

The Insider

by: Jim Petersen & Mike Shamy

The book, *The Insider*, was a very insightful book in regards to the ministry I am involved with. In working with International students at The Chapel I engage in many different cultures and situations when sharing Christ with people. I love how the authors of *The Insider* would tell how they have interacted with different world cultures in how they would communicate the Gospel of Christ to people. A lot times when I read books on evangelism I only get an U.S. perspective in reaching the culture. It was refreshing to read how on these authors would interact with different nationalities and how the Gospel would cross over in reaching different people groups. Petersen and Shamy give a great point of view on how to bring the Kingdom of God in our everyday lives and not to be afraid of that. I feel that “reorienting ourselves to live as insiders” (p. 124) is the constant theme of the book and call to believers to reach others for Christ.

In the ministry to International students I involve myself in meeting many physical needs of people. In the first part of the book it mentions about acting “kingdomly.” It is responding because of your love for God, you would love people (page 32). It is truly understanding the verse in Matthew 25:40 where Jesus says, “I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters you were doing it to me!” When I work with International students I want to be motivated out of love for God and not just obligation. I believe when you focus on the kingdom of God you will see great kingdom things happen in the hearts of people. As the authors explained, “Once we learn how to watch for the kingdom of God we can see it everywhere. We can see it every day, in the affairs of the people around us” (page 32). This is what I am trying to focus on as I help international students with basic needs they might have in order to build into the kingdom of God and not just a good friendship with students. It is realizing my kingdom citizenship as God’s child, and building into that kingdom as I interact with students.

I related to the statement, “Christians taught their converts to be humane, to live not according to the culture of the empire but according to God’s rule in their hearts. The ways of God’s kingdom ruled them” (page 34). Again, I come across many different beliefs and cultures when interacting with different students from around the world. I never want to think I need to change them to think like I think or do exactly what I do as an U.S. Christian. However, God’s kingdom crosses all cultural barriers and standards. So when I am able to share the Gospel with a student I know that the Word of God stands firm even in the midst of different world cultures. I will be able to teach those International students that come to faith in Christ certain standards God holds for those who are “kingdomly” people.

I agree with the statement, “To lay foundations for new generations takes time” (page 53). I am building into International students the ideas and standards of Jesus Christ and this for a lot of them is a new concept. I sometimes get in my U.S. mentality that change of a person must happen fast and should happen fast, but this is the wrong thinking. I need to take a step back and realize that I am laying a foundation for God to build on and that releases pressure for me to change them, which sometimes I get in the thinking. I want to embrace that it will take time and laying the foundation for God to build on is just as important as seeing the fruit of someone coming to faith in Christ.

I have seen the need more and more to impart and teach students that come from different parts of the world, who come to faith in Christ, to impact their own culture for Jesus Christ. I have seen students, who come from different countries to the states and begin a relationship with Jesus, feel that their faith can only be expressed in the U.S. culture and language. Of course this is not true and the authors stated that “...if there was going to be an impact by the Gospel in a place, it would have to be through the people of that place...” (page 71). Just recently, after reading this book, I have felt a need to encourage a Korean friend of mine, who came to faith in Christ here in the States, to be a witness to his

Korean friends who he interacts with daily. My Korean friend has expressed it is hard even to pray in Korean because he feels weird because it isn't a part of his culture that he is used to. I want to build a passion in him to reach his own culture for Christ and an understanding of how he can be affective for Christ in the Korean culture because of being Korean. I never want him to think that his faith can only be expressed here in the States. As a Korean he can be a great "insider" to reach other Koreans for Christ.

I also agree with Petersen and Shamy on the section about the balance and understanding of boldness and rapport. The authors stated, "If our notion of boldness is not seasoned with a quest for rapport, we risk polarizing those relationships" (page 96). I desire to build good rapport with International students and that means a lot of times just listening to students. Sometimes I have an agenda set to share the Gospel with a student, but I need to come to realization that my agenda might not line with God's plan. However, I want to be bold in sharing Christ with students but as Petersen and Shamy stated, "Boldness and rapport; we need them both. We need to maintain a healthy tension between the two, as either one without the other can cause us to fail" (page 96). I have learned being sensitive to international students is key in sharing Christ with them.

The examples from the Apostle Paul about not letting your fears paralyze you, which are laid out on pages 97-100 is good reminder for me in how I deal with the fear of sharing the Gospel with students. Sometimes I feel that I just need to suppress my fears or try to ignore them. However, I find the first step stated in the book about being transparent about your fears very encouraging. Being open and honest about my fears is allowing God to change me so I can be bold in sharing my faith. I love reading how the Apostle Paul also struggled with this notion of fear and not knowing what to say all the time. Reliance on God is central to conquering our fears.

I find the two laws or principles to help "...guide us in our deciding what to do when we are confronted with a decision over doubtful matter..." to be helpful (page 110). Different times when being with International students I am faced with making a decision on whether it is right or not to participate. The first law, "The law of love," needs to be on my mind constantly. I like the question that is stated, "How, in this situation, do I show love to this person?" (page 110). My motivation in being with the students needs to be out of love. If my heart is filled with that then my decision to participate or not will be accepted by the student and by my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. I also must not forget law two which is, "The law of self-control." I find this true in everything I do in life, that there is always a balance that I must be aware of and not go to the extremes. Keeping I Corinthians 6:12 on my heart is, I believe, essential to my Christian living. "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything."

Chapter twelve, "The Second Life Pattern of an Insider: Praying and Responding" I feel is most important in living as an insider. I have really been convicted recently to be man of prayer. Asking God for boldness, help, and guidance in reaching others for His sake to further His kingdom. I think the authors stated it well that praying, "brings divine resources to bear on what's going on" (page. 155). So much can happen when we are on our knees crying out to God for help. I am reminded of the verse in Acts 1:8, where it states, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When we pray we will receive power to be His witnesses. This comes through surrendering unto God. I never want to down play the idea of praying for guidance in sharing my faith and for someone to come to Christ. This is where the power is. Not in my presentation of the Gospel but all on the power of God changing the hearts of people.