

Episode 044

Ps Prakich on Organizational Culture

Ps Wilson

Pastor Prakich, I'm really so excited to have you join us on our podcast. This is our wilsonlailing.com leadership podcast. And Pastor Prakich has been a pastor, a regional pastor. He's been involved in a lot of ministries actually over the years. And one of the things is you went to the UK and you became the Senior Pastor of our church in Leeds, and you led it for about 10 years.

Recently, you have gone back to Thailand and now have taken on the role as Director General of the Bible Society of Thailand. And I'm sure in all these roles that you have taken, you've had to come into a group, an organization where there was an existing way of doing things and culture. I'd love to find out what were some of the things you faced in coming into culture, and I'm sure you went about trying to change some of this culture. What are some of the challenges that you faced trying to do this?

Ps Prakich

Yes, before I took over the church in Leeds- actually the church existed for quite a few years already- but there was a need for the church to have someone take over and lead the church, and I was the one. And when I came in, the church was predominantly Filipinos and I was the only Thai person there.

So I think in order to come into a new church or organization like Thailand Bible Society- to come back to Thailand, I also had to adjust. Because living in Europe for so long, I mean, your mindset, you know the way you do things were also different. So I think it could be daunting. Yeah, daunting for various reasons. You don't know what reaction you would expect from people. You are also not sure whether something new you're going to bring into the church would work or not, or the organization. So I think the first thing that you need to have is this, you need to be secure. You need to have that security in God knowing that it is God who leads you into that situation. For me I have that security. I knew that it was God, it's not me who wanted it. It was not me who took the initiative to do that.



Though I was willing. Yes. So I got that conviction. I got that security. To me, that's the foundation before you would do other things.

And then, when you come in, you share your dream or the dream that God has given to you, your conviction. I remember that when I was in Hope Leeds many things that were not new to me were new to people in the church. For example, church planting, missions, for example, mentoring. Yeah. And I remember because in those years I had a lot of mission trips, so each time I came back, before my sermon, before my preaching, I would take a few minutes to share, you know, my experience in church planting. So I kept sharing and sharing and sharing. It took a few months before some people would get curious or would get interested to try. Then I gathered those people and we just went to some nearby towns.

Ps Wilson

So could I say that you were intentional perhaps, in sharing your mission stories. Because you were trying to change something in the culture, correct?

Ps Prakich

Yes, because I think people in my church, just like in many churches, missions or church planting are for leaders or pastors. But I believe that everyone can be involved, not just can be involved, but must be involved because it's the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. So I took people out to the mission field and in the first few times they just observed me. I did the talking, I did the Q & A, preaching, and then slowly I just challenged some people in my team to come in to contribute.

Just something simple. Just share some simple stories. They didn't have to preach or do something big. Then after that, when they came back from the mission trip, they got so excited. I got them to share testimony. I did the same with mentoring as well. I got some of my mentees to give testimony.

So after a few months, we found that more people were interested in joining the mission trip. And finally we could plant a church. So I think you dream together with them, you inspire them, you share your story, and then you get them to share their stories. So slowly the culture of the church changed in Leeds.



And once you know you see something happen you celebrate together. Filipinos really enjoy eating. So we came together at the pastor's house. We celebrated together. So these are some of the few things that I did. It might sound, 'Oh, it's so simple', 'It's easy'- it's not easy, it took years. So you have to be firm. You have to be secure. I'm not saying you have to be harsh. I'm not saying that you don't listen to what your people say, but if you really believe that that is what God has called you to do, you have to be firm.

Ps Wilson

So as I'm hearing you. You're saying, first of all, you got to have a vision for it. Whatever that you see ought to be part of the culture. And then you start talking about it, doing it. Bringing others along continuously and celebrating it as well. So that they really see it, they experience it, they feel it. It's propagated through the celebrations. That's wonderful. Yeah, and I can see actually now that I'm here in the UK and having heard and met with some of the people from the church in Leeds, I can see that heartbeat - the very heartbeat. And in fact, they just celebrated the fact that they have started a new church plant. So that's really incredible.

Can you tell us how about when you went to the Thailand Bible Society? Of course, it's a different thing again. It's a more work environment, although obviously very Christian. What were some of the things that worked?

Ps Prakich

I have to admit that there were things that I did that worked. And then there were also things that maybe are mistakes that I made. As I mentioned, I'm definitely Thai, but I have lived in Europe for so long. So when I went back to Thailand, I, first of all, I had to be self-aware of the fact that, the culture that I learned here, the way we work here, things that we implemented here might be different. We cannot do it in the same way.

So I observed people first. I did not just come in and just say you have to do this, this, this. No. And I got to know people in the Society even before I came back to Thailand, I had a Zoom call with all the departmental heads, all of them. I asked them some questions like 'How did you feel being there in the society?', 'What was your observation?', 'If there is something.. '



Ps Wilson

When you say society, you mean Bible Society.

Ps Prakich

Bible Society. Thailand Bible Society. Yeah. which is our organization. So if there is one thing that you can change, or if you wish to change to see improvement, what would it be? Then I learned to know what they think, right?

And I learned to walk along with them. So this is what I did in the beginning. Another thing that I did quite a lot was training. I realised that sometimes, you know, especially for an organization that has been there for so long, there were traditions, there were routines and people were happy keeping the routine and sometimes they forgot about the aim- why they did what they do and whether it is still relevant to the time.

So I came in, I did a lot of training, I did English training because we are a global organization, so we had to connect with our colleagues from other countries. I taught them how to write emails, wording that they would use. I even taught them how to write a Thai draft. So I did the strategic work and also some of the operational work. So I think they did not just learn some new things, but they also maybe feel bonded with me that I really came and helped them. That helps improve trust and relationships.

Something that I said earlier that I said could be a mistake was when I came in the first few months. I just shared my dream, my vision. I said that I want to see change. So some people just took it maybe wrongly, like, "Oh, you know, you're new and everything. Yeah, you're gonna come and then you're gonna bring change." So then I learned that, okay, I have to be careful to make sure that the wording that I use wouldn't cause misunderstanding.

Ps Wilson

So now you did some of the things, but was there one or two cultures that you changed -the culture way they did certain things?

Ps Prakich

For example, because I have so many roles. I mean the role in the Thailand Bible Society, also the roles in HIM, HIM International, HIM Europe, HIM Bangkok, so I have to be very organized.



For example, I ask everyone to do the weekly plan, weekly evaluation. They have to submit it on Friday before they go home. So I bring in a lot of structure. So, I think this is maybe something new to my staff. And then there are some of the key things in the Bible Societies, like communication. When I say communication, I mean like letters, newsletters, something on the website. I know that for the new generation, the younger ones in Thailand, they're so much into how it looks good, whether it looks good, whether the wording is attractive. How about the font? So I asked them to submit everything.

They have to go through me first. So this is not negative. I hope they enjoy it because I come down to help them. But I have to say that to them this is also new that now the process is not that short. Now it's longer, but now they can see the fruits. Yeah. There is a lot of improvement in our communication, in our media.

Ps Wilson

That's good. So it sounds like what you did in the church was somewhat different from what you implemented in the culture. Yeah because maybe you didn't have to show so much, but you have to be clear what you were looking at and win them over correctly in the changes that you were making. So as a result of making those changes, have things improved a lot?

Ps Prakich

Yes, I cannot take all the credit, but if you just look at the result after we got the first year evaluation together with the board of trustees, they were very pleased and they said that they have seen a lot of improvement in Thailand Bible Society. So I really thank God for that.

Ps Wilson

I guess that's a question I could ask. Because often people face this, thinking about it, is that when you're trying to make some changes in the culture, are there times when you might face resistance?

Ps Prakich

Yes.

Ps Wilson

What would be some of the things you would do to you know, work with or deal with, address some of these challenges?



Ps Prakich

I think I have two sides of this. On one hand I'm very pastoral. I think I believe I'm very gracious to people. On the other hand, I'm very principle led. So if someone doesn't want to follow, I don't want to say rules- but guidelines- and they don't listen, of course I would have to talk to them. So after a few months one of my staff members left because he refused to change. And actually until now, he is attacking me behind me. I heard it from different people that he was attacking me. Talking bad behind my back, but this is just a part of life if you do something good. You have to go through it.

Ps Wilson

Not everybody likes change, not everybody likes or are able to adapt.

Ps Prakich

Correct, but thank God the majority are still there. And I can see that they love it. I can see that they get motivated, even more motivated. Maybe, I don't know, maybe they're looking for this. Yeah. So I'm very happy.

Ps Wilson

I'm glad to hear that. Well, thank you so much for sharing this Ps Prakich. It's wonderful. You've done some fantastic work in the churches, in the Thailand Bible Society, it's been incredible. Thank you for sharing with us. God bless.



Discussion Questions

These questions could be done personally or as part of a group discussion.

1. What were some key lessons you learnt about changing organisational culture? Why were these important?
2. What did you learn from Ps. Prakich's dealing with resistance to changing the culture? Has it inspired some ideas for dealing with your own context?

Actionable Steps

Following questions are to prompt us on suitable actions. Importantly, come up with steps you will take to make progress. Give them datelines and priority.

1. What are some organisational cultures that should be addressed in your leadership scope? Consider the steps that can be taken to bring positive change.
2. What are some possible resistance that may occur before you can bring cultural change? What specific steps can you take to reduce it?





Ministry Equipping Resources

Leadership Episodes

www.wilsonlailing.com/episodes-1/leadership

Prophetic Episodes

www.wilsonlailing.com/episodes-1/prophetic

Intercession Episodes

www.wilsonlailing.com/episodes-1/intercession

Blog Articles

www.wilsonlailing.com/blog

Bible, Christian Living, Reflections, Church & Q&A



<http://bit.ly/subscribenewsletterWandL>



Do subscribe to receive regular newsletters on updates

Inspirational Resources

Sermons

www.wilsonlailing.com/sermons

Quotes

www.wilsonlailing.com/quotes

Connect with Us

Ask Questions

www.wilsonlailing.com/contact

Hope International Ministries

www.byhim.org

Social Media



www.facebook.com/Wilson.LaiLing

www.instagram.com/wilson.lailing

Hope Church (QLD)

www.hope-church.com.au

Copyright © 2021 by Wilson Lim & Lai Ling Lim. All rights reserved. Materials are free to be distributed in whole or part as long as proper acknowledgement is given to the author and not sold for profit.



Open PDF with
Adobe Acrobat Reader

