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Leader Development: What Is Our Role?

In the last decade or so, there has been an increasing realization in the church around the world—especially in areas of fast church growth—of the need to build leaders. In response, there has been a steady growth of “leader development ministries.” But, what exactly does a “leader development ministry” do?

Essentially, there are three broad approaches that a leader development ministry can take in working with indigenous churches:

1. The “4P” Approach. *We will come in and train your leaders for you, using our curriculum, our teachers, our funds and we will give you our degrees upon completion.*

This “we must do it for you” method is largely a remnant of old colonialist missions thinking.

It is the “4P” approach. The outsiders supply:

- The Program (the curriculum)
- The People (the teachers)
- The Provision (the funding)
- The Prestige (the degree at the end)

In some situations, this might be the best ap-

proach. For example, if there are absolutely no existing leaders, the only option may be for outsiders to build them.

However, this approach is not the best long-term activity. Clearly, there is not a high level of contextualization or indigenous ownership in this method. In addition, it is condescending and demeaning toward the capacity of the national leaders and churches to build their own leaders.

In addition, this approach presupposes that outsiders (with their inevitably limited awareness of the local culture, history and context) can effectively build the indigenous leaders—a rather bold assertion!

When this approach is used, there is usually talk of the outside ministry “phasing out” or “passing

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the baton" of responsibility to the indigenous leaders. This rarely occurs, however, since the indigenous leaders have learned to be the passive recipients of outside charity. If the outsiders stop doing the work, sadly, the whole thing often falls apart.

2. The "Train the Trainer" Approach.

We will come and show you how to train. We will train you and then you will use the same materials and the same procedures and you will train others, who will then do the same with others, etc.

There may also be a certain amount of customization which is described as "contextualization." This "Train the Trainer" approach is currently in vogue. The basic idea is: "We will show you how to do it, giving you the materials to use, and then you will do it (our way)."

This approach does have a little higher level of indigenous ownership than the previous approach since it involves the national leaders themselves doing the ongoing training.

This approach may be appropriate when a high level of specialized training is needed. However, this method does have significant weaknesses:

1. The training is not deeply contextualized, since the national leader is being asked by the outsider, more or less, to use his materials and to do the training "his way."

2. Due to the "law of decreasing relearns," the effectiveness of the training decreases, often quickly and dramatically, with each subsequent "passing on."

3. The program is never truly owned by the nationals. It will always be seen as an "outside" program (which, of course, it is). Typically, such programs are used for a while, perhaps several years, but then fall into disuse, because they don't really meet the local need, being replaced by the latest program to come along.

4. The program cannot be adapted to meet local needs; neither can it be changed in response to changing ministry environments. The leaders have not been taught to *design*; they've been taught to *repeat*. Their own capacities to understand and create leader development processes have not been nurtured; they've simply been taught how to teach a certain program in a certain way. (Sadly, sometimes the outside ministry even goes so far as to formally forbid the in-

digenous leaders from ever changing their program, requiring them to teach exactly the same thing exactly the same way—a truly extraordinary insistence on opposing the indigenization of leader development!)

This approach presupposes that outsiders (with their inevitably limited awareness of the local culture, history and context) *know how* to best build the indigenous leaders—again, a rather daring premise!

Those who use the "Train the Trainer" approach frequently do have a strategy for "phasing out" by "passing the baton" to the indigenous leaders once a sufficient number of them have been indoctrinated in the training materials and their use. In practice, however, the "law of decreasing relearns" and the lack of true ownership are often the fatal flaws of the strategy, and, after several years, the indigenous leaders turn, disillusioned, to the next outsider who comes along promoting his new and improved "train the trainer" method.

3. The "Build the Designer" Approach.

We will come and explore with you the basic, biblical principles of how leaders are built, and, on the basis of those principles, we will then work with you as you develop the strategies, methods and tools that you will use as you build your own leaders.

Clearly, this method is considerably more difficult than the first two. However, if successful, it will yield a leader development process that is truly indigenized and contextualized, and is entirely owned, designed, operated and funded by the national leaders—one that is capable of being sustained and multiplied; one that is entirely capable of being changed whenever necessary.

This approach has the following characteristics:

1. It is considerably harder to do.

2. It takes a longer time to do.

3. It requires a deep and genuine commitment from the indigenous leaders, since they are the ones, ultimately, who will design the work, do the work, and provide for its support.

4. It requires a clear and accurate biblical model of how leaders are built, rather than merely a set curriculum along with preformed implementation strategies.

5. It requires a deep and flexible willingness to explore and to learn on the

parts of both the leader development ministry and the local leaders.

This approach presupposes that outsiders (with their inevitably limited awareness of the local culture, history and context) *are simply not the best ones either to do or to design the leader development work—* perhaps a more realistic hypothesis!

Significantly, this approach requires no “phasing out” or “passing of the baton” since the batons of both design and implementation are entirely in the hands of the indigenous leaders from the very beginning. And because it’s theirs, they will use it and make it work.

The author had a significant “Aha!” moment many years ago. For several days, he was with a group of top leaders from a large church network in Asia. On the last day, hundreds of copies of the first book written by one of these leaders arrived, fresh from the printers. The author watched as many of the leaders excitedly tore open the packages and grabbed many copies of the book to take home. With animated joy, they threw the packages back and forth to one another. Clearly, this first book was very important to them. As he watched this, it occurred to the author that there existed probably dozens of books by foreign authors that, technically, were “better quality” than this one. But, this book was theirs! They owned it, they would use it, and it would work.

When the leader development program is designed and implemented by the local leaders, it will work much better than any imported system.

At the same time, this approach affirms that outside leader development ministries do have an important role in serving the indigenous leaders by working with them as they interpret and implement biblical principles. This is a true partnership of equals with neither domination nor dependency.

While any of these three approaches, or combinations thereof, might be appropriate in certain situations, an emphasis on the “Build the Designer” approach may provide our best chance of achieving truly indigenized and contextualized leader development in the long-term. Exactly how this can be done will be addressed in the next section.

Building Designers of Indigenous Leader Development

The following are the six specific things that the leader development ministries can do as they seek to *build designers* among indigenous leaders:

1. They should build them in their own spiritual lives, marriages, families and ministries. There are two reasons for this. First, one of the greatest current *needs* of many Christian leaders—including those with the most leadership responsibility, and especially in areas of fast church growth—is for their own personal nurture, encouragement and strengthening. It can be challenging for them to receive this help from inside their own groups; so, this can be an appropriate and beneficial role for an outsider to play. Second, as the leader development ministries work personally with them, it provides an *example* for them to follow as they personally build their own leaders. Thus, the leader development ministries

Universal biblical principles, rather than established curricula, are the foundation of indigenous leader development.

must be committed to genuine, caring relationships with the indigenous leaders and help them build their own lives. These personal relationships then become the foundation for healthy leader development partnerships.

Such relationships cannot be forced. Neither can they follow preset patterns, plans or timetables. Trust and respect must be earned and this comes through a sincere commitment to listening and learning. The leader development ministries must first get to know the indigenous leaders, hear what they have to say, and learn the current situation in their churches, their vision, and their genuine needs and struggles. This can be done through time spent together during meals or while visiting for several hours or days. It will take time for relationships to be built and trust to be established. Moreover, the exact manner in which relationships are nurtured may vary considerably culture to culture.

When the leader development ministries are sincerely committed to the in-

digenous leaders, and not merely trying to use them to fulfill their own agendas and expand their own influence, they will find that one relationship quickly and naturally leads to another, as the indigenous leaders introduce them to other leaders in a pattern of relational-networking that is deep, open, effective and lasting.

2. They should explore with them the core biblical principles of leader development. This is quite different from imposing a particular curriculum or preplanned leader development “package” on the indigenous leaders. Instead, this involves working with them *conceptually* to enable them to internalize the fundamental biblical principles of leader development.

Universal biblical principles, rather than established curricula, are the foundation of indigenous leader development. For example, one core biblical principle is, “Leaders build leaders.” Two practical

implications of this principle are:

- Leaders must take *personal responsibility* for building new leaders, and not only fulfilling their ministry responsibilities. Jesus personally built His emerging leaders, while He conducted His ministry; He did not delegate that responsibility to some “expert” institution.

- It takes *personal interaction with mature leaders* to build emerging ones, and not only academic work in classrooms. Jesus took His emerging leaders “with Him.” His disciples’ personal interactions with Him in life and ministry profoundly transformed their lives and made them strong leaders.

While *biblical principles* will work in any culture or context, the *specific application* of the principles (the appropriate curriculum, etc.) will vary considerably. Consequently, the leader development ministries should not impose the form of application but, instead, explore with the leaders what those forms might be. The leaders themselves must design their own leader development forms. In

short, the leader development ministries should “bring seeds, not potted plants.”

During this building process, the leader development ministries must nurture the indigenous leaders’ abilities to think and design. This could be done through specific training that is designed for this purpose, as well as through the personal examples of the teachers and mentors who model the thinking-designing process. The leader development ministries can also give the leaders challenging assignments to stretch them and cultivate their abilities to think about how leaders

ment in a variety of contexts, and other pertinent resources.

This is a different kind of resourcing than simply supplying the curriculum to use. The indigenous leaders are the ones who always must be in control of their own leader development. If they own it, they will implement it, use it and support it—they will take responsibility for it. Many leader development ministries have been genuinely puzzled when indigenous leaders initially embrace their materials and approaches with apparent excitement but never follow through with a system-

The indigenous leaders are the ones who must always be in control of their own leader development. If they own it, they will implement it, use it and support it.

are formed and to design their own leader development processes. This should be all done in a face-to-face context of much encouragement and prayer.

This exploration must, of necessity, be highly flexible, so it can accommodate not only cultural differences, but also maturity levels and even philosophical differences found among the indigenous church leaders.

It is also beneficial to create “design teams”—both within and across church networks—consisting of indigenous leaders and teachers who work together to design their own leader development.

3. They should coach them on an ongoing basis as they form and implement their own designs in their own environments. This will happen in individual meetings with the leaders, in which the leader development ministries will discuss what the indigenous leaders are doing in their leader development, their specific designs, the problems they face, and possible solutions and strategies.

This includes encouraging them, giving them “permission” to take risks and try new things, connecting them with others from whom they can learn, and debriefing with them their failures as well as their successes.

4. They should resource them with printed materials, examples and case studies of effective leader develop-

ment and enduring implementation. It was because they never truly owned it.

The leader development ministries cannot simply supply the indigenous leaders with the package that will do the job for them; instead, they must build their internal capacity to design.

5. They can network them with leaders from other groups and church planting movements, with whom they interact regarding leader development.

This can be done within their own nation or culture, or it could involve leaders from other nations or cultures. A vigorous sharing of models, ideas, applications, successes and failures is greatly beneficial to all participants in such networking. In addition, new “design teams” spanning multiple movements and even nations can be established.

This kind of networking is not intimidating to the indigenous leaders since no one is trying to get them to “join” something or to embrace a specific doctrine or specific form of leader development—all the leaders are responsible for their own leader development work. Thus, deep friendships and even working relationships can be forged across the Body of Christ.

6. Finally, they can encourage them to conduct their own research and development of foundational models of Christian leadership and leader de-

velopment, appropriate to their own culture and context.

In some cases, the indigenous leaders have been so convinced by the outside “experts” that they will never be capable of such a thing; so, this may require a lot of encouragement.

This is the ultimate expression of indigenization and contextualization—when the indigenous leaders create their own *foundational models* of leader development.

Throughout all this work, the leader development ministries must:

- Aspire to an attitude of true servanthood, refusing to ever use the indigenous leaders in any way.
- Strive to come as learners, not as experts.
- Dialogue with the leaders, asking questions, learning from them, studying their culture, history, struggles.
- Bring resources rather than agendas, principles rather than forms.
- Embrace flexibility, since healthy leader development will look very different place to place. Moreover, it will change over time.
- Honor the local leaders, never doing anything that would undermine them or their authority.
- Affirm the local leaders’ right to all decision-making regarding their own leader development work.
- Help the leaders, from the beginning, to be self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating and self-designing in their leader development work.

Clearly, to do all the above will take considerably more time and involve more complex challenges than an outside leader development ministry showing the indigenous leaders “how to do it,” or simply doing it for them. This, however, is a true partnership of equals with neither domination nor dependency, and it is an appropriate answer to the current need of the church in much of the world.

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Brent Fulton

Mel Sletch

What is **Our Role?**

Toward a Set of Shared Considerations for Outside Involvement in Chinese Leadership Development

In the decades since China's opening to the outside world, literally hundreds of organizations, educational institutions and churches have responded to the perceived need for training leaders to shepherd China's rapidly growing church. The initial response consisted largely of providing materials and direct training by teachers from outside China. The provision of materials was considered crucial, given that no Christian literature or other resources had been produced in China for at least three decades. Training, mostly in the areas of biblical knowledge and practical theology, was ostensibly directed toward leaders who could then pass on what they had learned to others.

In the past two decades a maturing has taken place both within the church in China and among outside entities seeking to assist in the development of leaders. As one experienced trainer put it, we are learning what it means to go from being a "parent" (deciding what is needed and delivering it to under-resourced leaders who accept unquestioningly its relevance and validity) to being a "partner" (bringing in needed resources but working together to assess and ad-

dress the training needs of the leaders) to finally functioning as "peers" (equal and self-sufficient, but choosing to be interdependent in pursuit of a common goal). Most, if not all, of those involved in leadership training in China would agree that the end goal is to foster the development of indigenous training efforts sufficient to meet the current and future needs of the church and able to be sustained without ongoing outside support. Practically speaking, how does

one move toward this end?

The following considerations were developed through dialogue over the course of several months among numerous individuals involved in serving the church in China through a variety of leader development programs. Divided by categories relating to different aspects of the leader development process, they are offered here as a starting point for identifying best practices that promote a culture of indigenous reproduc-

ing leaders. Recognizing that there are many types of leaders and many types of training, these considerations are positioned as broadly as possible and as such will need to be applied specifically within different training contexts.

Philosophy and Planning

Before jumping in, one needs to have a clear idea of who is being trained and for what purpose. While this point may seem obvious, it has often been overlooked in the rush to meet the urgent leadership needs of the church. The training or resources provided should fit into the long-term plans of the church or organization giving assistance as well as the church in China, both the specific local body and the larger church as a whole. To know whether one is indeed making a valid contribution requires a well-researched understanding of the local needs and opportunities for involvement, which means getting to know

Chinese? What means are we using to continually seek to understand the social, political, economic and spiritual context in which we are working?

Methodology

Leader development is holistic—a fact that seems to have gotten lost in the West and in Western-influenced societies that emphasize academic achievement over other areas (not to mention the high value put on education in Chinese culture). Intellectual development is but one part of a process that should also encompass the spiritual, relational and practical aspects of the leader's life and work. As Dr. Robert Clinton has pointed out, the development of the leader starts even before the point when the individual is aware of God's working in his or her life and continues through a variety of life experiences. In this sense the notion of "training leaders" in a few days' or weeks' time is preposterous. It may

build upon the previous experiences of those being trained? Do we incorporate prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the process? Do our programs reflect an understanding of which methodologies are appropriate to the particular Chinese church situation in which we are involved? Are these methodologies closely tied to our own culture or to tools or technologies available to us, or are they easily reproducible by, and within the context of, those being trained? Do our trainees interact not only with the material presented but also with one another, in the course of learning and serving together in teams?

Curriculum

While much attention has been given to developing training materials for the church in China, the curriculum does not begin to represent the whole picture when it comes to leader development. Nevertheless, a biblically sound curriculum is an essential part of the process. A balanced treatment of doctrine has the ability to promote and even restore unity within the body of believers, while an over-emphasis (or deliberate de-emphasis) of one interpretation can sow seeds of division. The church in China has enough internal threats to unity of its own and does not need well-meaning outsiders to bring in more dis-unifying factors.

The curriculum should have a balance between "head, heart and hand" or the knowing, being and doing, aspects of leader development. It should address not only biblical knowledge and ministry skills, but also character, relationships and the leader's responsibilities to oneself, God, family, co-workers, other believers and the larger society. The curriculum should ideally be developed in consultation with local leaders such that there is no question about transferability; it is theirs, and they are fully capable of taking and using it later in their own training context. A proper understanding of this context will help ensure that the curriculum is appropriate on several levels: it fits the culture (for example, urban or rural, Han or minority), educational level, existing skill level and individual callings of those being trained, and it is financially within their reach to reproduce without outside support.

Since much of what is learned comes from the person, not the material, **trainers should be selected whose lives demonstrate the qualities ultimately desired in the trainees.**

situations and people over time. Simply desiring to meet the immediate need of leaders in a given context is not sufficient motivation for getting involved. As mentioned above, the goal should be indigenous leaders reproducing indigenous leaders, a goal that should be reflected in all aspects of the training undertaken.

Ask: *What is our long-term vision for involvement with the church in China? Have we done our homework and thus have a thorough understanding of who we are working with—their background, history, leadership structure and key relationships (both within China and with outside entities)? Have we spent time with them in dialogue about our shared long-term objectives and appropriate strategies to reach them? Have we identified existing indigenous resources or Chinese resources borrowed from other contexts that can be utilized? If none are currently available, are we moving deliberately toward delivery of programs in*

be possible to impart specific skills or knowledge during this period, but any specific program, resource or tool must be seen as just one element in God's ongoing development process.

Experiential learning takes place in the context of ongoing ministry responsibilities, with skills imparted through modeling and supervised assignments. Leaders are developed in community, as they serve together. Because of the importance of peer mentoring and interaction with other leaders in the process, leaders are developed a few at a time, not in cookie-cutter fashion through large-scale programs. Herein lies one of the paradoxes of leader development in China: the numbers of leaders needed are huge, yet individual and small group methodologies are essential for holistic leader development.

Ask: *Recognizing that leader development is ultimately a work of God in the life of the individual, do we seek to identify and*

Ask: Does this curriculum promote historically orthodox doctrine, biblical literacy, study skills and application to daily life, while leaving out pet doctrines and biases? Does it address stewardship of time, resources, gift, and relationships, as well as core character issues? Will the effectiveness of the curriculum end with the leaders we train, or are they being equipped as lifelong learners to develop new and relevant training experiences for their next generation of leaders? Is it “packaged” in such a way that it can be readily passed on to others? Is our curriculum based on a needs assessment of current and desired competencies, defined in terms of observable behavioral changes which can be later measured (see evaluation, below)?

Trainer Selection

It is often said that leaders train leaders. Simply being able to preach or to teach the Bible does not qualify one to equip church leaders in China. Since much of what is learned comes from the person, not the material, trainers should be selected whose lives demonstrate the qualities ultimately desired in the trainees. In order to realize the benefits of real life-on-life mentoring, the trainers should be committed to building relationships with trainees over time. They should see themselves not simply as purveyors of skills or knowledge, but as partners with the local body in a process that is owned by those whom they serve. Where possible, trainers should already possess a working knowledge of the local context and needs; if not, these issues should be addressed in a thorough orientation. Keeping in mind that the end goal is indigenous leaders who can multiply themselves through others, trainers should anticipate gradually decreasing their involvement (or changing the nature of it) with a particular leader or group rather than seeking to perpetuate their involvement. Finally, not only the trainers themselves, but also the churches and organizations to which they belong, should seek to model principles of effective leader development, such as those set forth in this document, throughout their work.

Ask: Do our trainers exhibit the fruit of a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ? Do they demonstrate a working knowledge of the training context and trainees? Do they



The curriculum should have a balance between “head, heart and hand” or the knowing, being and doing, aspects of leader development.

. . .

have a proven track record of cross-cultural effectiveness? Are they able to demonstrate emotional stability across a variety of situations? Do they recognize their role within the larger leader development context? Are they committed to a long-term relationship with leaders they help train?

Trainee Selection

Perhaps the most oft-quoted biblical reference to leadership training is 2 Timothy 2:2. Here Paul instructs Timothy to entrust what he has learned “to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (NIV). His instructions imply a definite intentionality, the goal being not merely the instruction of others but rather a process whereby the teaching will be ongoing and leaders will multiply. If one does not first identify those with the gifts, calling, character and commitment needed to reproduce themselves in others then it is not surprising that the results of one’s training efforts fall short of what was expected. Many in China are eager to receive training, but all are not equally qualified to utilize it. Nor is all train-

ing equally relevant or appropriate for all believers. Ideally, the existing leadership who knows the potential trainees the best should identify within the context of the community the unique gifts and callings of each and then consider which training experiences are best suited for them. Careful consideration with these leaders of the selection criteria can help to ensure that those who receive training are able to fully utilize it to the benefit of the larger body.

Ask: Have trainees been chosen prayerfully and strategically? What criteria are used? Are they recommended by their relevant leaders? Do they demonstrate spiritual maturity and have proven ministry experience? Are they willing and able to develop others? Are they committed to a defined, personalized process of development?

Sustainability vs. Dependency

A long-term focus in leader development aims at promoting an ongoing process whereby leaders multiply themselves through others. Without this long-term outlook, the infusion of resources and courses will be ineffective in satis-

fying the growing need for leaders. Ultimately this need must be satisfied from within the church itself; thus the value of any contribution from outside must be evaluated on the basis of whether it helps or hinders the church in meeting its long-term leadership needs. Financial incentives (direct or indirect, such as travel opportunities, provision of materials or other resources, or introductions to donors outside China) may appear to speed up the leader development process in the short-term, but in such situations it is highly questionable whether leaders will continue to be developed once these incentives are withdrawn.

Ownership and direction from leaders at the appropriate levels are key. Considerable damage has been done by outside trainers who engaged at the local or regional level without realizing that the group or groups they were serving were part of a larger network. As a result, the delicate power relationships among leaders were upset and jealousies ensued over the fact that one part of the body had access to outside resources while others did not. Contributions from outside must strengthen the whole community not just individual leaders or particu-

dividual leaders to carry out work in country unless church leaders at the appropriate levels agree and are active participants in the ongoing working arrangement? Do specific programs complement the wider leader development efforts carried out in the locality, region or country? Does our involvement facilitate linkages across existing networks to promote leader development and sharing of development resources (as opposed to fueling territoriality by creating a "haves" versus "have-nots" situation)? Is this leadership development effort scaleable in the hands of local leaders?

Evaluation

A commitment to leader development includes a commitment to defining desired outcomes and evaluating results. Results are seen both in how the outside entity functions in providing the leader development assistance and in the lives of the leaders at various levels in country. The *EvaluLead* guide—the product of extensive research on leader development by a number of NGOs and foundations under the auspices of the Sustainable Leadership Initiative—further breaks down the impact on the leader into three interpenetrating domains: individual, or-

with one another, much to the detriment of the larger community and ultimately to the church in China itself. Outside organizations and churches that have a learning mentality acknowledge these concerns where valid but are also willing to share knowledge with and seek input from others, believing that doing so will enhance the effectiveness of all involved.

Ask: *Is a learning assessment program incorporated into the development process? Are systematic records kept of development activities and documented results? Does the evaluation process include pre- and post-testing; feedback from peers, supervisors and subordinates on the leader's performance following the development activity; and longer range evaluation of the quality of the leader's work? Do evaluation efforts reflect an understanding of the culture that is sufficient to know what measures are appropriate to assess significant outcomes? Do outside entities and local leaders cooperate in evaluating the effectiveness of the program? Are trainees involved in self-evaluation as part of the development process? Is there a means of measuring whether leaders are actively involved in reproducing themselves after receiving training?*

Not the Last Word

For those on the frontlines, these considerations may seem idealistic. In many situations some of these points may be difficult or highly impossible to carry out. Yet, after three decades of outside involvement in leader development in contemporary China, it is worth evaluating the effectiveness of these efforts and reflecting upon what has worked and what has not. This draft is presented as a starting point in this process in the hopes that it may lead to a shared understanding both outside and inside China of how best to serve the church as it develops leaders for the future.

Draft compiled by Dr. Brent Fulton, editor of ChinaSource. Comments are welcome and may be directed to BFulton@chsource.org.

Endnote

1. John T. Grove, Barry M. Kibel, and Taylor Haas, *EvaluLead: A Guide for Shaping and Evaluating Leadership Development Programs*. Oakland, CA: Sustainable Leadership Initiative, 2005: 6-10. ■

If local ownership does not exist, outside programs will likely be discarded after a few years or sooner if outside support is withdrawn.

lar groups of believers. Leaders need to agree together on the direction they wish to take in leader development in order for outside resources to be appropriately utilized; only then can true partnership take place in co-creating long-term solutions that will outlast the outsiders' involvement. If this local ownership does not exist, experience shows that outside programs will likely be discarded after a few years, or sooner if outside support is withdrawn.

Ask: *Do the leaders with whom we are working have a long-term commitment to a culture of reproducing indigenous leaders; do they value participating in producing more leaders? Does our involvement strengthen indigenous church-based institutions and respect existing authority structures at all levels? Do we refrain from hiring in-*

ganizational and societal. Desired changes in each of these domains should be stated up front and then appropriate measures designed to ascertain whether these changes have taken place. Measurement of results should be both evidential (hard data that enumerate what is different as a result of the training), and evocative (impressions about what has changed either from trainees themselves or from those whom they have influenced).¹ Although a full exploration into the methodology of evaluation is beyond the scope of this paper, suffice it to say that effective leader development requires evaluation of both processes and outcomes.

Security concerns have often prevented those involved in leader development from sharing methodologies and results



A Chinese Pastor

Jim Nickel

A Pastor's Training Course Experience

It was my pleasure to have attended a training course for leaders that has had a significant impact on my own life. I participated in this study at a time when I was still trying to get my feet on the ground at the beginning of pastoral ministry. Admittedly, at that time I had not thought this course for leaders would be personally relevant so early-on in my ministry. However, to my increasing surprise, this time of study has been of great importance and enormous assistance.

The Ministry

Humility: The quote the leaders used, "Our vision is to bring your vision to fruition," intuitively expresses that their primary intention was to "minister." Despite their outstanding human resources (lecturers and speakers), there was never a hint of arrogance or superiority toward the participants; rather, they humbly shared with us what the Lord had laid upon their hearts. Their self-abasement disarmed our own pride and encouraged us to receive from God with humility.

Servanthood: The ministry of the leaders, along with all the other participants, was significantly important. Their humility and maturity permitted us to

feel accepted and intimate. Their important role was largely to act as a bridge, allowing us to learn firsthand that apart from the provision of resources, successfully achieving results in mission is hugely dependent upon the communicator. In fulfilling this role, they demonstrated themselves to be such a resource.

Context: At great cost, they provided a very helpful and relaxed environment for living and study. Such a context certainly contributed towards the success of the course. Given that stress already defines our day-to-day lives, very little could have been achieved in the way of relaxation or information absorbed had we been simply crowded into unpleas-

ant facilities. Rather, within the tranquil environment that was provided us, we were able to thoroughly relax, spiritually recharge and physically regenerate—inadvertently making it difficult to leave! We echoed the words of Peter: "O it is good that we are here—(that is, to remain on this spiritual "mountaintop"). Oh, if only all church workers could have such opportunities!

The Teaching

Content: Inspiring. Despite some re-occurring themes, the content exhibited great depth and strength. Each lesson topic was very down-to-earth, meeting issues of concern to all pastors. I received much insight. For example, prior



The training broadened my perspective and stimulated both my view of pastoral ministry and my thoughts toward personal spiritual growth.

. . .

to attendance, I had always avoided admitting I was a leader because in China such a word carries much cultural baggage. Yet, the very first lesson dealt a severe blow to my hollow humility. I came to realize that I had refused to admit my position because, in reality, I feared taking any responsibility. In fact, I should not refuse to admit I am a leader. Rather, I should take up the responsibility charged unto me and work with greater diligence.

Form: Given that class participants had all had some previous theological training, possessed rich ministry experience and were currently pastoring busy churches, it was wise not to arrange mass lectures but to institute a seminar approach to learning. Such a class format more successfully encouraged participation and aroused interest while at the same time reducing anxiety in the learner. The small group discussions, which increased interaction, additionally acted to assist us in absorbing taught materials, broadening perspectives, as well as cementing greater camaraderie among participants.

Life: Every lecturer was outstanding. They were not only specialists in their areas, but their lives exuberated excel-

lence as they acted as our role models of abundant living and sagacity. They left me with memorable impressions of their love and humility.

The Fruit (Significance)

Their perseverance for the Lord has yielded abundant fruit as they have worked significantly and meaningfully to mature China's urban church and pastoral laborers.

Platform: By means of their service, a valuable networking platform was erected. Previously, I had little interaction with other brothers, yet after this opportunity our interconnectedness is now much stronger. As a group we discussed together the various ministry issues and difficulties we have each encountered with the result that we gained from one another's shared experiences many practical pastoral insights. We were mutually inspired and, despite my own shortcomings, I was greatly encouraged. This platform established for us a solid foundation for future interaction and communication—even to this day we continue to fellowship periodically. I believe that this unity will have significant impact upon the future of the church.

Booster and Incubator: Not only was our faith encouraged, but more importantly there was an increasing and maturing church macro-perspective. For example, our understanding of church-societal relations, church-state relations, maintaining an amicable predisposition towards contact with government officials and establishing a healthy pastoral image within the Mainland Chinese church was expanded. Such perspectives strengthen the maturing of the urban church and enable it to advance.

Overall, my heart is filled with gratitude unto God. To have been a part of this training, even though I am the least of all, was a valuable encouragement. This training has broadened my perspective as well as stimulated both my view of pastoral ministry and my thoughts toward personal spiritual growth. I have been deeply encouraged by this "great cloud of witnesses" and will press on in faith endeavoring to continue following and serving the Lord.

Thanks be unto the Lord who loves us so greatly! Thank you also to those brothers and sisters who have served. May the Lord remember your labor in Him! ■



Peoples of China

Profiles of Chinese House Church Leaders

Pastor David

In the last decade, China has undergone tremendous economic changes which have inevitably led to social and cultural changes as well. With the opening up of the country to globalization and the internet, all kinds of knowledge about Western civilization have become references for individuals who are not satisfied with the present communist rule and are searching for a better model for China's future development. These changes have posed challenges to the church and church leaders wherever they are located. In many cases, the situations in individu-

al churches have already compelled their leaders to make certain changes in their ministry practices and in their way of doing evangelism in their communities.

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al churches have already compelled their leaders to make certain changes in their ministry practices and in their way of doing evangelism in their communities.

We can safely stress one point here: the changes under way in the public arena are things church leaders cannot ignore or totally neglect. Church leaders must face these changes. Not many churches can avoid the current of these changes for long. The differences among the churches tell us how well they are coping with the changes taking place in the hearts of their congregations and their changed lifestyles. These reflect any questioning of church ethics and the building up of various secular heart idols. Indeed, with the advent of such drastic change in China, the first question we ask is how church leaders will adapt their ministry models and supplement their congregational teaching so that believers are not

confused or overwhelmed and are still able to live a Christian lifestyle. China is huge. Many churches, as well as their leaders, differ in many ways. The author's experience with these leaders, even though it has covered a good percentage of them in terms of geographical territory, is by no means comprehensive enough to represent all the models among the churches. We have mentioned the present leaders who came from the past and how they need to change; however, we have yet to discuss the emerging new leaders who have come onto the scene more recently since the advent

of social and economic changes. Rather than drawing on examples and generalizing from them, this author intends to leave the generalizations for the reader. The following are profiles of different leaders that are representatives of groups of leaders with similar characteristics.

Leaders A, B and C

Leaders A, B and C are high school and middle school graduates who are pastors and elders of a rural northeastern church. The congregation size is about forty thousand. The pastor has served in ministry for more than fifteen years and was a graduate of a theological program. The elders have served a bit less time. They are in their late 30s and 40s, and all of them are eager to learn more ministry skills, church governing abilities and theological knowledge. Responding to the pressures of change, even in such a

remote part of the country, they decided to attend together a seminary away from their home area. They elected three more elders to run the church in their absence. They are now working towards their Master of Divinity degree and have developed strong skills in researching biblical and Christian materials on the web.

Leaders D and E

Leaders D and E are both more like district bishops administering a group of church workers numbering more than a hundred. Both have been in their positions for decades, and both were undereducated except in the area of biblical knowledge. They know that they need help from learned Christians, and they run theological classes on an ongoing basis with the help of overseas Christian workers. Leader D allows all workers to come and study when a teacher is available while Leader E organizes study classes which take three years for a new student to graduate and be qualified to serve as an evangelist in their church group. These two leaders have found adapting to a changing environment more difficult since they are in a more self-contained, closed church. They are both rural and do not encourage young people to seek work in cities or in factories.

These leaders need an understanding of the social, economic and cultural changes that are posing threats to their separation from the secular world. As youth from their church have successfully left their area for college in the cities, these individuals are unable to follow them up. They need churches in the cities to take over the care of these college students. They themselves are in their late 50s and early 60s; they can only rely on volunteers from "somewhere out there" and do not control any curriculum or have a coherent program.

Leaders F and G

Leaders F and G are both from the past as were leaders D and E. However, the differences between them are their ministries which require Leaders F

and G to travel extensively among more than twenty provinces and dozens of cities. Leader F is the top leader of a mega church system based in northern China that covers some twenty-four provinces and forty cities. Leader G is one of the founding leaders of a church covering one-third of a large city in the south. Both of these leaders decided not to join the Three-Self Movement and were to a certain degree being persecuted. Nevertheless, with God's provision, their churches were protected and have grown into mega churches in the low six figures. They continue active in leading roles. They, too, have no formal theological education and are now responsible for teaching missionaries who are sent to different parts of the country. These two old brothers are now learning how to cope with the young people in the cities. They are being exposed to the idea of building community relationships with all the local churches. Churches must be beneficial and accountable to the community in order to be more receptive, accessible and visible.

Leader H

Leader H is a graduate of a seminary in the south from which he received a college level theological degree and is now pastoring a church in the north. This church is not big in terms of number but has quality. There are numerous intellectuals in various disciplines in its congregation. Leader H is young, in his 30s and without much other educational experience in the social sciences or arts and therefore has difficulty serving as a mentor to these intellectuals. Leader H needs help in this capacity in order to help these intellectuals who continue to challenge themselves with further achievements toward their goal of having a better life and making a better world. Leader H has covered this gap by asking an educated missionary to help mentor his flock.

Leader J

Leader J, a junior leader, started out as a youth minister. He was a graduate of a theological class within his church and was elevated to a leadership position despite his youth because of his ability to run programs for the young people, especially college students. His church is part of a big church system, and he was

able to call youth ministers from the different districts to form a discussion and prayer group. He gradually became the leader of this group and of other young leaders within the entire church system. After some years of coordination among the young people, he was then elected to be the second person in charge of the entire church system administration.

Leader J does not want outside help to give seminars in biblical, theological and ethical classes. He would rather establish a formal seminary for the church by himself. He wants to learn from other people's experiences in running a seminary, and he is very eager to take control of all the resources and responsibilities necessary for the success of the seminary.

Leaders K and L

Both leaders K and L are businessmen who found God and decided to follow Christ while they were having successful businesses. K is in the north and managed real estate, restaurants, trading companies and other enterprises. His commitment is to establish churches by forming focused businessmen's small groups where they share together during their devotional times. These groups grow, becoming stable churches. Leader L is a merchant from an eastern city. He houses a seminary in his factory. Besides ministering for evangelism, both of these leaders also spend money for benevolent purposes. Recognized as successful businessmen and devoted individuals, they need more mentoring in how to walk the path of righteousness with God.

Leaders M and N

Leaders M and N are both intellectuals of a professorial level. They have endeavored to serve the Lord by holding Bible study groups and then gradually gathering friends and relatives for Sunday services. They are in cities thousands of miles apart; however, they pray together for the cause of our Lord. They have many common friends and mentors. They have a good cultural background and knowledge and are skillful in handling church matters. However, apart from self study, they do not have much theological training and have difficulty coping with theological and holistic issues that are posed by their congregations. It is even more difficult for them to

separate issues of redemption and freedom. Sometimes, even when they want to call for separation from evil forces like the *Falungong*, they are blamed by their colleagues for being too Christianized.

Leaders P, Q and R

These are leaders who returned from overseas where they converted to Christianity during their time abroad. They decided to come back and work in China, but as they are now Christians, rather than going to a traditional church they have established their own Bible study groups in various cities. Usually they are closer to the work force and mainly intellectuals. They have a great time worshipping God, but they have a difficult time separating themselves from secular practices. They are learning to understand the way of the cross as the most precious aspect of Christianity. While obtaining biblical knowledge is easy for them, living a clear-cut, faith-based lifestyle remains their greatest challenge.

Conclusion

The above is just a partial list of the different types of church leaders currently found. However, this author believes that we should spend more time building new leaders for tomorrow. The most important elements in a new leader are a heart of purity and humility along with the willingness to forsake worldly glory while submitting totally to God's guidance and provision. One testing point is how much suffering they can bear for Christ. In training and mentoring leaders, each one might need something different, but the goal should be the same. Whether present or future leaders, we can prepare them using the following rubrics: be able to walk in faith; be knowledgeable in the faith and able to give an apologetic for it; be able to serve by evangelism and mission; be able to teach and preach in the biblical tradition; be able to love our neighbors and care about communities; and be able to reconcile any enmity with human institutions but stand firm against any Satanic forces and idols.

Pastor David is a Reformed Evangelistic Missionary burdened to promote social, cultural and spiritual righteousness in both Chinese and American churches and societies. ■

Book Review

Team Dysfunction

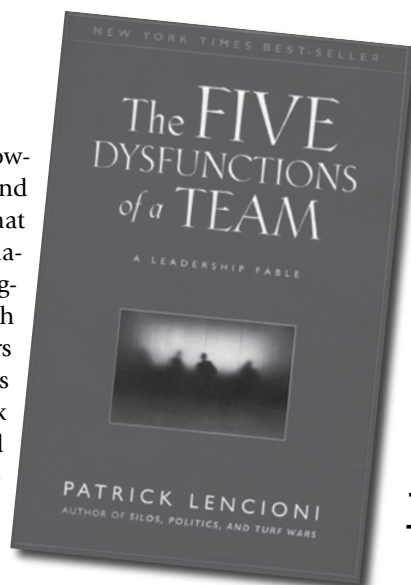
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni. Jossey-Bass, 1st edition, 2002; 240 pages, hardcover; ISBN-10: 0787960756, ISBN-13: 978-0787960759; \$16.47 at Amazon.com

Reviewed by Gary Waldron

It has been said that a group is a bunch of people standing in an elevator; a team is a bunch of people standing in an elevator but the elevator is broken. Teams exist to accomplish tasks; however, all too often it is the tasks themselves that are the focus and not the building of highly effective dynamic teams. When tasks become the primary focus and not the development of the team, people become burned out, overworked and feel underappreciated.

A significant shift must occur in leaders if they are to guide an organization to

team distinguishes growing vibrant churches and ministries from ones that start out well but plateau and eventually stagnate. Church research has shown that pastors who see themselves as doing most of the work of the church can lead a church of about 150-200 maximum. It will take all their time and effort to prepare regular sermons, keep up the building, carry out administrative tasks, visit people in the hospital, lead a small group, plan outreaches and all the other things that a congregation expects of them. This is why the majority of churches never grow beyond that number. However, if pastors see themselves in a role of building and equipping a dy-



Patrick Lencioni tells a fable about an upstart high-tech company that is well funded, well-staffed and has a great project, but they failed to prosper and increase their market share.

greater levels of kingdom effectiveness. That shift is from doing work to building a dynamic team that gets the work done. In essence, all leadership is team leadership. A prime minister does not lead a country; he leads a cabinet of ministers who through their departments lead the country. A chief executive officer does not lead a corporation; he leads a team of vice-presidents who oversee various departments. A pastor does not lead a large congregation; he leads a team of ministry heads who lead through their ministries.

The ability to lead a highly effective

dynamic team of leaders, the potential for growth, expansion and vitality is endless.

In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni tells a fable about an upstart high-tech company that is well funded, well staffed and has a great product, but they have failed to prosper and increase their market share. They bring in a new CEO from outside the industry, and her first job is to get them to see that the problem is not with the product or their work goals but with how the team is currently operating. She makes it her primary job to develop the team. This

is met with a great deal of skepticism on the part of the team members who do not see their own dysfunction and at first criticize her priorities and tactics. The new CEO begins by taking the team to an offsite retreat and their interactions there expose the five dysfunctions.

Dysfunction #1: The Absence of Trust

High performing teams develop between themselves the ability to trust

each other at deep levels. They not only trust that each other will tell the truth, they trust that they can be vulnerable with each other without reprisal. Members of this kind of team know each other well and take the time to build strong relationships. They know each other beyond the office and care about each other in a broader sense. They know that they can trust the other team members with who they are. When making decisions they can give their honest feedback. When mistakes are made or deadlines missed, they can be honest about why and invite the team to forgive and examine how the situation can be changed next time. Individuals in teams with a high level of trust do not need to hide or pose in the group; rather they can genuinely be who they are. It takes a commitment on the part of the team leader to foster a culture of honesty and vulnerability and to value the team relationships above all other priorities.

Dysfunction #2: Fear of Conflict

In the name of unity, Christian organizations and their teams can often justify what is truly a fear of conflict. Surface politeness can mask deep differences that never get aired and ultimately lead

to serious fractures on the team. Teams that trust each other are not afraid to enter into spirited debate over issues that are critical to success. They can disagree about issues without attacking people. These kinds of teammates can seize an issue or decision and question it from all sides and allow for unfiltered discussion. This kind of team values the collective wisdom of all of its members and believes that when anyone holds back their opinions the entire team suffers. In order to foster a culture of positive conflict, the leader should facilitate a time where debate and conflict norms are discussed and agreed to. While conflict might be uncomfortable at times, lively passionate debates around critical issues helps to ensure that the team is making the best decisions possible.

Dysfunction #3: Lack of Commitment

When there is a high level of trust and positive conflict present in a team, it leads to a high degree of buy-in from the team members. Team members do not need to be on board with a decision one hundred percent, but they acknowledge the process, have had their honest input, and can commit to doing their part to see that the goals are achieved. Team members on dysfunctional teams will give a half-hearted nod to the imposed team goals and then either give a token effort towards achieving them or may even sabotage the team through backstabbing, gossip or lack of effort. A high performing team will have team members who will go above and beyond what is expected to see that the team goals are met, and the entire team will share the credit.

Dysfunction #4: Avoidance of Accountability

Teams that commit to group decisions that require interdependence of effort to achieve are not afraid to hold each other accountable for performance. These teams map out mile stones and deadlines and are free to check up on each other as to how the work is coming along. Team members who fall behind for some unforeseen circumstance or are not able to meet projected deadlines are free to ask for help from other teammates. Some who may have finished earlier that expected can offer their time to assist the

"A friend of mine, the founder of a company that grew to a billion dollars in annual revenue, best expressed the power of teamwork when he once told me, **'If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time.'**

Whenever I repeat that adage to a group of leaders, they immediately nod their heads, but in a desperate sort of way. They seem to grasp the truth of it while simultaneously surrendering to the impossibility of actually making it happen."

—excerpt from the Introduction in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, by Patrick Lencioni



others. There is a great deal of mutuality in that this is "our" goal, not just "my" goal, and all are accountable to pitch in and help even beyond doing their own part. A team that practices appropriate accountability does not look to the leader to keep everyone on track; rather teammates go directly to their peers.

Dysfunction #5: Inattention to Results

Teams that have a high level of trust, engage in appropriate conflict, commit to following through on group decisions and hold one another accountable set aside their individual agendas and that of their departments to see that the team goals are met. The collective results of the team are their focus, and they prioritize their activities accordingly. Teams exist to accomplish tasks. The leader and the team need to know exactly what it is the team exists for and develop measurable results. When team goals are fuzzy and tasks are ambiguous, the team will falter. Clear results will allow the team to celebrate their successes and build towards the next challenge.

After writing *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, author Patrick Lencioni was inundated with requests to help overcome them. In a companion book, *Overcoming*

the Five Dysfunctions of a Team, he gives suggestions and tools for how to address each of these areas and move a team towards greater relational health and work productivity.

When a leader places his or her primary focus on the development of the team everyone wins. The result is a team that becomes a healing, nurturing community where every person is viewed as a whole person (not just a human resource). The team then takes responsibility to see that every person is operating in their giftedness and from their strengths for the good of the entire team. A high level of trust creates a positive atmosphere where people can genuinely bring the best of themselves to the team and not hide or try to create a false impression. Teams like this accomplish extraordinary results and will attract other motivated individuals to join them. It takes a visionary leader with a calling and vision from God that is beyond what they can accomplish on their own to commit to making team building a priority.

Gary Waldron, Ph.D. is the director of the Faith Leadership Initiative and has been involved in China service for 23 years. He may be contacted at gwaldron@faithleadership.net. ■

Resource Corner

Now on the Web

Annotated Bibliography

Compiled by China Academic Consortium

Since 1985, as China has opened up to the world, there has been a revival of religious studies in Mainland China. Chinese scholars in the fields of philosophy, literature and history have written numerous books on different aspects of Christianity, concentrating on Christianity as a cultural and historical force. These books provide Chinese readers with an introduction to Christian history and culture as well as a basic acquaintance with Christian theology.

Since there has been no systematic distribution of these books, China Academic Consortium is producing an annotated bibliography of these volumes printed in Mainland China from 1985 to the present. These books are published by secular publishers, not Amity Foundation or the China Christian Council.

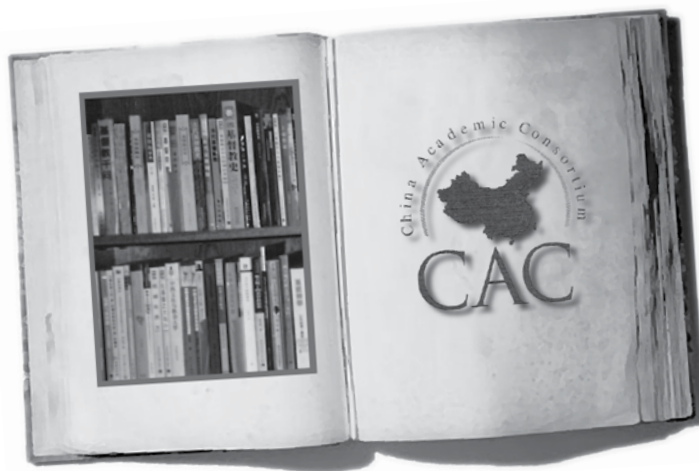
These books, listed under 21 different categories, have a Chinese summary with an English translation.* These summaries should enable Chinese scholars and Religious Studies Departments to:

- **Find books about Christianity**
- **Help them contribute to contemporary discussions of Christianity in Chinese society**
- **Assist Western Christians in understanding contemporary Chinese perceptions of Christianity**

Published in China, these books are available in overseas Chinese Christian bookstores in major cities (Shanghai, Hong Kong, Beijing, and so on). In other countries it may be more difficult to locate these works; however, the Chinese Amazon website is a good source. Go to: amazon.com.cn

The Annotated Bibliography is still a work in progress. Currently there are summaries of 300 books. If you would like to recommend a book or help with summaries email the project at: errchina@gmail.com

*Summaries are in PDF format and require Adobe Acrobat Reader which can be downloaded from the web site if desired.



For the Annotated Bibliography, go to:

www.errchina.com/cac.html

(Arrow down and click on Annotated Bibliography)

Intercessory Notes

Please pray

1. **For wisdom, understanding and open-mindedness** for all those involved in formulating and providing leadership training.
2. **For pastors in rural areas** trying to cope with the tremendous changes occurring in China while ministering to their congregations.
3. **For leaders and pastors working with urban student churches** as they work with university educated individuals.
4. **For leadership for churches of migrant workers** and for the training of this leadership.
5. **That the pastors receiving training would have open hearts and minds** and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to them.



Brent Fulton, Editor

China Perspective

Cultivating Homegrown Leadership

Surveying the leadership development landscape in China one finds literally hundreds of outside organizations and churches contributing trainers, mentors, curriculum, print and digital resources, scholarships, and other types of assistance. Yet simply training more leaders does not necessarily address the church's long-term need to be able to raise up its own indigenous leadership. In fact, some of the approaches utilized today may actually stand in the way of truly indigenized leader development.

As Malcolm Webber points out in this issue, the notion of training trainers has become a popular watchword among many involved in leader development. In keeping with the 2 Timothy 2:2 mandate, equipping leaders to train others is a sound goal. Yet in the long run these leaders will be hobbled if they are only able to parrot formulas but not able to adapt what they know to their own or to others' changing life situations.

If the emphasis is on reproducing knowledge, not on reproducing values or

behaviors, it is possible to end up with many who can teach but not many who can lead.

Vast advances in technology have opened up new avenues for providing training resources. These mediated resources are vehicles not only for sound teaching; they also indirectly import outside models, values, cultural biases and theological emphases. Without an understanding of the context in which these ideas emerged or the ability to ask questions about them, learners have no way to gauge their appropriateness to their own situation or to sift out what is cultural and what is biblical.

Yet these foreign standards may become the measure by which some leaders determine what is sound teaching and practice and what is not, thus precluding them from working through these issues together within their own context.

Not a few organizations that have developed successful training programs or resources outside China approach the Chinese church as a monolith.

Their question is too often not wheth-

er the Chinese church really needs what they have to offer (This is assumed.), but rather, how to deliver it as "strategically" as possible. Pastor David's treatment in this issue of the growing complexity of church leadership in China provides a pointed reminder that a "one size fits all" approach may fall short in adequately addressing any particular leadership situation.

The "packaged" approach also perpetuates the notion that outsiders can do it better, that the local Chinese church does not have the skills or resources to develop its own leaders. As a result leaders become accustomed to looking outside China for what they need instead of searching within the church to discover the gifts that are there, waiting to be developed and utilized.

There is a role for believers outside China to encourage the church in its efforts to develop leaders. It is our hope that this issue will stimulate healthy discussion about the nature of that role, "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12b-13).

Brent Fulton, Ph.D., is the president of *ChinaSource* and the editor of the *ChinaSource* journal. ■

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