

HOW CAN WE USE TEE IN S.E. ASIA?

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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The title question avoids consideration of "should we" and proceeds immediately to the question of HOW CAN WE USE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION by EXTENSION IN S.E. ASIA? This is indeed appropriate. Over the last ten months under the leadership of our Friendly Counselor, our expatriate staff in Hong Kong has been meeting at least once a month to discuss the present potential of our field. On the one hand, we sought methods that could be applied to our work that would make maximum use of both expatriate and national manpower. In a more general direction, we sought ways to capitalize on the opportunities presented for winning souls to Christ in S.E. Asia with particular emphasis given our Hong Kong field. The conclusion reached after a concentrated three day staff Seminar was affirmative. A form of TEE is vital toward the effective training of a national ministry in Hong Kong.

It is also necessary for the purpose of this paper to distinguish between the Hong Kong field and the satellite missions (Taiwan, Indonesia and India). Hong Kong has a number of established institutions for ministry. It has a contingent of national personnel already trained and functioning at different levels of ministry. The satellite missions have neither of these characteristics, at least not to the degree of Hong Kong. For the most part, the question of this paper will be considered in relation to the immediate Hong Kong field.

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THE EXISTING SITUATION IN HONG KONG ITSELF

In order to answer the question HOW CAN WE USE TEE IN S.E. ASIA? It is necessary to look at the present situation. Our expatriate staff gratefully noted the gifts God has given to His Church in the persons and ministries of two national pastors and five national evangelists. In addition we have been blessed with a number of facilities. We have a school building, the new C.E.L.C. office building that houses the Seminary-Bible Institute, and in addition, several places of worship. Our national pastors and evangelists have been trained under the considerable effort and dedication of a number of former missionaries and friendly counselors. Through their efforts with the support of our Executive Committee and the World Board for Missions, our Bible Institute and Seminary Curricula were set up and the men that we now have were trained.

Unfortunately, at present, there are no students in either the Seminary or Bible Institute. However, we do have one candidate who has expressed his desire to be trained for service in the Church.

We regret the fact that there are no students in the Seminary or Bible-Institute at this time. However, that fact itself coupled with the fact that the Seminary has been functioning for a number of years seems to indicate the time is ideal for a re-evaluation of our approach to theological education in Hong Kong and S.E. Asia. It is perhaps self-evident that continued self-evaluation of

our training programs is going to be the only way to develop the most effective approach to theological training in our mission effort.

TEE finds justification for its use in Hong Kong simply because it is a potential partial solution to a number of concerns. Former missionaries and Friendly Counselors have at different times and different ways expressed concerns regarding many diverse cultural, situational and economic ramifications of training Chinese men in Hong Kong for the work of ministry. Solutions to some of these concerns have already been approached; others remain to be evaluated and appropriate steps taken toward resolution.

In the past, concern has been expressed about the adequacy of the training given our men in relation to the type of ministry they are expected to perform. "Are they really prepared to preach, to evangelize, to teach, to administer a congregation?" One former missionary to Hong Kong has said, "The Chinese men have received much training in theological disciplines and theory, but I question their ability to translate that knowledge into practice." If there is a problem in this area, let it be said that the missionaries training the Chinese men had almost insurmountable obstacles to overcome. Most of our missionaries training the Chinese men had no time to acquaint themselves with the culture before their teaching assignments began. In addition, each missionary had to carry on his teaching across the considerable language barrier with no knowledge of Cantonese or Mandarin. The only exception to the latter

was Pastor G. Lange.

Some specific areas for which TEE may provide a partial solution are:

1. The impact of subsidy on the candidate for ministry.
2. The nature of student selection.
3. The determination of the level of ministry for which the men are being prepared.
4. The encouragement toward substantial increase of on-the-job training.

THE POSITIVE APPLICATION OF SUBSIDY

The effect of subsidy on the national church is considerable. Pastor Tung, the president of a church in Taiwan declares, "Chinese have ... for several decades ... regarded the administration and financing of the church as the prerogative of the foreign missions ... The church has appeared to be a foreign enterprise supported by funds from abroad.. The continued prevalence of this attitude is a serious hindrance to the more rapid development of the Church in China." (From TAIWAN, Mainline versus Independent Church Growth" by Allen J. Swanson)

The nature of the application of subsidy to a developing church is a continual but vital concern. Misapplication of subsidy can have drastic effects on the development of a national church body and on the training of its workers. Swanson goes on to make his point by the apt comparison to the application of medicine. He says, "contrary to western convictions bred in the pietistic tradition of giving alms to the poor, the function of giving must rather be understood in terms of applying medicine. All ill person requires medicine in order to return to good health. Too

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much medicine, however, either creates a drug addict or kills the patient ... Many churches have been either killed or addicted through the wrong application of financial medicine."

Pastor E.H. Wendland indicated his concern for this aspect of subsidy when he stated in his evaluation of TEE to the Missionaries Conference, Lutheran Church of Central Africa in February, 1973, "We have reached a point in our theological training program where certain changes will have to be seriously considered if we want to avoid mounting subsidies in order to promote continued growth."

In Hong Kong we grapple with the same problem of how positively to apply subsidy to the national church body. But perhaps equally important is the question, "How do we positively apply subsidy to the student preparing for the work of ministry?" The present approach to the full-time student has necessitated providing free schooling, free housing and additional financial support to the student. Speaking of this method of obtaining national workers, F. Ross Kinsler, writing for the quarterly bulletin of Theologia Extension Seminary makes the point that this pattern, "creates pastors who come with only artificial credentials, a diploma and ordination, and as professionals who demand a salary, generally above the level of the average church member."

We see TEE as providing part of the solution to the negative impact of subsidized institutionalized training of the national worker. It could allow him to earn his

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own living while progressing in his studies and at least delay the time when it would be necessary for the church to provide subsidy on his behalf.

STUDENT SELECTION

At present, a student applies for training and if he is a member of one of our congregations with support from his pastor is likely to be accepted. He may well be a young Christian having had little chance to prove himself to have the gifts required for the ministry. He may even have had little chance to show committedness toward service on the universal priesthood level. And yet, at this point the student is required to commit himself to virtually full-time for work in the church. At the same time the church is required to commit itself to virtually full support as the student works toward his potential for service in the church. TEE allows the process of selection to continue after the student begins his training, without major disruptions to his job or family life. It can give the student time to consider the nature of ministry as he becomes more familiar with the nature of commitment the ministry demands. At the same time it gives the church the opportunity to observe the student at work and evaluate his potential without having first made a major commitment of support to the student.

LEVEL OF MINISTRY

The nature of the ministry, and, specifically, the level of ministry for which the student is preparing,

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should be very clear in the minds of the mission administration and clearly communicated to the preparing student. It is possible that we have assumed that every student applying to our seminary would be prepared for the fully-trained, professional ministerium. A student studying on virtually a one track course of study would certainly be let-down to find he did not qualify for the "big" role of full-fledged pastor. Pastor E.H. Wendland acknowledged the difficulty and the necessity of at least the concept of a bi-level ministry. In his evaluation of TEE - 1973 he makes the following distinction: "Pastors=fully-trained, full-time workers supported by the church. Pastoral assistants= part-time, perhaps partially supported or possibly volunteer lay leaders." Pastor T.A. Sauer dealt with the theological implications of the doctrine of the Call toward the Pastor/Evangelist arrangement. In his paper, "The doctrine of the Call as it applies to our missionaries and those who work under their supervision" he speaks positively toward the church calling men to serve at different levels of ministry.

In Hong Kong the national and expatriate staff have both been concerned with our inability thus far to clearly outline the different levels of ministry. Concern has been expressed that while we have initiated a Pastor/Evangelist arrangement, that the level of training for each level of ministry ought to be just as clearly defined. TEE provides the potential for training anyone from our laity to a level of ministry at which he can positively function,

whether Sunday School Teacher, Congregation President, Elder, Evangelist, Pastor etc.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

As a Synod, our model for ministerial training is obviously our own extensive training program in the United States. In the States, we have a number of institutions set up to train men for a great number of years. In the States, we are committed to the necessity of such extensive training, even though our candidates are usually from our own culture. The candidate usually has been a long time member of one of our churches. He has seen the ministry for years as worked in his own stateside congregation. There is usually no language barrier in the classroom between professor and student. The candidate on the mission field usually has none of these benefits. The question is, "Have we fully taken these factors into account in the nature of our theological training on the field?"

Our Hong Kong Seminary endeavored to prepare the existing manpower adequately for the ministry, with heavy emphasis on the area of academic basics. However, experience has indicated a considerable problem still exists. How can we assist the man who has graduated from the Seminary and the sphere of the academic to make the transition to the gut-level aspects of performance in the day to day ministry? It is possible that we have sought to train men at the highest level for the highest level of ministry and in the process slighted some basic aspects of training.

We have obviously tried to make our training program as practical as possible. But perhaps TEE provides us with the opportunity of initiating training at the basic levels of congregation and Christian life and then proceed to the more advanced levels of the academic. It would seem that TEE strongly encourages starting with the basics of how to witness, of how to teach on the lowest levels and that the progression to the higher levels of the academic would follow naturally.

In our staff evaluations several goals were stressed that pertain to this topic:

1. Seek to keep property and programs proportionate to the national church's ability to support them.
2. To seek a progression in our theological education that first places emphasis on lower level on-the-job training.
3. To continue the progression of training that will result in a ministerium well trained in practical ministry and orthodox theology.
4. Place emphasis on enabling Christians to reproduce their ministry at each level of service.

These goals and the thoughts to follow represent the thinking of only our expatriate staff and are not at this time official policy or program of our Hong Kong field. However, we offer the following initial conception of an approach that may maximize the impact of our theological education. We see TEE fitting closely with these concepts and would especially welcome thoughts and reactions to this approach while it is under consideration and discussion in Hong Kong.

AN APPROACH TO THE USE OF TEE IN HONG KONG

Men who already have a job should be selected from the existing membership in the Church. Such a candidate should be willing to give free time initially to his preparation not expecting a stipend salary. He should have shown leadership, academic and teaching skills. He should have shown evidenced committment through faithful church attendance and activity in congregational life.

THE PROGRESSION OF TRAINING

The candidates training would follow a consistent progression covering the areas here listed:

1. personal evangelism
2. teaching sunday school
3. teaching Bible class
4. making stewardship calls
5. making sick calls
6. participate in public worship (reading scripture, write & give prayers etc)

Each area above would involve several aspects of training. For each area there would be:

1. a supportive course in TEE
2. on-the-job training
3. the training of another person to do the work he has just learned to do

The academic (TEE course), the on-the-job training and the training of another person would all be under the direct supervision of a trainer. (cf. attached sheet giving a further breakdown)

Those who satisfactorily have carried out these steps of training and who continue to show interest in the work of the ministry would be given deeper training in the theological disciplines through TEE courses offered on a

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more advanced basis as well as the regular courses of our Seminary.

CONCLUSION

We do not need TEE in Hong Kong to reduce a distance factor, as with students from far off places. We have our central teaching facility. However, we see TEE as having a decidedly positive potential in a number of areas of theological education in Hong Kong. TEE will allow us to provide basic theological training to a student without his becoming fully dependent on subsidy. It should give a greater amount of time to the student and to the church before a major commitment is made on the part of either. The screening process would be facilitated. In addition, the amount of on-the-job training can be greatly increased providing more qualified workers on every level in the church.

Beyond the above reasons TEE could serve as an excellent means for continuing education for our present evangelists and pastors. It should be especially helpful for providing background study during the week in preparation for staff continuing-education meetings.

Once materials for a given course are prepared, TEE could offer real flexibility for our teaching manpower, enabling the teaching of a maximum number of courses with a minimum of preparation for each one.

We are, however, convinced that a TEE program can never fully replace the full seminary training program and see the two programs coexisting in a complementary fashion

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and functioning largely at different levels.

In our satellite mission fields we see TEE at this time having little or no real potential. Any program used in these fields at this time would have to be practically on a correspondence basis which would certainly violate the basic principle that TEE needs the weekly discussion meeting. Perhaps as our mission efforts expand by way of manpower in these other fields TEE will represent a viable potential there also.

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POTENTIAL PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

PRACTICAL & ON-THE-JOB
TRAINING

corresponding

SUPPORTING & ACADEMIC

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| 1. Participates in personal evangelism training. Includes making calls with trainer once a week. | 1. Participation in TEE course presenting aspects of Evangelism the candidate will be observing and practicing. |
| 2. Participates in follow-up calls with a trainer on prospects gained through initial Evangelism calls. | 2. Participation in TEE course that deals with problems of new prospects and church membership implications. |
| 3. Participates in Evangelism program as the trainer of another trainee. Attend trainer meetings prior to Evangelism calls. | 3. Participation in TEE course dealing with basic leadership principles and the transfer of information through on-the-job training. |
| 4. Participates in teaching a sunday school class as the teacher's assistant. First observation, then teaching under the guidance of trainer. | 4. Participation in TEE course in basic teaching techniques. |
| 5. Teaches a sunday school class and trains another sunday school teacher to replace himself. | 5. Participation in TEE course on basic Bible study techniques. |
| 6. Participates as a trainee in a small group 6-10 week Bible class then teaches the course for same period to others. | 6. Participation in TEE course on in-depth Bible study (light exegesis) |
| 7. Teaches the same Bible class to others with a new person as his trainee. | 7. Participation in TEE course in basic Bible doctrines. |
| 8. Participates in stewardship program by accompanying trainer, learning the stewardship presentation, presenting increasing portions of presentation. | 8. Participation in TEE course on Christian stewardship principles and practice. |
| 9. Teaches a trainee how to make calls on church members for stewardship. | 9. Participation in TEE course on the Christian Congregation. |

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PRACTICAL & ON-THE-JOB
TRAINING

corresponding

SUPPORTING & ACADEMIC

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| 10, Makes sick calls with trainer | 10. Participation in TEE course on ministering to your fellow Christians |
| 11, Trains a trainee to make sick calls. | 11. Participation in TEE course on the ministry |
| 12, Participates in development of aspects of worship, reads Scripture, selects hymns, writes and reads prayers. | 12. Participation in TEE course on basic worship concepts. |

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