

insight



Leadership Across Cultures

The role and styles of leadership in international student ministry

The Impact of Culture on Leadership Styles
— Baiba Strause-Kalmer et. al.

Learning to Lead: Reach Volunteers Share Lessons Learnt
— Matt Moury and Ngo Bao Ngoc

Leadership Development as Outreach
— Joel Callow

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transforming nations*

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insight@friendsinternational.uk

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A Word From the Editor



**Lynette
Teagle**

Lynette has been a Staff Worker for Friends International since 2001, alongside her husband Peter. Based in Oxford, she is working part-time on a PhD researching identity change in international students at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

As international student workers we sometimes underestimate the weight of expectations which our student friends labour under.

Surrounded as we are by a never-ending stream of bright, ambitious undergraduates, Masters and PhD students, we can become blasé about the vast range of opportunities and challenges which lie before them, not to mention the significant pressure from family and society at home to become people of influence and affluence once they graduate.

So it was a valuable reminder for me when one student recently wrote: *"(Coming overseas to university), international students know themselves what they are, or what they want to be...sometimes both. But they are also aware that they can't grow towards what they want to become, or perhaps can't do it as quickly as they would have wanted, as in their original settings.*

So because of our condition, uprooted and unplugged from social ties, we are free to aim for more, more than what our parents say or even want us to become; more than what our society says is enough, right or accepted; more than what other countries think or expect from individuals coming from certain parts of the world; more than what some teachers have told us we are or can be; more than what our friends encourage us to be or become; more than what we ourselves thought about who we were and what we could do." – Verona Haynes, Masters student in Germany, from Panama (quoted with permission).

Yet the gospel ministry we are involved with behoves us to see that in Christ, the possibilities are greater even than all that Verona expresses.

As we share the gospel, seeking to teach, model and impart Biblical principles and values such as servanthood, humility, integrity, forgiveness, and accountability, the Holy Spirit is at work challenging preconceived ideas and prejudices, transforming mind-sets, worldviews and values from within. Returning to their home countries with redeemed values and changed attitudes, the potential which these graduates have to make an impact at the deepest level of society is limitless, under the sovereignty of God.

In this issue of *Insight* we explore the subject of leadership, looking first at how leadership differs across a range of cultures. We then discuss the transformative potential of equipping and nurturing international students, both Christian and non-Christian, with leadership skills which (we pray) will be relevant and usable as they face the realities of work, church and family life at home.

We have tried to glean wisdom and experience from a range of voices, and hope that the different insights shared, even if only briefly, will prove instructive as we seek to build up leaders from all over the world in a godly and Biblical way.





The Impact of Culture on Leadership Styles



**Baiba
Strause -
Kalmere
et al.**

Baiba is a Staff Worker for Friends International in Canterbury. She is from Latvia and is married to Gavin.

It is a common assumption in the business world today that cultural differences have a huge impact on leadership styles and structures. It is harder perhaps to identify the impact those differences might have on students who return to the working world in their home or other country.

In this article three Friends International Staff Workers and an Affiliate – all with experience of several different cultural backgrounds – respond to some questions about how culture influences leadership styles in some specific contexts, highlighting a few of the ways in which factors such as history, politics, interpersonal relationships and hierarchical structures all create challenges which we must equip returnees to face if they are to thrive as disciples of Christ in the workplace back home. The constraints of space and word-length mean that while inevitable generalisations have been made, this article gives just a flavour of the diversity of issues and approaches we should be aware of.

The contributors are as follows:

- *Baiba Strause-Kalmere (BSK), Friends International Canterbury, from a Latvian perspective.*
- *Emese Carter-Whittle (ECW),*

Friends International Leicester, from a Romanian/Hungarian perspective.

- *Mike Fernando (MF), Friends International Affiliate in Manchester and lecturer at Manchester University, from an Indian perspective.*
- *Geoff Low (GL), Philip Project Co-ordinator, from experience working in Peru and more recently interacting with Africans through the Philip Project.¹*

INTRODUCTION

by Baiba Strause-Kalmere

In a recent conversation with an Ethiopian student from an Orthodox Church background, I was struck by how he praised Russia's president as a great leader and as a defender of the Orthodox faith. His views on Vladimir Putin were influenced by his culture, background, experience, historical context and the information accessible to him. This begged the question, what is the impact of culture on leadership styles?

Lewin² (1939) defined three styles of leadership – Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-Faire – and demonstrated how each of these leadership styles have certain advantages and disadvantages. For example, the Autocratic leadership style is highly productive while other

¹ Contributions are also gratefully acknowledged from Paul Turner (Peru), Paddy Sentongo (Uganda), Sam Mckie (Nigeria) and Chola Mukanga (Zambia). There is great cultural diversity within each of these countries and there may be great variation between the observations above and the situation in other regions or among other people groups.

² Lewin, K., Lippitt, R. and White, R.K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behaviour in experimentally created social climates. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10, 271-301

styles are less productive, but employees are less motivated compared with other leadership styles because they have less power to influence the decision-making process.

There are many factors involved when it comes to a culture's preferences of leadership style. To understand how culture influences the choice of leadership style, we can look at five of Hofstede's³ (1970) cultural dimensions: masculine/feminine, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, time perspective, indulgence/restraint. For example, **masculine societies** have different rules for men and women, less so in feminine cultures.

Uncertainty avoidance in some societies will be low and in others high, which may result in reluctance to try new things or being resistant to change. **Power distance** refers to the degree people are comfortable with influencing upwards. **Time perspective** looks at whether society takes a short or long-term perspective which might impact, for example, on whether future planning happens. The **indulgence/restraint** dimension refers to societies which highly value the gratification of natural human desires, compared with societies which value restraint of gratification, and thus ascribe a higher value to hard work and fulfilment of obligations.

As Christians we should be guided by Biblical values. However, as we live in the world but are not "of the world", our students will most likely return to societies where leadership will be defined by the cultural values of their nation, and they will therefore need to be adequately prepared for the challenges these might bring.

QUESTION ONE:

In the culture(s) with which you are familiar, how is the role of leader viewed? What are the qualities of a leader that are favoured/necessary in that culture?

BSK:

The **Latvian** nation has seen a few very weak parliaments. Current polls suggest that Latvians want a strong leader who would also be, in a sense, "an owner of a land". Many people favour leaders who might be corrupt, but are taking care of their city. This is particularly if they appear to do something in opposition to a weak government in which party factions are always fighting each other

rather than doing any work. A decisive leader with a strong vision is needed, but people might feel that integrity is not necessary as long as they achieve something and invest some of the money into the development of the nation. "Cheat first before someone else cheats you" summarises the thinking prevalent in Latvia. The challenge for young people in Latvia will be not to lose heart, but continue to live and work according to Christian values and lead by example.

ECW:

There is currently some conflict resulting from a shift from a traditional **Romanian** culture to a modern westernised culture. This has led to two leadership styles that are preferred, depending on the age of the employees. On the one hand, those in society who are advocating a traditional lifestyle, expect leaders to give clear direction, be authoritative in order to achieve their goals, and take action if things don't go according to plan. On the other hand, for the younger generation – many of whom have worked abroad themselves and who have been very much influenced by Western media – their expectation of leaders is quite different. They want to be consulted by their leaders, they want to be praised and they want their rights to be recognised. They prefer a more democratic leadership style.

“ ...'Cheat first before someone else cheats you' summarises the thinking prevalent in Latvia...”

GL:

In **Peru** the leader is still viewed as the "top dog": what they say goes and they are expected to be strong in their exercise of authority. This is very gradually changing as people see the value of being more consultative and servant-hearted in approach. A leader's ability to be articulate is still valued more than their character. This continues in spite of immense frustration with perceived corruption by leaders, both outside and inside the church.

GL:

Typically in **Africa** the leader is viewed more as a

³Wu M., (2006). *Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions 30 Years Later: A Study of Taiwan and the United States*. pp. 33-34. Western Illinois University. Accessed: 20.04.2016. Available: <http://web.uri.edu/iaics/files/04-Ming-Yi-Wu.pdf>



“chief”. As a tribal chief, people generally do not challenge a leader (**Zambia/Nigeria**). A good leader is viewed as one who is noble, trustworthy and a person of integrity (**Uganda/Nigeria**). Leaders are expected to be intelligent with the ability to make good decisions and bring unity to the community.

MF:

In **India** the leader is viewed as a “do-er” – someone who is able to do things in response to the current situation. So in the Indian context, a good leader is viewed as someone who is able to action things quickly, more than someone who is a visionary or strategist.

“ The culture encourages an ‘end justifies the means’ approach which means integrity is neglected...” ”

QUESTION TWO:

Does the context for leadership make a difference? For example, does leadership within a business differ from that in the church or community?

BSK:

In church and business contexts, the differences between **Latvian** and **Russian** churches/businesses can vary tremendously. Latvian church leaders would be more democratic but Russian orthodox priests would be autocratic. The same goes for business. It is common for leaders of small churches in the villages and cities to make big sacrifices, doing many jobs as well as the job of a pastor for little or no pay because their congregation cannot afford to pay them. These leaders are desperate for volunteers and might push those working hard and try to provide for families to also come and serve in the church tirelessly and attend every meeting.

ECW:

Romanian Christians are naturally very much influenced by the culture they live in: the leadership style in a church will often reflect the same style that is practised in a business or secular organisation.

GL:

Business in **Peru** is more influenced by styles of leadership in the developed world. The church still tends towards dictatorial styles.

GL:

In **Ugandan** business and politics, fulfilling patronage links will keep the leader in power. In many churches leadership is not challenged. In other institutions, leadership is governed by a council of elected leaders.

MF:

For **India** I would say there is no difference in church and community contexts, but styles do change in business. With globalisation, more and more businesses value strategists and visionary leaders.

QUESTION THREE:

What are some of the challenges which might be faced by Christian leaders in the workplace?

BSK:

There is a huge temptation to cheat and steal or avoid paying taxes in **Latvia**, so many businesses are doing that. It is a major challenge to stand up for what you believe and to live with integrity and purity in a corrupt and promiscuous society. The support of a church and good Christian friends are key to being able to withstand these pressures. Prayers for Latvian Christian leaders would be appreciated.

ECW:

The main challenge in **Romania** is corruption and being a servant leader. As corruption is very deeply embedded in the culture from the top down, it is very hard for Christian leaders to make a stand against it when they occupy influential positions. Also, because most leaders in the past and some even in today’s Romania are domineering and oppressive, it’s a real challenge for Christian leaders to lead gently and with a humble attitude following Jesus’ example.

My top tips: be daily rooted in the Bible, rejoice in God, be content with what God gives and live out Biblical principles irrespective of the pressures you might face. Cultivate godliness in everyday life and trust that God is stronger than all the corruption and He is able to keep you even if you don’t conform to the society’s pressures.

GL:

Peruvian culture encourages an “end justifies the means” approach which means integrity is neglected and mistakes are covered up to save face. If the mistakes are big and obvious then the person is usually dismissed or retires with little sense of restoration.

My top tips: Depend daily on God, seek to demonstrate God's love and grace, imitate Jesus, think before you speak, be an encourager, pick your battles carefully, know when to act and when to do nothing. Find a good mentor.

MF:

Everyone has a faith in **India** (a general assumption). *My top tips: Be open in acknowledging your Christian faith at work. Show grace by offering to work during Hindu holidays so that your Hindu colleagues (which will be most of them) can enjoy their break.*

Other Examples from African Nations:

GL:

Corruption in **Uganda** is common and therefore a challenge for any Christian leader.

My top tip: Set a good example and seek integrity, even when that differs from the norm.

GL:

The challenges faced by Christian leaders in **Nigeria** include the influence of those with money, a widespread lack of good education and a sense that they are unable to speak their mind.

QUESTION FOUR:

How can we help returnee students who are frustrated by the organisational culture back home?

BSK (Latvia):

Some young people might be very optimistic when they come back from studies abroad, and get very disappointed with the way things work in reality. Helping them to understand that we also need to suffer with Christ is a key concept to learn. We need to teach them patience and perseverance as we share in Christ's victory over sin and death but that we also share in His suffering, as we bear our cross day-by-day. Pray for young people with energy, enthusiasm and faith to be raised up who would be ambassadors for Christ in all of the society.

ECW (Romania):

Get them thinking about the pressures they might face back home. Help them grow in godliness and help them work through what it would mean to be a godly person in their workplace. Keep in touch with them after their return, pray for them, encourage them with Bible verses. Encourage them to be humble and teachable and seek God's wisdom in dealing with

organisational pressures.

GL (Peru):

Encourage them to be Christ-centred, patient and have a sense of humour; depend on God and his sovereignty (and not see themselves as indispensable!); to have a listening and learning attitude and value those they work alongside however frustrating they might be!

GL (Uganda):

Male returnees might need to be encouraged to accept women leaders. They shouldn't be afraid to work by democratic leadership norms, that is, to consult and be transparent.

GL (Nigeria):

Returnees should seek to be Christ-centred and have high standards of citizenship and integrity – this will lead to gaining the trust of those that they lead. They should be encouraged to build a network of friends in similar situations so they can share ideas about what's going on in each community.

MF (India):

Returnees need to be aware that when you join an organisation, you will be expected to run around and do menial things. But don't worry, trust in the Lord(!), it's the way God has used Indians to acknowledge leaders. Indians expect future leaders to be servant leaders first and foremost. They might need to hold on to their educational knowledge until they have built trust with their superiors.

CONCLUSION

This article seeks to demonstrate how vital it is that we encourage everyone to think how we can best prepare international students for return to their home countries, helping them think about the issues that might arise when living out the gospel at work, especially in societies and cultures with different values and practices from those of the Bible. This could be done by including the topic of leadership in our Bible studies, training events or 'Think Home' sessions.

We should encourage returnees to continuously allow the Word of God to change them. Jesus called His followers the salt of the earth and the light of the world who change the culture around them. Let us pray that the Lord will give us, and the students we minister to, the wisdom to analyse our cultures and contexts and influence those around us.





Learning to Lead: Reach Volunteers Share Lessons Learnt



Matt Moury

Friends
International
Reach Volunteer
(2014-15).

The Friends International Reach Programme offers young adults a unique opportunity to be trained in international student ministry while gaining practical experience in leadership and service in the UK context. We asked two international Reach Volunteers for reflections on how their views on leadership have been shaped by their experience in Britain, and how equipped they feel to meet the challenges of leadership at work and church when they return home.

MATT MOURY (FRANCE), REACH VOLUNTEER IN CAMBRIDGE

As I'm originally from France, most of my leadership experiences have happened there. I had the pleasure of being the Christian Union (GBU) leader of my local group between 2011 and 2014. When I was leading the GBU in Orléans (France), I felt a bit isolated at times because I didn't have a tremendous amount of support from the other members of the group. For example, my official co-leader would often skip meetings and did not really take part in the life of the group. The rest of the GBU group were vibrant Christians but were also busy with their studies and thus didn't invest much, so I often ended up doing most of the work myself.

Equality and Autocracy

As a secular country still influenced by the cultural heritage of Catholicism, France's style of leadership is more autocratic than anything else. Paradoxically, equality is a very important French trademark. If you are the leader, people expect you to do most of the work or to give orders, but also to treat everybody in the same way. The same is true of the church: pastors often have to be pioneers, with individuals taking a lot of initiative in order to get things done.

As a student leader, I recognised that I personally didn't really know how to delegate. It didn't prevent my GBU group from launching ambitious projects: one of my greatest joys was to organise debates, most notably a debate between a Christian worker and a Muslim imam. For that one occasion, I was blessed enough to be able to partner with a non-Christian Tunisian charity that provided the imam as well as a crowd of listeners.

However, generally speaking, I would say that I didn't have a lot of experience of teamwork before I moved to Britain because there wasn't much of a team in France. As French Evangelicals only represent a tiny minority, they can rarely afford large teams and need to rely on a few enthusiastic volunteers. Some things remain similar: I am



**Ngo Bao
Ngoc**

Friends
International
Reach Volunteer
(2014-15).

meeting weekly with my supervisor in England as I used to in France, and we do study the Bible together. There are lots of differences though: the team is bigger, with three staff workers and two other Reach Volunteers. It also seems that the process of decision-making is more democratic, and encourages personal taking of initiative.

“Friend” or “Teacher”?

It is interesting to see that the international students I meet often have a different opinion on leadership. They see me as a friend but also as a “teacher”. I’ve noticed it with several students from Latin American or East Asian backgrounds. If I invite them for a Bible discussion, they will expect me to be their “teacher” and they will act as “students”. If I try to convey the message “No, we are equal, let’s just discuss the text together”, they are often surprised. In their view, we cannot be equal because I am a Christian (thus I must know lots about Christianity) and they are not. This reaction is often linked with the impression that Christianity is primarily a Western religion. Therefore, they expect a lecture rather than a Bible discussion. One of the “solutions” is probably to build a solid friendship. If we are friends, we will express our opinions more openly and share most frankly.

Dealing with People

One of the most important lessons I have learnt as a Reach Volunteer is the importance of relationships. Being a leader is mostly dealing with people. It is something that I knew theoretically but that I had not seen in practice. It is easy for leaders to focus their attention and energy on the area of organisation: setting up rotas, sending emails, making sure events are well planned. However, what is even more important is the quality of the relationship. We need to be organised, but we primarily need to build up friendships, to serve our international friends and seek to make them disciples of Jesus.

Quite often, we can think that all we need to do is to make a plan and distribute a few flyers. Through time, I have learnt to be more flexible and to adapt to the students’ needs and schedules. Things will not necessarily happen in the way I have imagined but that is fine. The most important thing is that I have spent some quality time with my friend.

When I go back to France, I will try to implement

some of the things I have learnt here, bearing in mind that it will be in a different cultural environment. It will be different because I will have to deal with people who have a more homogenous background (perhaps more post-modern than anything else). I hope that I will be able to disciple a few young Christian guys through one-to-one Bible studies and perhaps try to develop a “relational evangelism” ministry in my local church. My prayer is that God would continue to transform me so that I can serve Him as faithfully and efficiently as possible.

NGO BAO NGOC (VIETNAM), REACH VOLUNTEER IN OXFORD

Before coming to the UK, the opportunity to serve as President of a Student Union in Vietnam developed and strengthened my leadership skills. During the two years I was in post, my main responsibility was to be a Project Leader, organising about 20 different non-profit activities, which included festivals, meetings and events for hundreds of students from 25 universities and colleges in Ho Chi Minh City.

Looking back to more than three years ago, when experiencing student leadership in Vietnam, I used to focus a lot of attention on developing my own leadership traits and skills. However, coming abroad to the UK and becoming a Christian has changed my worldview. I realise that it is also very important for a leader to consider which leadership approach is the most appropriate to follow.

Servant Leadership as a Business Model

I learned on the leadership module of my Masters course that there are about seven different leadership approaches. Among these theories, the Servant Leadership model caught my attention. This approach places great emphasis on the moral and ethical issues of leadership with the aim of encouraging followers to achieve a great purpose. The leader’s ability to care for others is one of the most important skills in leadership. Since leaders are also called “servants”, the leader has a natural desire to “serve” first (Greenleaf and Spears, 2002). It is claimed that the most popular leadership book is the Bible, hence, Jesus Christ is considered as a great leader (Collier, 2004).



For me personally, the Servant Leadership approach is probably best suited for my future career in the service industry. There is a major need for more business companies in the service industry to recruit leaders who have good abilities to “serve”. In some company working cultures, the ability to “serve” even determines the level of success of the business. For example, the slogan “The Spirit to Serve” has made Marriott one of the leading hotel chains in the world (Marriott.com, 2014).

Generally, there are numerous similarities between Servant Leadership and Christian Servant Leadership. Being a Reach Volunteer for the last year has helped me to develop a variety of servant leadership skills, and has encouraged me to enhance my natural desire to serve others. However, the challenge is to learn how to distinguish the differences. The ultimate goal of Christian Servant Leadership is to serve God and to glorify Him. For young leaders, sometimes this goal is easily distracted or diminished by other personal desires such as salary, career promotion, or reputation. As a young Christian leader, my question is how I can always keep my eyes upon Jesus and follow His good model as a servant leader and to serve the only God, rather than to be a servant of many different bosses.

“ Giving someone a space in my decision-making process was not easy... ”

The Authority of a Leader

As a Reach Volunteer, the most challenging lesson for me has been to learn how to let God use me to do His work. In Western culture, a leader has a role to fulfil, but probably does not expect to make all the decisions. In Asian culture, it is expected that the leader will lead and the team will basically follow (Lanier, 2000). The authority of the leader is extremely vast, in other words, the leader has the biggest role in the group. In a Communist country such as Vietnam, this concept is especially true. As a young leader in Vietnam, I was used to controlling everything on my own. Giving someone a space in my decision-making process was not easy, and asking someone to be on top and to be over my authority was extremely difficult. What I have learned so far through the Reach programme is that it is only when we trust in God’s control and let Him be the centre of everything - our job, our future career, our plans, our relationship with colleagues or with others – that there is wholeness and integrity to our lives. As God

is always at the centre of the job, we do not work in our own authority or ability, we work for Him. As a servant leader, we do not only serve people, we serve God by working in the job that He wants us to do.

Priorities in the Workplace

The question of how to be a Christian in my workplace when I return to Vietnam is one of my primary concerns. My parents are worried that since I have become a Christian, I may have lost the ability to work in a secular job. In Vietnam top business companies normally look to recruit an ideal candidate who is described as “competitive, ambitious, confident, and even aggressive”. In our society, “to be a leader means to lead people” - the concept of “being a servant” is still far from the business working environment. For example, there is a type of group interview that is becoming more popular in many Asian countries. During such an interview, a group of 3 or 5 candidates would stand together in front of the interviewing panel. Some very sensitive questions would be asked to see how much ambition the candidate has in competing to gain the position, including: “Why do you think you are better than the one who is standing next to you?”, “Why should we hire you rather than the rest?”.

Being a Christian who is guided by the Bible’s teaching helps me to know clearly what I should do and what I should not do in such situations. However, faced with huge pressure from my family who have lots of expectations for my future career, the challenge for me is how to continue to find my identity, security and purpose in God alone.

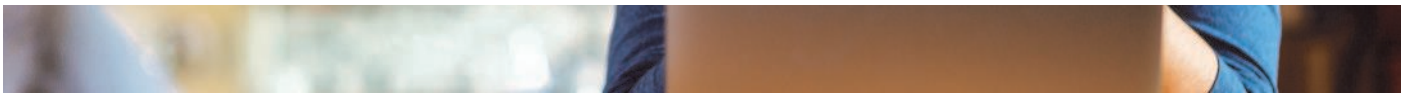
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Leadership Development as Outreach



Joel Callow

Joel is the Head of Innovation and Partnership Development at Friends International. He is a former architect and has his PhD in structural engineering.

The State of Play

As those with a heart for reaching the nations with the gospel of Jesus, we are always seeking to make Jesus known in the most relevant and high-impact ways. As student culture changes, we adapt our methods – but not the gospel – to reach as many as we can (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

Profound changes have taken place in the culture of international students over the 30 years that Friends International has been working on UK campuses, and these changes should provoke new evangelistic approaches. Change also continues apace, meaning that future and continuing adaptation will be necessary.

Numbers of international students are also increasing, as governments seek to help their future workforce adapt to a changing world. In a recent review (University of Oxford, 2015), the reasons behind US government initiatives to encourage international study were identified: “The move is driven by recognition that globalisation is both changing the way the world operates, and changing the skills and experience employers look for in their graduate hires.”

Today’s international student is no longer in a tiny minority, but part of a significant sub-culture, and on some courses, international students outnumber home students. An individual student is typically

motivated by a desire for career advantage in a competitive global economy, and correctly sees their international studies as key to future work and earning potential (European Commission, 2014). In 2014/15, subjects which had the highest percentage of international students in the UK were Business (38.4%) and Engineering (33.1%) (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). In this context, while integration with the host culture and cross-cultural friendships are still highly desirable, many students will consciously focus on experiences that have employment benefit in the future (QS World Grad School Tour, 2015) – they are investing financially and personally, and are outcome and development focused.

Leadership Development

Offering leadership development to students therefore connects directly with strongly held motives, and blesses students with something they need for future life. Biblical teaching on leadership is surprisingly rich, and the person and teaching of Jesus offers the best possible model for servant leadership (Mt 20:26-28). The servant leadership of Jesus predates the theory of the same name espoused by Robert Greenleaf in the 1970’s by nearly 2000 years (www.greenleaf.org). For these reasons, Christians are in a unique place to offer high-value relational leadership training, and to witness to Christ at the same time.

Christ's servant heart demonstrated on the cross, and in every moment of His life, lifts our eyes to the highest standard of serving others for their benefit. Biblical values that are intrinsic to Christian faith, such as integrity and forgiveness, are unknown or even undesirable in the leadership culture in some countries and companies, and their introduction would be salt and light in those places. It is generally agreed, for example, that corruption has a strong negative impact on economic growth and equality (Chene, 2014), and it is certainly against God's values and character. Any training that future leaders receive, in which the importance of honesty and integrity are emphasised, has the potential to reduce corruption through high-quality leadership.

A recent graduate of the 'iLive Leadership' course in Belfast (www.iliveleadership.org) said, "The iLIVE leadership provided me a new perspective of what it means being a leader. It encourages me to think about my vision and values, reflect on myself and shows me also that being a leader is more than leading people." (Daniel, Austria)

A number of models of leadership development exist for use with international students. Each has different emphases, but each seeks to build relationship with attendees, offering friendship as well as personal development. This means that those students who find they have a spiritual hunger - an interest in finding out more about the faith of those that serve them through these courses - have a relational context in which to do so. The experience of running both local and residential leadership training both here in the UK, and in the US, is that many attendees do seek out Bible discussions and further relationship as a result of their leadership experiences.

Challenges

There are, however, pitfalls with the leadership development model of international student outreach and relationship building. These can generally be avoided through careful communication and planning, but could include:

- Accusations of 'bait and switch' – students lured to an event for leadership training, but with a hidden evangelistic agenda.
- A failure to provide helpful follow-up after events – a potential seeker is not directed into helpful Bible discussion and so evangelistic opportunities are missed.
- Resource allocation – leadership development can be quite resource intensive for staff and volunteers, whose time cannot therefore be spent on other mission activities.

An important corollary to the above concerns is to be clear about what purpose such events might serve. In the case of the TRUE Leadership (www.trueleadership.org.uk) conference currently run annually by Friends International, speakers are specifically briefed to speak only about character and leadership topics, but are free to discuss their faith with students who ask, on an individual basis. The primary purpose of the conference is to bless students by developing them into better leaders, but as this is done, close and authentic relationships are grown, in which Christian witness can thrive. An additional benefit of the TRUE Leadership model is the training of young Christian students or graduates in leadership, group facilitation and relational evangelism. These 'Coaches' grow so much through this experience that many go on to lead Bible discussion groups after the conference.

Conclusion

Using leadership development as part of a portfolio of ministry activities with international students offers a number of positives:

- It meets a felt need in the students for personal development and improves future employability.
- Leadership values given to potential future leaders may increase their impact on home countries after they return.
- Close relationships develop quickly in personal development contexts, particularly residential.
- Christians have a unique perspective on leadership as a result of Jesus' example.
- The next generation of young Christian leaders is trained and grows in confidence.

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Book Review: Crossing Cultures with Jesus by Katie J Rawson



Catherine Weston

Catherine has been involved in ministry to international students for over 30 years. She currently runs Intonations with her husband Richard.

When we first began our journey welcoming international students we struggled to find books that spoke to the issues we were facing. Yes, there were lots of books about mission and about crossing cultures for Christ. But they were all geared for helping people who are planning to go or who have already gone 'overseas'.

And it's all very well reading something that helps me relate to Chinese culture, but what if, next week, I meet someone from Peru? Or Madagascar? What if my seekers' group includes Vietnamese and Eastern Europeans? Traditional missionaries have the opportunity to be embedded long term in one place and to get to learn one language and culture well. I am in my own country, relating to a wide range of backgrounds and understanding of the gospel. How can I share the gospel with people from such different cultures and worldviews? How can I effectively make disciples who will sustain their walk with Jesus and make a difference when they return home?

Thankfully a book has just been published which fills the gap. I wish it had been around when we first started. The author, Katie Rawson, has had long experience of working with international students in the US and has penned a thoughtful, comprehensive guide using Jesus as our model. Giving the reasons why she wrote the book, the author describes researching conversion patterns among East Asian students.

"Some of the testimonies of the twenty-eight converts I interviewed

disturbed me. Their conversions seemed shallow; these students had not changed at the worldview level. Additional years of observation led to the conclusion that helping people understand how the gospel affects them culturally is critical for conversions to be deep and transformative. The *cross-cultural* part of cross-cultural evangelism must not be ignored" (p 14).

Chapter headings include: The challenge and opportunity of cross-cultural evangelism; keeping in step with the Spirit; developing trust relationships; examining worldview lenses; understanding value systems; communities that draw in; communication that connects...

This book marries a deep understanding of scripture with insights from cultural anthropology. It is an engaging read, with many real life examples and stories. Each chapter ends with questions for reflection and discussion, so it could be used in a team-learning context. I'd like to think that every international student worker reads this book. It's my new 'go to' book to recommend.

Crossing Cultures with Jesus: Sharing Good News with Sensitivity and Grace
By Katie J Rawson, InterVarsity Press,
Downers Grove, IL: ISBN 978-0-8308-4438-8

Available in the UK on Amazon, in print or for Kindle.

The Insight Team

Sue Burt
Head of Returnee Ministry

Peter Teagle
Centre Team Leader, Oxford

Lynette Teagle
Staff Worker, Oxford

Fiona Barnard
Staff Worker, St Andrews

Patty McCulloch
Head of Learning &
Development

Jack Bentley
Communications & Media
Coordinator



friends
INTERNATIONAL

The Rowan Centre
All Nations Christian College
Easney
Ware, Herts
SG12 8LX

01920 460006
info@friendsinternational.uk
www.friendsinternational.uk