



## Yo-Yo Ma: Making the Most of His Tri-Cultural Background

by Esther W.

What do you know about Yo-Yo Ma other than his international reputation as an acclaimed cellist and fame as one of the most recognizable persons of Asian descent? In this opinion piece, Esther W. reflects on Ma's sovereign foundations and how this relates to World Christians.

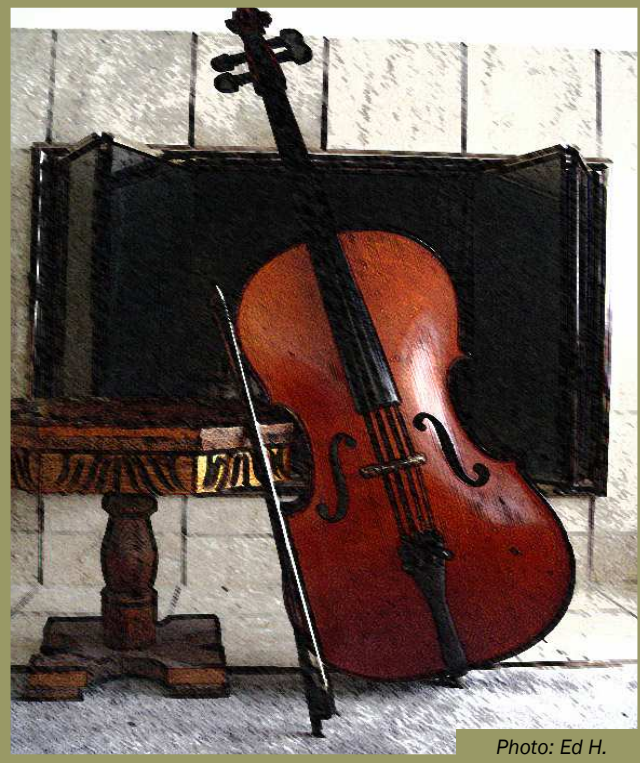


Photo: Ed H.

**Yo-Yo Ma** ♪ Recently on National Public Radio (npr.org), I heard Yo-Yo Ma discuss his core values and beliefs for the This I Believe national media project (thisibelieve.org). In his personal essay Ma described his tri-cultural background: French, Chinese, and American. Ma was born in Paris, his parents were natives of China, and he was brought up mostly in America. Ma explained that when he was growing up, he found this mélange of heritage confusing and never felt comfortable identifying with only one culture.

**Twining of cultures** ♪ As he struggled to belong, Ma came to understand what made each of the cultures unique and eventually decided that he did not have to choose only one, but could keep all three. Ma explained, "I could honor the cultural depth and longevity of my Chinese heritage while feeling just as passionate about the deep artistic traditions of the French and the American commitment to opportunity and the future."

As Ma embraced his uniqueness as a tri-cultural person, he relished exploring many more cultures and finding elements in each to love. Internalizing different cultural values, Ma implemented this idea through his work in international musical expression and collaboration. For example, Ma created the Silk Road Project in 1998 to explore the cultural tradi-

tions of the countries along that ancient trade route through Asia.

**Lessons for World Christians** ♪ Although I do not know where Ma's spiritual allegiance lies, I believe that as World Christians we can learn something from his life: Yo-Yo Ma is a great contemporary example of a Third Culture person who utilizes his background to promote his passionate evangelism of music. A Third Culture person is an individual who has been heavily shaped by two or more cultures resulting in a third unique cultural blend. As World Christians, we can likewise view our unique backgrounds as positions of influence for God's passion and love for all peoples of the world. This missiological endeavor is of an even more universal and cosmic magnitude and effect than music.

**Struggling to belong** ♪ Like Ma, many of us were born with Asian heritage, but then we grew up in or migrated to one or more non-Asian cultures in continents such as North America, Western Europe, or South America. We can easily relate to the relocation(s) and painful struggle(s) to assimilate during our growing up years. We may have wondered why God gave us such an awkward and painful experience. At some point, we may have also secretly desired an easier path or to have been born in the mainstream culture.

**Embracing our identity** ♪ And yet, like Ma, we can also learn to accept our varied cultural identities and the experiences God granted, and even to receive them as "one-of-a-kind" gifts. We can recognize and be grateful to God for the strengths of all the cultures that have helped define us into who we are today. I am sure that Ma's incomparable background blend opened amazing, unique doors for him as he earnestly collaborated with musicians from cultures around the world. As World Christians, God also has given each of us "custom-blended" backgrounds that form our whole identities as Third Cultural persons to access individual doors for His Kingdom work wherever we find ourselves presently stationed. Let us each eagerly look for our singular opportunities to fill that special role and find delight in the discovery process!



For another article on Third Culture, you can read "Destiny: The Privilege and Responsibility of Third-Culture People" by Carol D. in the 2008 January issue available at [wcfellowship.org](http://wcfellowship.org)

### In this WCF Newsletter issue...

- Yo-Yo Ma and His Tri-cultural Background..... page 1
- The Inspiration of World Christian Community..... page 2
- Freedom and Healing: A WCC Servant Reflection ..... page 3
- More Six-word World Christian Journeys..... page 3

## The Inspiration of World Christian Community

By Ed H.

**Reflecting on his first-time WCC experience, Ed H. saw that connecting with the wider, missions-minded community is instrumental in maintaining a life committed to involvement in missions work of all forms. As a result, God used WCC 2008 to increase his commitment to support missions work globally and locally.**

**World Christian community inspires** ✨ At the conference, I particularly enjoyed hearing from the many people who shared their testimonies about God working in their lives. Seeing God work in amazing ways throughout different areas of the world is always inspiring. Since the conference, I have been motivated to teach missions-related Sunday school classes, and have told others about what I have learned at the conference.

**Points taken home** ✨ Some of the key takeaways from WCC 2008 included becoming more aware about the state of the world, hearing about God work in non-traditional ways, and realizing the opportunities and responsibilities for individual Christians in missions work.

**Global disparity and exploitation** ✨ First, hearing about America's relative affluence compared with the rest of the world; the large number of poor and oppressed groups in the world such as the Dalits, the lowest rung in the Hindu caste system in India; and rampant child sex slavery really puts reality into a sharper perspective. It made me rethink my own priorities in daily life so that I focus on what really is important. Gaining the awareness of the global disparity and exploitation has helped focus and improve my prayer life.

**A willing heart needed** ✨ The keynote speaker Jackie Pullinger's sharing about her experiences in Hong Kong opened my eyes to how God can work. Her life example is a testimony about how God only needs your heart, meaning your willingness, to bring change to a region. After coming to know Christ in Britain, she felt God telling her to become a missionary, and she got on a boat without much money or

even knowing where she would get off. She eventually was led by God to get off in Hong Kong, and started her ministry there. Her dedication to following God and helping others know Christ brought about a ministry that changed the lives of many drug addicts. God does not always need large financial support from home churches to be effective as might be required in a more traditional missionary model.

Jackie's attitude of love and care for the destitute people was truly inspiring. And the statement that true love requires action was in evidence through Jackie's leaving her heart out in the open for these people. I recalled Jackie's words about not watching videos about hungry children in Africa, because after watching, she would be compelled to spend the rest of her life caring for those people in Africa. She implied that God's plan for her was to minister in Asia, and, given that knowledge, seeing suffering in Africa on a video while not acting on it would counterproductively "harden her heart" and potentially reduce her compassion.

**World wide open** ✨ I also learned about the many opportunities for missions work. I remember being advised that simply having an Asian heritage can be an enormous benefit in accessing and being accepted by those in Asian, often closed, countries.

And finally, I've also been encouraged by learning the various ways in which I can support missions work without leaving the country — from reaching out to local people groups, to prayer, and even mobilizing support for global missions. The conference was well worth attending.



Photos: 2006-08 WCCs

### REGIONAL WORLD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP 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)  
•Seattle (Tukwila, WA)

•LA (Arcadia, CA)  
•Bay Area South Bay (Sunnyvale, CA)

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

“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work, prayer *is* the greater work.” —Oswald Chambers

# Freedom and Healing: A WCC Servant Reflection

By Wilson C.

Reflecting on his opportunity to serve at and attend WCC 2008, Wilson C. shares some meaningful highlights from his experience that included the unexpected gift of healing.

**Serving opportunity** ► As a workshop liaison at WCC, I was the point of contact for two workshop speakers before and during the conference. I was blessed to serve with the Executive Committee (EC) whom I found to be very professional. The other team members showed a passion to see God's heart during the conference. I also felt that getting to know the workshop speakers and hearing their spiritual journeys first-hand was a big bonus.

My service in WCF began with a simple prayer asking God for a short-term project. Next came "a knock at the door" when a classmate, a member of WCF, approached me about serving in WCC. I already knew that God was present in this WCF movement; he had used past WCC experiences to mold my life strategically. My prayer was answered, and I responded to the "knock".

**Gratefulness** ► I am very grateful for the whole experience of WCC 2008 and wanted to share two highlights that were especially meaningful to me:

The first highlight was the plenary message pertaining to freedom from slavery and poverty passed down from previous generations. I needed to hear this message as I wrestle with integrating my role as the third-generation oldest son with God's leading in my life. From the specific examples and experiences shared at the testimonies and workshops, I gained a startling awareness of the subconscious undercurrent and negative impact from generational curses. Because of this knowledge, I can now be more sensitive to this hindrance in my life and bring my desire for freedom to God for him to address.

**Unexpected healing** ► The second highlight I observed was God healing me of a hidden hurt. During the same weekend of WCC, my family held a memorial service for my grandfather in Hong Kong. On my behalf, my family distributed and

read a eulogy I had written beforehand. With this task, I had thought my involvement was complete and that everything would be okay.

However, during an evening worship time, God kindly allowed me to participate in that memorial service through the Holy Spirit. I was shocked because I had thought that the eulogy substituted for my presence. It was not so as God revealed to me a hidden grief: I mourned the fact that I was not physically there to share the moment with my family.

**At that moment, I felt God relieve me of the burden to "fix" my parents and enabled me to entrust them into His hands.**

It also dawned on me that the evening worship time in California was about the same time as the memorial service in Hong Kong. It seemed to me that God had somehow folded and connected the dimension of space and time of two global locations through His Spirit.

**Generational freedom** ► The next day, my aunt, a believer, called me with news of a warm and peaceful service. She said that it was apparent the Holy Spirit was present. I was full of praise to God! Reflecting on the plenary message about freedom, I had this revelation: in one weekend, about the same time, at two places, one generation represented by a war refugee, my grandfather, came to rest while a later generation, meaning me, was set free from generational curses. At that moment, I felt God relieve me of the burden to "fix" my parents and enabled me to entrust them into His hands. How truly awesome God is!



## More World Christian Journeys in Six Words

Collected at WCC 2008

**"glory, apostolic passion, wartime lifestyle, worship"**

**"He wants, we want, they want"**

**"Broken people ministering to broken people"**

**"Brokenness, death, laughter, meeting Jesus: Yay!"**

***"Loving people to Christ His way!"***

***"Amazing adventure led by my Daddy!"***

**"Grateful that God would choose me!"**

You can submit your own six-word description of your World Christian Journey at [newsletter@wcfellowship.org](mailto:newsletter@wcfellowship.org)