

TOKYO 2010: Missionary Training Task Force

by Paul Strand

Keeping in mind that the **general focus of Tokyo 2010** is “*least-reached peoples*,” the **question assigned to this task force**, then is, “*What role does missionary training play in church-planting and disciple-making movements among all the remaining unreached peoples in the next ten to fifteen years?*” The emphasis here is on training missionaries for the remaining *unreached peoples*, not on training missionaries for the already reached. Most current thinking assumes that the unreached or least-reached are still unreached because they are among the most difficult and the most isolated peoples on earth geographically, politically, culturally and religiously.

It is our task to answer this question for the purpose of bringing clarity to training goals and processes for ourselves as trainers and to all who will read what we produce in TOKYO 2010. Clarity builds motivation to finish the task. We will begin with a few basic assumptions:

1. We assume that missionary training is essential. We will not debate the question of whether training is or is not necessary.
2. We assume that the cross-cultural components of missionary training make it qualitatively different from pastoral training requiring distinctive training content and approaches.
3. We assume that missionary training does have a role in church-planting and disciple making movements focused on the unreached.
4. We assume that missionary training must include the whole person. Therefore the “know-be-do” philosophy or the cognitive, affective and conative (knowledge-character-skills) domains should be addressed in any adequate training curriculum.

Some suggested divisions and questions to break down the task into the salient parts are:

Rationale:

1. What goals should missionary training schools set to enhance church-planting and disciple-making movements among all unreached peoples in the next ten to fifteen years?
2. How should “cultural distance” impact training using the M0, M1, M2, M3 continuum?

3. Why is training for cross-cultural competence an essential part in missionary education?
How does education in academics differ from training for ministry competence?
Should missionary training schools be responsible for both academic and skills training?
4. Who should be trained as cross-cultural missionaries? (i.e. what experiences, characteristics and orientation to life should they possess?)

Content:

1. What knowledge components (cognitive) are essential for effective ministry?
2. What character qualities (affective) are essential for effective ministry? (Keeping in mind the essential pioneer, cross-cultural living, social dynamics and spiritual qualities.)
3. What skill competencies (conative) are essential for effective cross-cultural ministry? Which of these can best be taught in school, by the sending organization or on the field?

Structure and Format:

1. What are the contexts where the training of cross-cultural missionaries should take place?
2. How is training best accomplished for each of the three domains?
 - A. Cognitive (knowledge) component
 - B. Affective (spiritual, character, social) component
 - C. Conative (skills) component

It is the plan of the leader that when this task force meets and after some preliminary introductions of the personnel and the topic before us, we briefly discuss the questions and divide ourselves into groups. Each group will tackle one of the three sections for a specified time.

We request that participants in TOKYO 2010, who anticipate working with the MISSIONARY TRAINING task force, bring any resources or lists of resources (books, curriculum, course syllabi, etc.) that you have found to be most critical and effective for training. Building a list of resources will aid all who are tasked with training.

We also recognize that training must go forward on two fronts simultaneously, 1) training of trainers, that is, the preparation of faculty to teach in the schools which train the grass-roots missionaries, and 2) training of grass-roots or field missionaries. As we approach the questions of training we will keep both levels of training in view.