never felt that I need a lot of material things. Third: I married to a mission family. My husband

Titus' parents were missionaries, and they too moved around a lot. I don't remember Titus or his siblings talk about their childhood friends. Three out of five of them are in full time ministries; it is all the grace of God.

(5) MKs – an Example

When it comes to our daughters, it is a very natural thing that they consider missions at a very early age. They were taught by missionaries at their school, and belong to a loving, close-knitted big family of missionaries in the remote town of Taitung. Out of the 15 children of 4 missionary doctor families do you know how many MKs (missionary kids) become doctors? None. But let me tell you how many of these 15 MKs have been serving on the mission field. Twelve. A very high 80%. Their friends from Taitung days are now serving in Africa, Indonesia, China, Central Asia, Latin America, etc.

(6) Vision for Mission

All God's people should desire to be Kingdom Christians: that your life's goal is to serve the hurting world, no matter what profession or location you are in. Look at this world. Despite of all the advances in technology and material things, there is everywhere human suffering, natural disasters, global economic crises, etc.

We are all called to be witnesses: to bring light to this world dominated by darkness. How can we ignore it?

You may think that you have established roots in America, but the truth is you should consider yourselves sojourners in America. There are chances that some day you or your children might return to Asia to live. When God scattered the Israelites He repeatedly told them He will bring them back to their homeland someday. Being in Asia I see this trend coming. Nowadays many young professionals choose to work in Hong Kong, Taiwan or China. If sufficiently equipped with gospel tools, language and cultural sensitivity, they will be Daniels and Esthers of the Old Testament: witnessing to professionals cross culturally.

Help your children discover God's destiny in their lives. Ask them questions such as, 'how can we help make this world (God's world) a better world? A good place to have this kind of brain-

storming is in the Sunday school classroom or during family retreat.

(7) Equip for Mission. *Mission Education for All Ages*

Learn about Hudson Taylor, Morrison, Livingstone, ... giants in the history of mission. Learn about geography, cultures, and languages. Show the importance of cultural heritage in mission. Be creative how you work all these into your life, family, and church. For instance, share how you grew up in Taiwan or Asia. Have an 'Asian' corner in your family room where you place items you collected from your parents' home. You will be surprised how eager your children want to know about your background. Keep in touch with friends back home. Someday your children may want to work in Asia and these friends will be good local guardians to your children. For beginners, plan a budget family trip to China! Set your children's attitude so they want to be **as local as can be**: take buses, try new foods, speak Chinese, etc etc. Award them afterwards.

(8) Go-Short-Term, Middle-Term, Long-Term

Send your Pastors, Elders and Deacons, Sunday School teachers to mission trips and get them ready to teach missions to your children. You may learn these from a neighboring evangelical church. Moreover, a fresh emphasis on mission education church-wide may be essential. Most importantly, you do not want to be left behind by your children. *Get yourselves involved in missions*: your children will be so proud of you. Our friend co-led a team of 30 teens to Taiwan last summer to teach English and to witness. He got a title, 'Tiger Dad.' He came back a changed person, very enthusiastic about life: suddenly filled

with added purposes. There are lots of calls for middle-age Chinese to witness to Chinese merchants in Middle East and Eastern Europe.

(9) Pray

Pray for your children: read through the Bible, and biographies of God's servants, you will find that God honors parents' prayers very much. May I suggest that parents pray together regularly, lifting your children before God, open your hearts and ask Him to teach you how to pray for your children. God already has great plans for them, but He desires that you partner with Him in raising your children. Ask Him to guide every small or big decision you make for and with your children. Same for grandparents.

I believe that God has been preparing us, our children and now grandchildren to live and to serve Him *not only in America but all nations*.

(10) Harvest by Giving

Last but not least: support generously and pray fervently for global harvest, and pray about giving one full year in your life's time for missions. Consider early retirement. Make yourselves fit to live in other lands. Re-shape your life-style, such as the size of your house and holiday plans. Serve diligently in local community. In doing so, you will not wake up one day and wondered, 'Who moved my mission cheese?'

In conclusion, I invite you to join me praying, 'Lord, send me! Send our children and grandchildren!' Whether to live near kings and nobles, in palaces or in wilderness, may our next generation fill your pleasure, be where you want them to be, and do greater things than us. Amen.'

(Mrs. Loong is sent by World Venture to Asia. She is one of the co-founders of WeCare Centre in Hong Kong.)





TAKING FOCUS ON THE FAMILY TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL: THE CHURCH AS FAMILY AND GANG VIOLENCE

By Paul Louis Metzger

God has placed on my heart a growing burden for ethnic communities in this great country of ours. Last spring, I was invited to the San Francisco Bay Area in my role as Director of The Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins of Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland, Oregon (www.new-wineskins.org). I met with leaders of diverse ethnic backgrounds during my visit. Themes that surfaced repeatedly were isolation and fragmentation.

We discussed the isolation of churches from one another, especially along ethnic lines, and the fragmentation that is occurring in the region as reflected in increasing violence as the result of gang activity. I will take up the isolation of churches first, and then go on to discuss social fragmentation bound up with gang activity. I believe that the two problems are related. We need to come together as the church and build family across ethnic and socio-economic lines if we are to address the problems associated with the dissolution of families and increasing gang activity in our society.

We Evangelicals have been known for great ministries like Focus on the Family. We the church need to take that focus to a whole new level as local ecclesial families that come together to care for families in disrepair and the fatherless in our communities.

Some African American pastors in San Francisco shared with me how they are often excluded from a vital place at the table of fellowship with other Christian leaders in the Bay Area. One Chinese American pastor responded to their statement by saying that “We Chinese have not been invited to the table either, so we simply made our own table.” These diverse leaders were saying to me that there is not sufficient intentionality toward the development of community involving equality and solidarity in ministry among people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. As is often true in the Greater Portland area, it seems that Christian ministries in the Bay Area often struggle with doing their own thing — whether Anglo American, Asian American, African American, or others.

We can lament our lack of unity, or look with prayerful expectation to how God might bring us together. Unless we sense our need for one another, we will not come together. We will not come together unless we know that we are dependent on God and one another for our ministry to succeed in society. The challenges we face are just too daunting to go it alone.

Gang violence poses a very large challenge that has the potential to tear our society apart unless the churches come together. Both the Portland region and the San Francisco Bay Area struggle increasingly with gang activity and violence. The growth of violent gangs re-

flects an increasing fragmentation in key quarters of our society. While gangs often demonstrate strong social bonds internally, they reflect the dissolution of social bonds across society. Such dissolution of solidarity often reflects ethnic and economic tensions.

The lack of cohesiveness and unity in one part of society has a bearing on other parts of society. Is there a connection between the lack of unity in the body of Christ and the lack of unity in our society at large? Does such disunity bear upon gang tensions and rivalries? All too often, we do not engage issues, if we do not think they affect us. But all systemic issues in a society affect every person, directly or indirectly. If systemic problems are allowed to fester and grow, the malignancy works its way throughout the society, as a disease often spreads through one's whole body if left untreated.

Churches often function as gangs — I have my gang and you have yours. We do our own thing and protect our own people and interests to the neglect of others. Often, our church gangs are ethnic in stripe. While we do not pick up arms to fight with one another in the church, we fight against one another in other ways, even by simply not partnering together as equals.

In John 17:23, our Lord pours out his heart in prayer to his Father, longing for God to make his people one so that the world might know that God has sent his Son. Our Lord longs today for our churches to move beyond gang identities along ethnic and socio-economic lines to partner together to confront the ills that plague all of us, including gang violence.

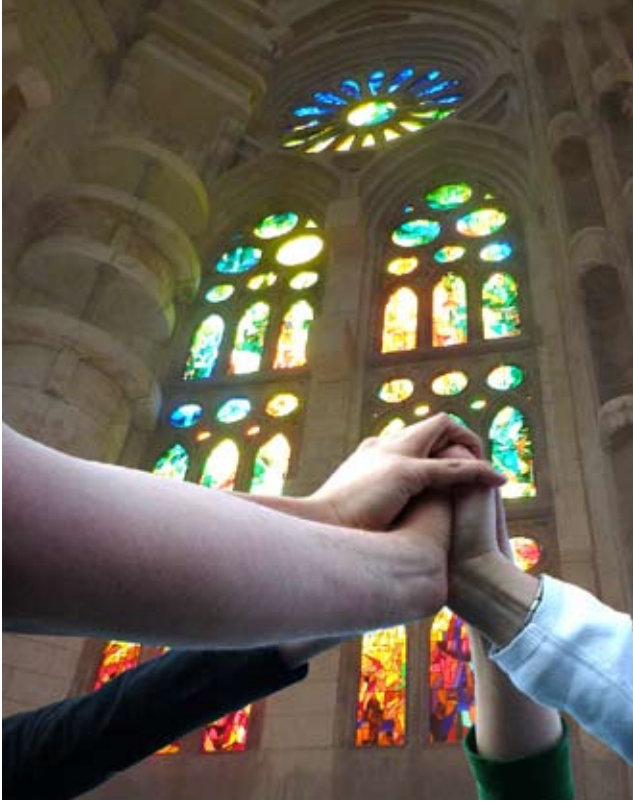
So, how can we get out of our ethnic ghettos and trenches and partner together as Christ's body? How might such partnerships bear on the gang violence sweeping through our society? As one African American leader in the Bay Area told me recently, "We are a fatherless nation which affects our families and communities and even to the place where fathers may be present in the home but the home is still fatherless." The churches must come together to help parent parentless communities. Among other things, this will entail the younger people in our churches even now looking to godly elders for wisdom and counsel. So seldom do we inquire of them,

when we have so much to gain from them. We are often looking to a future of which we know nothing, and fail to draw insights and perspectives on how to live now in view of history which others have already lived. While attending to the needs and cultural identity of our youth is extremely important, fixation with the youth culture and failure to engage the older generation inside and outside the church can only harm our social fabric inside and outside the church.

So, what is the collective wisdom of our elders in the Christian community at large in the Greater Portland Area and the San Francisco Bay Area? Among other things, they teach us respect and the need to take responsibility and develop appropriate boundaries as it concerns honoring laws that promote the common good. Diverse elders must have the opportunity to come together to share their collective wisdom with the community at large for the common good. Will that opportunity be provided, and will we all come together? Pastors have been father figures. Pastors from diverse backgrounds need to come together to help parent their communities and partner with fellow leaders of diverse ethnicities to model for their communities a spirit of collaboration.

White Euro-American Christian leaders like me have so much to learn from leaders of other ethnic heritages. For instance, we need the help of the Asian American Christian community. The church at large has so much to learn from our Asian American brothers and sisters. Generally speaking, there is so much respect for elders and such strong family ties in the Asian American church context. Moreover, at times, there have been greater inroads toward reconciliation involving Asian Americans and African Americans based on shared experiences of oppression and because of certain relational instincts in having such strong solidarity in their communities. As a result, Asian American Christian leaders are often well-placed to promote reconciliation between African Americans and white Americans like me. We need the insights and perspectives of Asian American pastors and other leaders to help build these bridges.

It is also important that Asian American and African American leaders work together with other ethnic groups, since their surround-



ing communities will engage in violent activity more readily with one another than with whites because of power imbalances in our society. The powers that be will often crack down much more readily when white communities experience violence at the hands of minorities. In addition, minority communities of similar economic status tend to compete with one another over scarce land resources. As with domestic violence, those who lash out will often lash out violently toward those closest in proximity. So, learning, understanding and respecting one another will build the community at large, moving us beyond fear and hate to beloved community. Such trust and solidarity will build the social fabric and help decrease violence.

We live in a racialized nation, where we have often been raised to be racist, intentionally or unintentionally. Without exposure to one another and building ties with one another where we move beyond stereotypes and prejudgments, we cannot become one. Did our earthly fathers raise us to view those of different ethnicities as equals? Did the fathers of our churches parent our churches so that for all our churches' rich and beautiful ethnic textures, they also sought to build bridges with those churches of diverse ethnic backgrounds?

Even the founding fathers of this great nation of ours failed to hold true to this country's grand ideals, including the conviction in the Declara-

tion of Independence "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." These founding fathers permitted the slave trade to flourish; and, even though the slave trade has long been abolished, the impact of the slave block with the blatant disregard and destruction of African American families as husbands/fathers and children were torn from their wives/ mothers continue to play a role in African American homes and our society as well.

All too often, we blame the victims of those injustices for the fragmentation of African American homes. The Chinese and Japanese faced huge and grievous challenges as immigrant and minority populations in the 19th and 20th centuries with oppressive working conditions and internment camps in some cases, while others who longed to come here fell victim to Exclusion Acts. No doubt, the descendents of these Asian immigrants can appreciate something of the horror that African Americans have experienced.

Each situation is unique, and so the response to each scenario will be different. Still, we must not repeat past sins by failing to care for families and ethnic communities in need. We must also learn to welcome new immigrant populations, remembering the old saying: "It takes a village to raise a child." Our churches must come together to parent our youth inside and outside the church, even engaging in civic partnerships in increasing measure. While we should never view our churches as babysitters for our children, nonetheless, our church communities must partner with nuclear families to care for the children and youth.

In view of past racialized structures and present realities, there are great needs in impoverished inner cities and other communities in disrepair where youth are so vulnerable to gang influence. Many gangs are made up of youth who come from families and communities in crisis; these youth form and join gangs to find some sense of social cohesion and belonging. Having said that, the reality is that gang activity is spreading into the suburbs as well. Think of Santa Rosa, California, and the amount of gang activity there. In these days, it is not just improv- ► To p.8



Japan: Reports indicate that after the devastation caused by the quake, Tsunami and nuclear disasters, the people seems to have changed quite a bit in their outlook of life and prospect for the future. Many are dealing with anxiety and fear, and the unknown, especially for those with small children and/or elderly relatives. The thought of “doing your best and keeping the harmony of the group will mean everything being OK” is badly shaken. People are seeking “other things” that can’t be seen with their eyes.

<East Asia’s Millions, Sep-Dec 2011, omf.org/diaspora>

Specialty Bibles: An organization has come out with two full Bibles recently. One called “Free On the Inside” tailored for the prison inmates. It contains stories of redemption of ex-inmates and is great for those in prison ministry. The other with a truck on the cover and called “The Road Home” is aimed at the truckers, especially those long-haul drivers who tends to feel very lonely on the road but will find interesting testimonies of other drivers. At \$2.50 a copy, it is also an excellent evangelistic tool.

<Biblica (International Bible Society), www.biblica.com, 12/7/11>

Audio Bible: Recent releases have added Scripture for 278,000 people in their heart languages. They are: Avokaya of South Sudan; Kapsiki of Cameroon; Konso of Ethiopia; Latin of Vatican City State; Luwo of South Sudan; Ndogo of South Sudan; Palauan of Palau; Takia of Papua New Guinea; and Tuwali Ifugao of Philippines. Audio Bibles are available also free on streaming and podcast. For smart phone users, there is Bible.is app for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices providing access to written Bibles in 600+ languages. The agency will continue to work on New Testament in every spoken language.

<Faith Comes by Hearing, faithcomesbyhearing.com, 12/13/11>

7 Billion Souls: Last November, world population reached this land mark. It is estimated to be 200 million in Jesus’ time. Our mission to fulfill the Great Commission has added urgency. The Church must look at creative ways to spread the gospel message. Should we not utilize more the social networks on the internet? Besides, church budget has declined in percentage for support of missions. A missionary may take up to 3 years just to raise support before even getting to the mission field.

<Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, hutchcraft.com, 11/25/11>

Brazil: Lately many youth have come to Christ. An agency was invited by churches to minister to teens, to present to them opportunities for missions, and to train them on creative ways to share the gospel. They just recently completed a conference focusing on the importance of and opportunities in missions for 400 youths.

<Operation Mobilization, www.omusa.org, 12/9/11>

Gap in Missions: There are 2.7 billion people that have little access to the gospel. Yet of all foreign missionaries serving around the globe, only one out of ten is ministering among them. An agency is creating a “Close the Gap” campaign, providing greater security for missionaries in some of the most dangerous and needy places in the world and training more church planters.

<Pioneers, www.pioneers.org, 12/1/11>

Gospel Talk: Last November a noted evangelist held 1-hour talk sessions on 4 consecutive nights in Spanish on 5070 TV stations and scores of radio stations worldwide along with online streaming and social media. He fielded questions from callers in Latin America, Australia, Europe and USA. And he responded with message of salvation and how the gospel applies to issues as complex as abortion, depression, the occult, and false teaching. Thus, millions heard the gospel over and over again. And hundreds of partner churches are connecting new believers to a church in their area, also to follow up with each caller. The evangelist described the simple vision behind this: “It is just me, a telephone, and a Bible.”

<Luis Palau Association, www.palau.org, 11/18/11>

Global 4/14 Day: There are 2 billion children under age 15. They are more open to the gospel, and 8 out of 10 of those who accept Christ, do so between the age 4 and 14. An agency invites people to a day of prayer and fasting for children in the 4/14 window on April 4, 2012. They are hoping to enlist on their website a million people to participate.

<Global 4/14 Day, www.global414day.com, 12/14/11>

India: An evangelist has conducted the largest evangelistic meeting in northwestern state of Punjab and taught in the pastors’ conference. The crowd increased nightly as well as the response to the messages. Nearly half of those at the last night accepted Christ, many of them Sikhs. He sensed that there is a revival there. The church has been growing rapidly. Many at the pastors’ conference were new in their walk in Christ.

<Sammy Tippit Ministries, www.sammytippit.org, 12/9/11>

Cuba: Baseball is king here and it is one of the few things that gives people a little enjoyment and bring them together. An agency has helped the outreach of churches through bringing in humanitarian aid, baseball equipment, and baseball programs. They even attracted the 2nd son of Fidel Castro who later came to Christ, and through him some in Castro’s inner circle. Now they can bring in also Christian college teams and singers.

<Global Baseball>

Passing-Baton Special Meetings



The founder and President Emeritus of GCCI, Dr. Thomas Wang has turned 86 this year. Because of his age, he has cut down some overseas travels. However, he went to Hong Kong to speak at the China Gospel Conference in November, 2011 organized by Life Ministries of Illinois. Over 5,000 participants attended this conference, most of them from mainland China.

Taking the opportunity of Dr. Wang's short stay in Hong Kong, GCCI (HK) organized two public meetings for Dr. Wang focusing on the importance of "Baton-Passing." The first one was held at North Point Alliance Church on the evening of November 27. Dr. Wang pointed out the importance of making disciples for every leader. He cited the example of Jesus calling disciples as soon as he began his public ministries. He also mentioned the examples of Moses and Joshua,

Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy. They had all trained younger leaders to continue the unfinished tasks. Therefore, one should measure a leader's success by examining his/her successors.

A Pastors' Seminar was held at the Hebron Alliance Church in the afternoon of November 28. Participants were pastors, mission organization staff and seminarians. Dr. Wang shared his insights on "Equipping the Younger Generation to Face the Mission Challenges in the 21st Century," and also invited Dr. Sharon Chan, President of GCCI, to speak on the importance of Mission Education in local churches. She encouraged all pastors to give priority to mission education.

In addition, GCCI (HK) invited some of Dr. and Mrs. Wang's old friends for a dinner with them in the evening of November 28. It was a very special joyous occasion.



From p.6 ► perished inner cities but other communities, too, since families are in disrepair and dysfunction everywhere, leaving the youth most vulnerable. Gangs are families, but they are often missing out on earthly and heavenly father figures. They are looking for membership and inclusion in a seemingly fatherless world.

As stated at the outset of the piece, we Evangelicals have been known for great ministry ventures like Focus on the Family. The church needs to take that focus to a whole new level to care for families in disrepair and the fatherless.

James tells us God calls his people to care

for orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27). The Greater Portland region and the San Francisco Bay Area are experiencing increasing distress. Will we the church come together across the ethnic spectrum in partnership to parent our communities? We need the collective resources, including the wisdom of our elders who have fostered solidarity and social cohesiveness for years so that we can be agents of God's healing embrace for the orphans and widows in distress.

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