



# World Christian Fellowship Newsletter

January 2008

## DESTINY: The Privilege and Responsibility of Third-Culture People

By Carol Davis

God seems to have distinctive assignments for those third-culture people who have been shaped by two cultures into a distinctively new culture. What purposes might Asian Americans be best prepared to serve in this chapter of His story?

### Where was God when Joseph...

- Was sold by his own brothers into slavery?
- Ended up in the household of Potiphar, who was captain of the palace guard?
- Found favor and was put in charge of all his master owned?
- Was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and imprisoned?
- Gained favor and release from prison by interpreting Pharaoh's dream?
- Was put in charge of the land of Egypt—second only to the King?

What was God doing when treacherous brothers took away Joseph's right to live in peace among his Hebrew relatives, assigning him to slavery in the foreign Egyptian culture? What about the injustice of false accusations and imprisonment after his faithful service to his master? Yet, as a prisoner, God gave Joseph success, wisdom, and favor with the Pharaoh. Looking back, we see that God was turning evil into a weapon against the dark kingdom. The totality of Joseph's experience was what honed him as the instrument God could use to save not only Joseph and the Egyptians, but also his brothers and a throng of others. Joseph says it best in Gen. 50:20 when he tells his brothers after their father's death: "*You meant to hurt me, but God turned your evil into good to save the lives of many people...*" God was there all along.

### What did God have in mind when Moses...

- Was born at a time when Hebrew boys were slaughtered at birth?
- Was hidden in a basket placed among the reeds of the dangerous Nile?
- Was discovered and adopted into the household of the Pharaoh?
- Had the best of everything: education, care, and experience in leading and governing?
- Escaped his murderous action and ran away to live in the backside of a desert for 40 years?

Who else but someone with Moses's experience could confront another Pharaoh, free God's people, and then lead multitudes of dependent Hebrews—wandering in a wilderness for the next 40 years to the very threshold of the Promised Land? Moses was a Hebrew by birth who had been adopted, raised, educated, and experienced in the Egyptian Pharaoh's household, had escaped his crime, and lived in the backside of a desert for 40 years. His years of privilege and additional years as an escapee

prepared him to respond to God's call. Like Joseph, Moses is another Hebrew-Egyptian who was chosen by God to save His people. Joseph and Moses are both examples of third-culture people.

**Defining Third Culture.** The concept of a "third-culture person" requires some explanation. *First culture* refers to the culture you were born into, usually related to your ethnicity. *Second culture* is the one you are later assimilated into—most often because your family moved to a different place out of choice, fear, force, or appointment. Throughout human history, new and distinct *third cultures* form out of the interconnectedness, melding, confluence, and cross-pollination of two or more distinct cultures.

Although God could have chosen Hebrews or Egyptians—people solidly of one particular culture—to save his people during the times of Joseph and Moses, He did not. In these instances as well as many others throughout human history, God often chooses a third-culture person to bring about a radical breakthrough in the status quo, freedom, and redemption. God seems to have distinctive assignments for those third-culture people who have been shaped by two cultures into a distinctively new culture.

**Third Cultures: Throughout human history, new and distinct *third cultures* form out of the interconnectedness, melding, confluence, and cross-pollination of two or more distinct cultures.**

**How about Asian Americans?** Where was God and what might He have in mind for the migration, struggle, opportunity, education, values, and expectations of the Asian American experience? What purposes might Asian Americans be best prepared to serve in this chapter of His story?

Today, all over the world, there are those who wait in darkness without the light that you and I have received so freely. The select blend of Asian and American gives access to most of the world. Because Asians (ethnically) live all over the planet, entry and involvement from Asian Americans are welcomed and not suspect—a stark contrast to the barriers that often block those who bear another ethnicity. With their cross-cultural experiences, education, language, resources, and connectedness, Asian Americans have an incredible and distinctive capacity to build, bless, and change the destiny of nations.

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Whatever the reason one is shaped by at least two different cultures, know this: it's ultimately God's assignment and must be embraced and lived out to its fullest, as did our spiritual ancestors Moses and Joseph.

The challenge for Asian American believers is to come **intentionally** to the Kingdom table with all they are and all they possess. For there are 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges in advancing the incredible message of freedom, hope, peace, and forgiveness that Asian Americans may be best positioned to take on.

**Making a difference.** What difference might it make in sacred history if this sovereignly endowed group of Asian Americans would lay at the altar the sacrifice of...

- Their circumstances that brought them to America?
- Their distinct capacities, which may include advanced degrees, sacrificial discipline, multi-cultural connections, ethnicity, committed networks, lifelong relationships, job titles, vocational positions, thriftiness, language, regular travel, giftedness, cross-cultural experience, and skills?

**THIRD CULTURE is more than a label. It's a shaping reality, a privilege, and a responsibility given by God for His purpose and by His sovereign design. Embrace it, and live into all God has in mind!**

*World Christian Conference is the place to grapple with others about these issues along with others.*

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## WCC 2008 Workshop Preview

By Vince Chan

**This year's theme for WCC, "Arise, Revive the Nations!" cries out for a vast army of God to rise and pursue the nations for the Lord. What will it take for God's church to become this army? The conference's 10 workshops aim to strip away what entangles and move you to press on toward the prize! Although the workshops may differ in focus, each workshop seeks to restore, equip, and mobilize God's people. Read on to learn about two of the exciting workshops that will be offered at WCC 2008!**

### Rising above the Challenges as an Asian American for God

It is a blessing to be an Asian American in God's Church. Certain doors to opportunities are opened slightly wider, simply because of our heritage, upbringing, and even appearance. However, along with these advantages come challenges that sometimes prevent us from running through these opportunities with zeal, let alone taking a step toward them. Tarnished self-esteem may tell us we're not capable; misguided self-expectations may deceive us to achieve "higher" in the world; and constraining families may restrict us from pursuing our grandest desires for the Lord. I, myself, often wrestle with my Asian American identity and feel that it limits me. But, what if we could freely embrace who God made us to be? What if self-esteem was healed and restored, or self-expectations were redefined and focused? What if we learned to love and honor our families by pursuing God? How high above the challenges we would rise and be made free to run with zeal for the Lord!

**Registration for WCC 2008 is  
now available at  
[wcfellowship.org/wcc!](http://wcfellowship.org/wcc!)**

### "Normal" Sexuality—Redeemed and Pure

"We are all sexually broken." When I read these words from the speaker, Chris Yuan, I realized that our flesh and emotions can easily mislead and "misdefine" what God intended to be beautiful for His creation. It is a struggle that we may try to overlook or keep hidden because of fear, shame, or even simply a lack of understanding. But, whatever the case, a broken sexuality inevitably reveals itself in consequences: often hurting others, always wrecking within, and ultimately distancing us from the One who loves. Chris's testimony reminds me that no matter how deep, difficult, or painful our brokenness, our Lord is relentless in redeeming us because He desires purity and because He desires to delight in us.

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## WCF REGIONAL PRAYER GROUPS!

The following prayer groups meet monthly. For more information on meeting times and locations, visit [wcfellowship.org](http://wcfellowship.org).

**East Bay (Moraga, CA)**

**LA (Arcadia, CA)**

**SF Monthly Missions Meeting (MMM) (San Francisco, CA)**

**Seattle (Tukwila, WA)**

**SF South Bay (Sunnyvale, CA)**