

**TEACHING IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING:
Asia Pacific Region
Thursday, July 13
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The Asia Pacific Region is the home to 40% of the world's population. Yet within its border's resides a multiplicity of opposites. On one hand you could experience a technologically advanced city of Hong Kong. Yet, within minutes drive one is immersed in the dynasty traditions of old China. One could teach in the highly sophisticated colleges of Australia and within hours stand before people from an aboriginal village whose world view goes no further than a couple of miles. One could experience the harshness of materialism that closes the mind of the Thai to the Gospel. But within a short trip, you could be preaching to the people in Laos who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ before. In Papua New Guinea where there are at least 875 languages spoken, a teacher could walk one mile and not understand the village language. Our region, as yours, offers significant challenges when we desire to offer quality education in an area of such diverse cultures. Today we have decided to allow three of our representatives to offer brief pictures of what it means to teach cross-culturally in their settings.

First is Peni Fakaua, principal of the South Pacific Nazarene College in Samoa. Second will be James Wambrauw, principal of the Nazarene Theological College in Indonesia. Third will be David McEwan, Academic Dean for the Nazarene Theological College in Australia. They will be giving you brief pictures of a portion of what you need to know if you were to come and lecture in their settings. Afterwards we will have a short exercise.

South Pacific Nazarene Theological College, located in Samoa, there are two Samoas, I'm from the western, there is an American Samoa.

In the South Pacific context, particularly in the small Island setting, life is very much open and generally communal. These small Island nations have traditions and cultures that are very closely related which even in their languages have words with same spelling and same meaning.

The traditional method of teaching that is still effective in the village setting is following the leader, watch and listen very carefully with your leader and do not ask the “Why” questions until later when the session is over. You can ask the “How” question during the session but not many, two “How” questions is enough, more than that is considered too much and you will be told to keep quiet but watch and listen. The why question is considered rude and disrespectful and to the point of rebelliousness. That is the general attitude of the students from that part of the world. Being friendly is the general rule for the relationship of the leader and the followers. The teacher is a leader and the students are followers. Leaders are expected to know it all, or at least twice than what the followers can do and know.

That is the basic awareness for any lecturer from outside of the South Pacific Island nations. Although I must admit that there are slight differences in these island nations that are always there just as in any country and cultures, but the commonalities is great and unique. I believe that is also what a visiting teacher must know.

Some visiting teachers failed because they were not able to connect with the students especially in the language. Language, as we all know, is the major area in teaching where visiting teachers failed greatly due to various reasons such as speaking too fast, or using vocabularies that are not familiar to the settings, using idioms, illustrations, and jokes that are not understood in their culture and way of thinking.

Most of the visiting teachers to our College who stayed long enough were able to sense and adapt to the way of thinking in the island setting. Most of whom were missionaries and generally missionaries were well prepared to adapt and adjust to whatever setting they settle with. But as things change with missionary status, more attention must be given to this need of visiting teachers.

We have one that is struggling to adjust and adapt due to the lack of preparation as what the missionaries had before going out. SO the failure is in relating to the students as according to their way of thinking, especially in the area of the language. This particular teacher is treating the students as if they are from the place where he originates. He must be aware and willing to accept the differences in the way of thinking and adjust the way he relates to them in the classroom and outside of classroom. Insisting on the otherwise would be a chaos and destructive.

All methods of teaching will work in the South Pacific but the approach must be that of friendliness but never of aggressiveness. Eye to eye approach is a no-no especially for foreigners inclusively and inclusively I mean teachers from the South Pacific area.

James Wambrau offered the Indonesian perspective.

It is my joy and privilege to be able to participate in this important event where Church leaders, especially the educators of Nazarene Institutions around the world meet together as a family. Praise God for His blessings!

First, I am going to share with you some thoughts in relation to the assigned topic, I think it will be better if I begin with the following things.

1. Our College (Indonesia Nazarene Theological College) is located in Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta is well known as the center of Javanese culture as well as a vast educational city. In fact, students from all over Indonesia, even international students, are studying in this city.
2. The cultural setting which I chose to talk about in this paper is the Javanese culture. The Javanese culture has influenced almost every aspect of Indonesian understanding, especially in the government, politics, education and religion.
3. I myself came from a different culture (I come from West-Papua which is also has its numerous and intricate cultures and traditions). I am living in the midst of the Javanese in the city of Yogyakarta. To learn a new culture was not something easy to do, but because of the Lord's call, I gave my life to Him, to serve Him and to lift up His people into Christlikeness.

This paper will be dealing with the following questions.

1. "What is my culture's educational methods?"

To answer this question, we have to start with "Javanese Trilogical Philosophy of Education", which was created by the late Kihadjar Dewantara, a noted philosopher and educator. He was also one of Indonesian's national heroes. His "Trilogical" approach to education were (in Javanese):

First, ING NGARSO SUNG TULODHO, (meaning: In FRONT, a leader (teacher) be an example through his/her words and deeds). That means that what they see in your life or my life as a teacher is more important than what we say.

Second, ING MADYO MANGUN KARSO, (meaning: In the MIDST, a leader (teacher) be an Encourager). That means after teaching you will walk together, stay together, talk together as friends, as brothers.

Third, TYT WURI HANDAYANI. (meaning: at the BACK, a leader (teacher) be a Supplier and Supporter for a welfare). They are always watching. The role of the teacher is from the back to help them, to encourage and support them.

So, from this philosophical background, the most effective method to be used is what I call “lecture-demonstration.” Students perhaps will “leave behind” all good lecture materials, but they will always “remember” what they have seen in the life of their teacher.

2. “What methods will not work in my setting?”

- a. Textbook or material orientation. Lack of students’ participation. From the experience, some teachers fail in this area because textbook is the main and students get tired of studying. There are some syllabi to guide their outlines but this teacher just focused on the textbook.
- b. Stiff rules for the students. Some teachers put a discipline in the syllabus too tough. Late 5 minutes – out – and the student will be out forever.
- c. Monologue (versus dialogue). Remember the philosophical background, they like to talk.
- d. Large classes (versus “small groups.” Small groups are very effective. Why? According to Sidjabat, in his book Menjadi Guru Professional: Sebuah Perspektif Kristiani (*To Be a Professional Teacher: A Christian Perspective*), he said,

“In order to get knowledge, people will get more information by sight (75%) rather than listening (25%). To develop an ability, people will more effectively learn by practice (65%) rather than by sight (25%) and listening (10%).

So, the practical aspect of teaching and learning process is very important.

3. “What would a visiting teacher need to know to minister effectively in Indonesia?”
 - a. Learning the language: Bahasa Indonesia (Major instruction)

I understand that this will not be easy for a visiting teacher to master any foreign language just in a week. Indeed, it is impossible. But still this “need” should be considered in the future. Now in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process effectively, we should do two things: *first*, Prepare translators. This means, the materials (original text) should be sent earlier to the translators for studying and contextualizing; *secondly*, prepare a good-ready translation material for handouts.
 - b. Understanding “the essence” of the culture and traditions.

Any culture or tradition in certain communities is a unique thing. In Indonesia, we have many cultures. I haven’t time to discuss my own culture. I talk about Javanese culture. In the classroom, the teacher must be careful, do not say any criticism or correction directly. Some teachers have done this directly and you can see the face of the student “Oh, it’s me.” This will insult the students. You can do it indirectly in way that shows a caring and loving spirit. It is very hard to forgive in the Javanese culture.
 - c. Understanding students’ religious background

Most of the students come from “other-beliefs (Animism plus Christian or Islam). So in order to bring a student up to the level of discipleship, a teacher should be very patient and praying continuously for “their” *conceptual transformation as well as spiritual formation*. Pastoral-Care approach is more effective than a focus on *indoctrination*. I want to teach you want I know.

- d. Appreciate their values. People are more important than programs or time. That means they are always late. Some teachers make an evaluation; late 5 times that means an absence. Late 10 times you have two – you are out. That won't work it creates a problem. Student gets angry at teacher
Students will learn “discipline” through and in their tradition. To create awareness of a disciplined life, a teacher will be more effective by using appreciation and encouragement rather than *enforcement* or *strict* rules. Criticize them but do it in an encouraging way and it is not insulting. They will learn “Oh I am wrong.”

This related so much to how a teacher be able to “incarnate” his or her “theology” into the new “contexts.” I remember one time one of my professors in the seminary was saying in his holiness class, “You can teach this theology in a perfect way, but what matters most is that you live it in a very simple Christ-like way among your people.” And I believe it.

- e. “Focused on Programs” rather than “focused on people”
Students more important than any other things that we are doing. I do not say that programs that develop students are not important. Any good or even “expensive” program (example: houses, buildings, etc) is important, but a focus on “these” is hamartia – “missing the mark” After the semester no change students still lying

David McEwan spoke about five areas a teacher would need to know about Australia.

What you need to know about Australia;

- Heritage is mainly from Britain and Ireland; today one of the most multi-cultural nations on earth; at the last census we had some 140 migrant cultures represented in our nation. Superficially, more like USA than Britain but all the major social institutions are British in origin – politics, law and education. Generally, Australia is free from ethnic tension although what you see on television overseas may well not

portray that. We do have some areas of social tension, that's not to be denied. We also have areas of conflict with the original aboriginal settlers of Australia but again the media often tends, as it does in many countries around the world, to blow these issues out of proportion.

- Politically, Australia is a democracy with the Westminster parliamentary system; politically it is social-democratic; it is still a monarchy, and we went to a vote of that only last year and we decided to remain a monarchy although I'm sure in due time we will become a republic and currently a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations; it has both a Federal and seven State governments;
- A post-Christian nation; Christians are very decidedly in the minority; we never have had much more than 20% of our nation claiming to be Christian. Currently, the census figures are that less than 10% will attend church on one Sunday in any month and less than 2% of our population will attend once per Sunday. We have no state church. Currently, largest church is Roman Catholic mainly through immigration; then the Anglican Church. The largest evangelical group are the Pentecostals; dominant form of evangelicalism is Reformed. About 85% of our population still does believe in God but its' spirituality has got nothing to do with Christianity.
- The Methodist Church because a part of the Uniting Church in 1977; prior to that it had long ceased to be a holiness body and, in fact, was not very much of an evangelical body; the Salvation Army has Wesleyan roots but in modern Australia is largely known for its social work, many of its corps are evangelical but holiness teaching is rare.
- From the Wesleyan-Arminian Holiness heritage, only the Church of the Nazarene and the Wesleyan Methodist Church are present in most Australian States, but their

combined membership is less than 4000;a few smaller independent holiness groups are also present

- Our nation is almost the same size as continental USA, but with only 19 million people scattered mainly along the eastern coastline; large distances and relative isolation are realities for us. Nevertheless, we are the most urbanized society on earth, with having nearly all of our population living in cities. In fact, between Melbourne and Sydney over 40% of our population live in those two cities.

What you need to know about Australians

- If you haven't picked it up already we tend to be anti-authoritarian and we tend to be egalitarian; generally first-name basis, informal, casual, in all settings including church and college (students call the staff by their first name); relationships are very important
- Credibility is not found in academic qualifications on their own, but in proven practice in a similar context to Australia; We focus very much on the value of personal experience and practical application. We are a country renowned for our attitude for the "tall poppies" in life. We generally like to cut them down. So those that come expecting to be respected for who they are, are generally disappointed.
- Australians tend to have fewer "friends" than some cultures but deeper relationships with those who are "friends"; We greatly value time spent together. Time spent over a cup of tea or coffee or a meal is especially valuable. This is expected of all staff who would come teach at our college
- We are profoundly multi-cultural, but the predominate culture is decidedly western. English is the national language but we have an English that is fairly unique to us.
- Australian speech is direct – to some it is blunt and offensive. We are highly idiomatic in our use of English. We normally value understatement. Therefore when

you are introduced in Australia you will not receive a long speech about how wonderful you are, how wonderful the things are that you've done and how much we appreciate you being there. We will simply say we are glad to have you and that's where it will probably end. As a people we tend not to appreciate "subtle hints"; our humor lends itself very heavily to sarcasm and irony. While on the surface we are impacted a great deal by United States television, video and music it definitely does get blended into a rather unique mix within our culture.

What you need to know about college and church life

- We serve the three Nazarene districts in Australia and one in New Zealand; they are a blend of conservative and progressive elements which, in every culture, makes for some interesting relationships.
- Most of our students are first-generation Christians, with very little Christian heritage or background. Many of our churches have a very strong youth element and therefore the whole implications of post-modernity in terms of how they learn and how they deal with learning and how they deal us and how they deal with the heritage of the church really has to be considered.
- Most of our churches are small (less than 50 attenders) and are clustered in the main cities. We really appreciate someone coming from a church talking about a staff meeting where their staff is larger than our church. It doesn't go down very well at all.
- Our college is multi-cultural; we also have a number of students from outside our educational zone (India, South America, Korea)
- We have a large number of female students preparing for the ministry. Currently, 40% of our full-time residential students are women preparing for ministry. If you are not happy with that, then I do advise you "don't come to Australia."

What you need to know about teaching in our college

- Education system is modeled on Britain originally, but with an increasing diversity becoming apparent
- University system is predominantly British in heritage, although newer universities are shaped by USA and other systems; it is a selective entrance scheme; state universities are heavily subsidized by the government but we are a “private” college and so full fees are payable
- High importance placed on class discussion and dialogue, not simply the presentation of a formal lecture; While we don’t mind a formal lecture going for a little while we do expect it to be broken up with questions and answers and if you don’t stop the students will ensure that you do. Teaching is much more than just “class time” Some of the best teaching opportunities come around the meal table or just walking around the campus. Teaching requires both formal and informal relationship time outside the classroom; Our British heritage ensures that “morning tea” is an institution. One of our non-Australia principals, and we’ve had many of those, decided to abolish morning tea. He changed his mind the next day before he was abolished. It is very much an institution so do not lecture over into morning tea time.
- Examinations are in essay format, not multiple choice or short answer. We have to meet government assessment requirements.
- Grading is standards based, not adjusted on a bell-curve; average grade is “C” (credit); most students are at this level. You start at a “C” and either prove that you are better moving up to “Distinction” or “High Distinction” or prove that you are not so good dropping down to a “Pass” or a “Fail.” Most students are really at credit level. We also practice second assessment and benchmarking with other Australian

institutions. That means that any grade that you give is subject to revision as we benchmark as we try to maintain a national standard.

- It is vital to really know our context before making assumptions about ministry; We teach in three general areas – Bible, theology, and ministry. Generally, most of the adjunct lecturers we have we seek them in the Bible and theology area. Generally, the college will not use overseas lecturers to teach ministry subjects unless they are out of a context that is very similar to our own. Therefore, if all you have pastured is large churches in the Bible-belt of a certain nation you are unlikely to be invited to teach us. If on the other hand, you have been practicing pastoral ministry in Wyoming or Montana or certain other areas in that part of the world we would be very happy to hear how you got on in pasturing. We also expect those who come to visit us, will share what they know with the faculty as well. One of the areas we are very keen on is our own faculty development and we see the opportunity of having overseas lecturers from wherever coming and spending time giving a faculty workshop or seminar so we can be enriched and our own teaching be improved in that setting.

Teaching in Australia: Successes and Failures

- Successes: those who value Australia for what is is and how it is, and do not spend endless hours comparing it with “home” – particularly in a negative fashion; those who value friendships above role expectations will always be warmly welcomed and warmly remembered; those willing to spend time outside of the lecture room with staff and students will always make a lasting impact.
- Failures, and to be honest there are relatively few of those, are those who come to “tell us” what we need to do and how it is done from their own cultural perspective. Likewise those who keep themselves aloof from informal contacts, no matter how

brilliant they are no matter how brilliant their lectures are, will have very little lasting impact upon our students and upon the life of the college.

We enjoy sharing with many cultures as we are a multi-cultural nation and we see it as a prime goal of our institution to always be open to having people from other parts of the world to come and share their knowledge, their insights into Christ and their life in Christ with us.

Brent concluded the session by summing up the 3 speakers. Three different countries, three different schools, three different methods of teaching. That only represents three of our 13 schools and all of them are totally different. What we would like to know what is the method of your school and how does that take the shape from your culture.

Peni talked to use about Samoa. It was “follow the leader” instruction, maybe because Samoa is patriarchal. Indonesia was demonstration and discussion. How does that come out of his culture? Australia was discussion and informal education. The way they do educational method comes directly out of their culture

Brent asked everyone to break into groups of 3 (with different regions represented) and explain the best educational method used in your cultural context and secondly, explain why that method further represents your culture.