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DEVELOPING GREAT COMMISSION STRATEGIES
FOR CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF OXNARD, CALIFORNIA

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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**Developing Great Commission Strategies
for Chinese Christian Church of Oxnard, California**

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The goal of this study to help Chinese Christian Church of Oxnard (hereafter, CCCO) become a Great Commission church through a theologically relevant and practical strategy that involves missions education, short-term missions trips, an annual missions conference, and faith mission promise pledge cards. CCCO is a small church of about one hundred members, located in southern California. Currently, the church gives one-tenth of its tithe funds to world missions ministry, but this strategy has several flaws, including negatively impacting the local ministry as well as limiting the amount that is given to world missions ministry.

This ministry focus paper will be divided into three parts. Part One is an overview of Chinese people in Oxnard and an analysis of the missions ministry context of CCCO. Characteristics of the Chinese in Oxnard and their social lives affect the church missions ministry. The strengths and weaknesses of the missions ministry at CCCO will also be presented.

Part Two discusses the theological foundations of church missions ministry. The purpose of this part is to demonstrate from the Bible that the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to believers today. The apostles' church was fully aware of the missionary mandate. The church today cannot excuse itself from this responsibility. This section also includes an examination of the theological context of missions ministry at CCCO. And then, I will rebuild a theology of missions ministry for Chinese Christian Church of Oxnard.

Part Three is the church missions ministry strategy for developing a Great Commission church. This section includes the goals, plan, and implementation process. The church missions ministry strategy is to develop a Great Commission church through missions education, short-term missions trips, an annual missions conference, and a faith missions promise pledge card.

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INTRODUCTION

Chinese Christian Church of Oxnard (hereafter, CCCO) is a Chinese church and located in southern California. CCCO developed from a Bible study group twenty-eight years ago. The church founders were businessmen who came from Hong Kong. They had a vision to evangelize those Chinese who came from Mainland China and Taiwan. They started a Bible study group in their houses. Within a few years, they had led about ten people to become Christians through the Bible study group. At this point the church founders rented a fellowship hall in a church on Sunday morning for the Sunday Worship. A couple of years later, when the membership of the church totaled thirty people, they started a plan to have their own church property. By God's grace, in the year 1991 they purchased and moved to the current church property for the Sunday worship.

Today there are approximately one hundred church members. The congregation includes the first generation of Chinese from Mainland China who came to the United States in the 1970s, as well as their second and third generations who were born in the United States. It also includes new immigrants who came from the Mainland in the early 1990s, those who came from Hong Kong in the late 1990s, and others who came from Taiwan in the 2000s.

When the church was formally established and met in a rented fellowship hall in 1986, the focus was on evangelism to the Chinese people in the city of Oxnard; at this point, the church had never been involved in any mission work overseas. In 2002, one church leader was invited to visit a mission field. Upon his return, he encouraged the

church board to do something new for the mission field the next year. Yet, due to the fact that the church did not have any budget for mission funding, most church leaders did not follow his suggestion. One year later, he suggested that the church board use one-tenth of the general fund for foreign missions ministry. The church leaders liked this idea because they did not have to donate any extra money for missions ministry and the church could still support foreign missions ministry. From that point forward, the church has used one-tenth of the general fund for foreign mission ministry.

Unfortunately, this plan has had its drawbacks. In the long run, it will affect the local ministry. Also, when the church only took one-tenth of the general fund to do the foreign missions ministry, it limited the congregation's ability to participate more fully in foreign mission ministry. Further, the church members have not cared about the foreign missions ministry at all because they have not truly participated in it. By not giving any money out of their own pockets to support the foreign missions ministry, their "hearts" are not in the work, just as the Bible states, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34).¹

In addition, most church leaders have a wrong concept that CCCO, as a small church, has no ability to do missions ministry. They are content to let larger churches do it. But if all small churches were to believe this, a huge mission resource would be lost from the small churches across the United States. Participating in world missions

¹ All Scripture quoted is from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

ministry does not relate to the size of the church; it relates to the commandment of Our Lord and the responsibility of each church.²

Church members at CCCO must become Great Commission Christians. For this reason, the church needs to develop Great Commission strategies for the foreign missions ministry of CCCO. The goal of these strategies is to help CCCO become a Great Commission church which is actively involved in world missions ministry through a theologically relevant and practical strategy that involves missions education, short-term missions trips, an annual missions conference, and faith mission promise pledge cards.

Developing Great Commission strategies for the church missions ministry at CCCO is important since it is related to the Great Commission commandment of Jesus. Even though the church already started the church missions ministry in 2004, this was merely a good start. The church should not simply maintain the missions ministry of seven years ago, but it must deal with the weaknesses of the ministry. The church needs to make the effort to become a Great Commission church, which is God's will for CCCO.

In addition, the reason for my interest in this topic is that there are only 2.6 million Chinese in the United States; among all of the Chinese people in the world, this is a very small percentage. This means that among 1.4 billion Chinese in the world (more than 1.3 billion in the Mainland and almost 100 million in all the other countries around the world), fewer than 0.18 percent of them have immigrated to the United States and enjoy its freedom and democracy. Many Chinese people who live in the Mainland still hope for "the America dream"; travelling and immigrating to America are their greatest desires for

² The terms "foreign missions ministry" and "world missions ministry" will be used interchangeably.

their lifetimes. Further, only about 10 percent of the Chinese in the United States are Christians. Chinese Christians in the United States are very blessed, and they are “chosen” just as the people of God in Persia were chosen for a particular task. Mordecai told Esther, “Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14). Esther was willing to receive the challenge from her uncle, Mordecai, who was like a father to her. She asked all Jews who were in Susa to gather together and fast for her for three days, night or day. Then she took a risk by approaching the king in the inner court and asking for help from the king for her people. In the end she was greatly used by God to save her people. Her uncle became the second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews (Esther 10:3).

The rich, professional, and cross-cultural Chinese Christians of CCCO also have come to royal position; they are potential missionaries for the mission fields and also can be greatly used by God in the church missions ministry and the world missions ministry. They can use their freedom, wealth, and professional degrees to respond to and accomplish the Lord’s Great Commission. If they waste all of God’s graces, including democracy, freedom, wealth, and professional degrees, and do not use them in service to the Lord, then they will be responsible to God during the last judgment day. Jesus once told a parable about a fig tree planted in a vineyard which could not bear fruit for three years; the owner of the vineyard wanted to cut the fig tree down and said, “Why should it use up the soil?”(Luke 13:7). If the Chinese Christians of CCCO cannot bear spiritual fruit for God, they may be given up by God.

As the church pastor, on the one hand I have a responsibility to remind them about God's graces and judgment; on the other hand, I need to teach them about the Lord's Great Commission and guide them become Great Commission Christians. Most Christians will forget that the judgment will begin with the family of God (1 Peter 4:17). All Christians need to know that they have to give account to Jesus who is ready to judge the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5). All Christians need to make preparation to give account to him.

This ministry focus paper will be divided into three parts. The first part presents the demographics of the city of Oxnard and an overview of the Chinese history in this city. It also includes an analysis of the missions ministry context of CCCO. The characteristics of Chinese people and their social life will be explored, particularly how these affect the church missions ministry. Part One will also describe the strengths and weaknesses of the missions ministry, including the problem of the previous pastor of CCCO.

The second part of the paper presents the theological foundations of church missions ministry. The purpose of this part is to demonstrate that the Great Commission not only pertained to the original apostles, but also to local churches today. The chapter explains how the Calvinist doctrine of election limited the vision of missions. It also includes an examination of the theological context of missions ministry at CCCO. Finally, Part Two will rebuild a theology of missions ministry for CCCO.

The last part of the paper is the church missions ministry strategy for developing a Great Commission church. It includes the goals, plan, and implementation process. The church missions ministry strategy is to develop a Great Commission church through

missions education, short-term mission trips, an annual missions conference, and faith mission promise pledge cards.

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF CHINESE PEOPLE IN OXNARD, CALIFORNIA

The Demographics of the City of Oxnard

The city of Oxnard is located at the Western edge of the fertile Oxnard Plain, and is an important agricultural center, with its distinction as the strawberry and lima bean capital of California. Oxnard is the most populous city in the Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura metropolitan area. Oxnard is also a major transportation hub in Southern California, with Amtrak, Union Pacific, Metrolink, Greyhound, and Intercalifornia stopping in Oxnard. Oxnard also has a regional airport called Oxnard Airport.

Significant Growth in the Hispanic/Latino Population

According to the demographic research of California Department of Finance, the population of Oxnard was 170,358 in 2000 and was 197,067 at the 2009 census.¹ For the past ten years, the population in this city has increased 17.4 percent. This 17.4 percent growth mainly came from the Hispanic/Latino Population. The Ethnic make-up of the city is mainly Hispanic or Latino ethnic, White, Asian, and African American.

¹ Stephen D. Cummings, *The Ventura County Statistical Abstract* (Ventura, CA: Ventura County, 2009), 19.

According to the “City Profile Report 2009 – Oxnard” from South California Association of Governments, between 2000 and 2007 the Hispanic population in the city increased from 66 to 70 percent.² Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in the city and their population share is projected to further increase to 73 percent by 2012, while the share of other minority groups has been increasing slightly. (Over the past ten years, the American Indian population has only increased by 0.5 percent and the non-Hispanic Asian population has increased from 7.2 to 8.1 percent). Like most cities in Southern California, the non-Hispanic White population in Oxnard has been declining. From 2000 to 2007, this group’s population declined from 20.6 to 16.5 percent, and it is projected to decrease further to 13.8 percent by 2012. In addition, between 2000 and 2007 the non-Hispanic Black population in the city decreased very slightly from 3.5 to 3.0 percent, and is projected to decrease to 2.7 percent by 2012. During the twelve-year period (2000 to 2012), all other non-Hispanic population groups are estimated to decline slightly from 2.2 to 2.0 percent.

Clearly there is a significant growth in the Hispanic and Latino population in the city of Oxnard. This primarily Hispanic culture makes it more difficult for a Chinese church to commit to home mission in the city. Most of the church leaders are hesitant to engage the local community because of the lack of openness. However, Chinese people are a minority in this city and the population is estimated to be less than 0.5 percent (less than 1000).

² Bryan MacDonald Hon, *Profile of City of Oxnard* (Los Angeles: Southern California Association of Governments, 2009), 4-6. Hon’s book is used as the source of all statistics provided in this paragraph.

The Economy of Oxnard

The economy of Oxnard is driven by manufacturing, international trade, and agriculture. Oxnard is one of the key manufacturing centers in the greater Los Angeles area. Some of major companies headquartered in Oxnard are Haas Automation, Aluminum Precision Products, Seminis, Raypak, Drum Workshop, Borla Performance, Boss Audio, Robbins Auto Tops, Procter & Gamble, and Sysco; these companies maintain their West coast operations in Oxnard. The port of Hueneme is the busiest and only deep-harbor commercial port between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and is vital to trade with the Pacific Rim economies. Companies utilizing the port include Del Monte Foods, Chiquita, BMW, Land Rover, and Jaguar. In addition, because of the high quality agricultural soils, coupled with a favorable climate, Oxnard has been known for several different crops over the years, including cucumbers, sugar beets, lima beans, stock (the cut flower), and strawberries. In fact, the Oxnard Plain is well known for its strawberries. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, Oxnard is California's largest strawberry producer, supplying about 44 percent of the State's annual strawberry volume.³ These three businesses—manufacturing, international trade and agriculture—have been driving the economy of Oxnard city, and the blue collar jobs connected to these industries have attracted many less educated people (particularly Hispanic).

A Low-income, Less-educated Community

According to the data of the 2009 Oxnard Economic Outlook, Oxnard is a city with a low level of education. Of the entire population of the city, those aged twenty-five

³ Diane Bertelson, "The U.S. Strawberry Industry," *Statistical Bulletin No. 914*, electronic edition (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1995), <http://www.nal.usda.gov/pgdic/Strawberry/ers/ers.htm> (accessed November 2010).

and older number 112,166; yet only 21,421 (19 percent) are high school graduates, 10,141 (9 percent) have a Bachelor's degree, and 3,267 (2.1 percent) have a Master's degree.⁴ This means that most people in the city have less than a high school education.

Due to this low level of education, most people in the city (particularly the Hispanics) work in manufactories, wholesale trades, retail trades, and agriculture. These types of work provide low-income jobs. More than 25 percent of residents have a total household income between \$15,000 and \$34,999.⁵ Other data reveals that approximately 14 percent of the population falls below the poverty line.⁶

Although 14 percent of the population in Oxnard lives below the poverty line, the Chinese people are generally not in this category. On the contrary, they are the "rich" in the city. Most of them are landlords and professionals. With this in mind, clearly the Chinese Christians living in Oxnard, and in particular, those at CCCO, have the means to participate in world mission ministry if they are willing.

The Chinese People in Oxnard City

The Chinese people in Oxnard city can be divided into three groups: the first generation, the second generation, and the new immigrants. The first generation escaped from the Mainland to the United States; the second generation was born in the United States; and the new immigrants have come from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

⁴ The Economic Development Corporation of Oxnard, *2009 Oxnard Economic Outlook* (Oxnard, CA: Oxnard Chamber of Commerce, 2009), 13.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ States Municipal Profiles Service, *California Cities, Towns, Counties* (Woodside, CA: Information Publication, 2009), 301.

The First Generation

The Chinese history in the city of Oxnard can be traced back to 1898, when a railroad was built which attracted a few Chinese laborers to the city. Much later, a significant population of Chinese immigrated to Oxnard between 1966 and 1976, during the Cultural Revolution. This ten-year period followed seventeen years of rule by the Communist government, which had taken over Mainland China in 1949. Adrian Hsia, author of *The Chinese Cultural Revolution*, writes, “The government attempted to dispose of established cultural values by the use of political power. It consciously set out to destroy the existing bourgeois culture – to destroy it so utterly that it could never again be revived – thus paving the way for an entirely new proletarian culture that would serve as a guiding light for the entire population.”⁷ Stephen Endicott, in his book, *Red Earth – Revolution in a Sichuan Village*, explains, “To encourage the movement President Mao chose to activate students in high school and universities. In response to Mao’s manifesto, the students quickly formed themselves into detachments of Red Guards and began spreading the news about his ideas as they understood them.”⁸ During the Cultural Revolution, thousands of people were killed and persecuted by the Red Guards; many Chinese escaped from the mainland to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, England, and the United States. Some Chinese immigrated to Oxnard, becoming the first generation of Chinese to move to Oxnard.

⁷ Adrian Hsia, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (San Francisco: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 13.

⁸ Stephen Endicott, *Red Earth – Revolution in a Sichuan Village* (New York: New Amsterdam, 1991), 112.

When these Chinese immigrated to the United States, they did not have any skills or professions; they did not even know English. For them, it was very hard to find jobs in the United States. Yet Oxnard was a good place for them to find jobs requiring little education, even though it was an undeveloped city at that time. The Chinese immigrants worked on the farms, in restaurants, in warehouses, and for cleaning companies. Some worked in flea markets as peddlers, on piers as coolies, or as gardeners. Due to discrimination, culture shock, and a lack of English language skills, they faced many difficulties during the first few years. After settling down their families in Oxnard, they wanted to have their own businesses. In order to obtain this goal, they worked very hard every day and directed their efforts to saving money needed for capital. Due to the Chinese virtue of being thrifty, some years later most of them had saved enough capital and were able to start their own businesses. Some ran small grocery stores; others ran small Chinese restaurants or landscaping companies in the Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura area.

After twenty to thirty years of striving and effort, most of them became rich as compared to other minority groups (particularly the Hispanic) in Oxnard. They not only owned their own businesses, but they also became landlords. Most of them live in large houses (between 3000 and 4000 square feet) on spacious lots (between 10,000 and 15,000 square feet). At this point, they are retired or getting ready to retire. Many rent out their houses for income and are enjoying their lives, although at their age it is a bit late to begin enjoying their lives.

The Second Generation

The second generation of Chinese was born in the United States. There is no information about this small Chinese group in the city of Oxnard; according to the home visitations, including non-believers' families and members' families of CCCO, they are currently between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. Most of them grew up here in the United States, assimilating to Western culture and receiving a Western education. Yet their parents also taught them the Chinese culture and home dialects (such as Shanghainese, Taishanese, Hoklo, Cantonese, and so on) since they were born. Since more than 70 percent of the Oxnard population is Hispanic or Latino, most of their schoolmates were Mexican, and they are familiar with the Mexican culture. Further, during their childhood the majority of them did not want to be isolated from their Western friends, including Caucasians and Mexicans; they preferred to identify with them. This generation of Chinese has many Caucasian and Hispanic friends. They have now become multi-cultural people.

Generally speaking, the childhood of a second generation Chinese person was very tough. Most of their parents ran small grocery stores or restaurants, and these parents worked at least fourteen hours a day and seven days a week. The children had to help their parents in their grocery stores or restaurants after school every day. For this reason, these young people did not have many friends and did not have much of a social life. Due to their parents being very busy with their businesses, they have never experienced vacation time or even entertainment time (such as watching movies together) with their parents during childhood.

Another difficulty for the second generation relates to their education. Due to the fact that their parents did not have much education, when the children had problems or difficulties in their studies, they could not get any help from their parents. They needed to solve their study problems by themselves, which made them more independent and mature. After much frustration, striving, and effort, many among the second generation finally graduated from universities and became professionals.

The New Immigrants

The first set of new immigrants came to the United States following the Tiananmen Square massacre. In 1989, more than ten thousand students came from different universities around provinces of Mainland China and demonstrated in Tiananmen Square, Beijing (the capital of the People's Republic of China). The demonstration was meant to express their emotions related to the death on April 15 of former party secretary Hu Yaobang.⁹ Hu Yaobang had become something of a hero since he had been made the scapegoat of the 1986 student movement and was ousted as general secretary, and many students had hoped that he would be brought back someday to lead China on the road to reform.¹⁰ In fact, the students who demonstrated in Tiananmen Square simply called for democracy, an end to corruption among officials, and honest dialogue with the leaders. The government had taken a harder and harder line since publication of an official declaration on April 26 of that year, condemning the student

⁹ Harrison E. Salisbury, *Tiananmen Diary: Thirteen Days in June* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1989), 4.

¹⁰ Shen Tong, *Almost a Revolution : The Story of a Chinese Student's Journey from Boyhood to Leadership in Tiananmen Square* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), 166.

demonstrations.¹¹ Unfortunately the government used military force to deal with this democratic movement, and in the end, that more than three thousand college students were killed in Tiananmen Square. The event scared Chinese around the world. Following the massacre, one million Chinese people living in Hong Kong held a demonstration to support China's democratic movement, and thousands upon thousands of Chinese people around the world (in England, the United States, Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and other countries) demonstrated in support of the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square.

For this reason, between 1990 and 1995, many Chinese students and scholars made up their mind to leave their home country for a foreign one, being very disappointed in the Chinese government. Several scholars came to the United States. Many of them were invited to be visiting scholars in different universities; eventually they asked for political protection from the U. S. government. In addition, many students also came to the United States to continue their studies in American universities; after graduation, the majority of these Chinese students did not want to go back home and they also asked for political protection. Based on a humanitarian approach, during this time the U. S. government allowed all Chinese scholars and students to remain in United States. During the past ten years, some of them have moved to Oxnard.

The second set of new immigrants came to the United States from Hong Kong either shortly before or after 1997, when Hong Kong was being returned to Chinese rule. Hong Kong had been a colony of the British since 1842. The Opium War (1839-1842) was fought between the United Kingdom and the Qing Dynasty of China, with the aim of

¹¹ Salisbury, *Tiananmen Diary: Thirteen Days in June*, 4-5.

securing economic benefits from trade in China. After defeating China in the Opium War, the British forced China to agree to the provisions of the Treaty of Nanking—the first of what the Chinese called the unequal treaties which imposed on China a century of humiliation. The Treaty of Nanking granted an indemnity to Britain, the opening of five treaty ports (including Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, Shanghai, and Canton), and the cession of Hong Kong Island, ending the monopoly of trading in the Canton province System.¹²

However, on July 1, 1997, the time came for the crown colony of Hong Kong to return to Mainland China, ending 156 years of British rule. After a formal handover ceremony, the colony of Hong Kong became the special administrative region of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese government made a promise that Hong Kong people would enjoy a high degree of freedom. Yet, after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, most Hong Kong people did not trust the communist Chinese government. They did not want to put the next generation at risk. They were afraid there would be no freedom after Hong Kong was returned to Mainland China. Therefore, between 1995 and 2000, more than 500,000 Hong Kong people immigrated to Canada, the United States, Singapore, South Africa, England, and other nations. During the past decade, some of these have also moved to Oxnard.

The third set of new immigrants came to the United States from Taiwan related to the “Taiwan Independence Movement.” Taiwan independence is a political movement whose goal is primarily to create an independent and sovereign Republic of Taiwan out of the lands currently governed by the Republic of China (ROC) (commonly known as “Taiwan”) and claimed by Mainland China (also known as the People's Republic of

¹² Henry McAleavy, *Modern History of China* (New York: Praeger, F. Rederick Inc., 1967), 51-54.

China or the “PRC”). This movement is supported by the Pan-Green Coalition in Taiwan and opposed by the Pan-Blue Coalition, which seeks to retain the somewhat ambiguous status quo of Taiwan (the ROC) under the 1992 consensus, or gradually reunify with Mainland China at some point.

Due to the government of Mainland China’s claim of sovereignty over Taiwan and their repeated threats, a formal declaration of independence could lead to a military confrontation between the Military of the ROC (Taiwan) and the People’s Liberation Army of the People’s Republic of China (Mainland China). The previous President Chen Shui-bian (president of the ROC, 2000-2008) supported and advocated the “Taiwan independence movement,” which made many Taiwanese feel insecure living in Taiwan. They were afraid that the “Taiwan independence movement” would lead to a military confrontation. Due to this fear, many Taiwanese have immigrated to Canada, England, Australia, Singapore, and Brazil, among other nations. Many of them have immigrated to the United States, and some of them have also moved to Oxnard during the past fifteen years.

In summary, the new Chinese immigrants of Oxnard include those Chinese who have come from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Most Chinese from Hong Kong and Taiwan are professionals and businesspersons. Most Chinese from Mainland China are scholars and professionals.

The Characteristics of Chinese People in Oxnard

The Chinese people in the city of Oxnard work very hard. One senior member told me that when the first generation came to Oxnard, they did not have any skills or

professions; they faced discrimination, experienced culture shock, and did not understand English; and it was very hard for them to find jobs. In order to survive they had to work very hard. They were willing to do any job, even low-class jobs and low-income jobs that non-Chinese did not want to do, such as farming, restaurant work, cleaning, landscaping, peddling, or working as coolies. Many of them worked two full-time jobs each day, which made it possible for them to save the capital for establishing their own businesses within a few years. When they ran their grocery stores, landscaping companies, or restaurants, they used to work fourteen to fifteen hours a day.

The new immigrants are hard workers as well. When medical doctors immigrated to Oxnard from Taiwan, the local people did not know them; it was not easy to establish their businesses. In order to establish their own businesses, they worked very hard. They would work in a hospital during the day time and they would work in their own clinics during the evenings. They even worked on Saturdays and Sundays. Similarly, all Chinese restaurants in Oxnard also open seven days a week and fourteen hours a day. Hard-working is certainly one of the characteristics of the Chinese people in Oxnard.

Not only do the Chinese work very hard, they also require their children to study very hard. Many Chinese parents send their children to after-school programs every day. Most Chinese parents also require their children to attend classes for piano, violin, ballet, drawing, and academic tutoring. The Chinese children have a very busy schedule every day.

One third-generation youth in the church explained that his parents view education as being very important; he stated that his parents' childhoods were very tough as they

had to help their parents in the grocery store after school every day.¹³ Because his parents never had the same opportunities they were now giving to him, they pushed him to achieve as much as possible. His parents believe that without education their son will not be able to succeed. His parents want him to be a straight-A student, achieve a 1600 on the SAT, and go to Harvard. He said his parents taught him that a person should strive for success.

Like the example of the boy mentioned above, many second-generation Chinese also desire that their children become professionals or businesspersons when they grow up. They tired of doing the long hours of work and business during their tough childhoods (like helping in the restaurant and grocery store), and they are committed to a good education for their children. For this reason, most second-generation Chinese parents prefer to pay very high prices for houses so that they may live in the high-ranking school districts. Other Chinese parents have even moved their children out of the public schools altogether, opting for the high-ranking private schools for their children.

When the time comes for their sons and daughters to prepare for entering the university, the parents are very concerned about their SAT examination. Generally, they will spend two years for their sons and daughters to prepare for the SAT examination that will decide what university the high school graduates will enter. Hence, they will send their sons and daughters to SAT tutoring class twice a week and let them practice the SAT examination unceasingly, and then send them to take the SAT examination repeatedly until their sons and daughters gain the ideal score that will be accepted by the ideal university. Most Chinese parents in Oxnard have high expectations on their sons

¹³ Steven, personal conversation with the author, July 2010.

and daughters for entering an ideal university.

The Chinese people in Oxnard are also very professional. Except for the first generation, most Chinese people in Oxnard are very well educated people. Many of them have a Master's degree; some have a doctorate degree. For this reason, the occupations of most Chinese in the city are professional. Except for a very small percentage of Chinese people who are "grass-roots" class (with jobs like cleaning workers and restaurant workers), most Chinese are professors, teachers, accountants, architects, engineers, lawyers, judges, dentists, medical doctors, and acupuncturists. This trend of a high percentage of professionals among the Chinese will keep on growing in Oxnard when Chinese parents continue to emphasize education for the next generation.

The Social Life of Chinese People in Oxnard

The Social life of Chinese People in Oxnard City can be divided into two areas. They are "The Chinese Association" and "The Chinese Christian Church of Oxnard". In fact, their social life already affected the mission ministry of the church.

They Socialize in "The Chinese Association"

When the first generation of Chinese people moved to Oxnard, they were a minority. They did not know English and it was very difficult for them to communicate with people of other ethnicities. It was difficult to make friends, which is why they did not have many friends and felt very alone. Approximately thirty years ago, the Chinese in Oxnard organized a "Chinese Association," which met and continues to meet four times a year. They have an election for president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary every three years. All participants pay thirty dollars as a membership fee each year.

Every year, the Chinese Association will sponsor a “Chinese New Year” celebration (in February), a “Chinese Dragon Boat Festival” event (in May), a “Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival” event (in August), and the “Chinese National Day” celebration (in October).

Due to the fact that the Chinese did not have many friends in the United States, they greatly enjoy and treasure friendship with other Chinese. For this reason they are very supportive of the Chinese Association and very active in all Chinese events. Further, the Chinese Association also plays a very important role in that the next generation is taught the Chinese traditions. Chinese parents are happy to bring their children to participate in the Chinese events that are sponsored by the Chinese Association.

They Socialize at CCCO

CCCO is the only Chinese church in the city. The Chinese who have immigrated to the United States during the past several decades have varying levels of knowledge about the Christian faith. The Chinese who have come from Hong Kong have heard about Jesus and some of them have already become Christians because Hong Kong has been a colony of the British. The Chinese who have come from Taiwan have also heard about Jesus; when America’s ancestors established their country, they formed the constitution according to the teaching of Bible. Yet many Chinese who have come from Mainland China have not been told about Jesus and most of them are atheists.

Regardless of whether the Chinese people are Christian or not, many like coming to CCCO because they enjoy what the church offers to them every week. On the one hand, the church is a good place for those Chinese who have become Christians in their

home countries to worship God, serve God, and enjoy the fellowship in Christ. On the other hand, the church is a good opportunity for those who come from the mainland and who have not yet been told about Jesus.

But despite its religious affiliation, the church has become a social place (just like The Chinese Association) for non-Christian Chinese people to come and entertain themselves before they have an understanding of salvation and receiving Jesus as their personal savior. Currently they come to the church simply to enjoy the friendly, caring, loving environment, and even for the lunch the church offers after every Sunday worship service. They also come in order to let their children learn and keep the Chinese culture; some non-Christian Chinese parents are happy to bring their children to the church to attend the children's program and youth fellowship every Saturday. Some of these individuals have already been affected by their participation in the church, as they have decided to pursue a spiritual life and follow Jesus' Great Commission. But although they have been baptized and have become full members, many do not yet understand the Great Commission, and are simply enjoying the benefits of the community.

Summary

Due to the Chinese people being a minority in Oxnard, they have dealt with isolation and loneliness. Many Chinese who have been coming to CCCO for many years have attended primarily for the friendship and the social life, but they have not learned how to live a biblical lifestyle. Even after being baptized, their biblical foundation is very weak, and they are still very connected to the secular world in many ways. These new believers have not been mentored towards a focus on the Great Commission, and as

a result they do not donate to the foreign missions ministry. CCCO needs to educate them about the truth of the Great Commission and mobilize them to be mission-minded Christians. Then CCCO will become a Great Commission church.

The believers at CCCO have three advantages in particular which will benefit the goal of becoming a Great Commission church. The first advantage is their financial strength. Due to their hard-working nature, the Chinese immigrants in Oxnard were willing to do any jobs, even low-class and low-income jobs that no one else wanted. Yet, after twenty to thirty years of effort, these individuals are rich among other ethnic groups in Oxnard (particularly among Hispanics); they own their own businesses and own rental property as well. Some of these Chinese have become Christians, and some among them are church deacons. At this point, they have the financial ability to do a great deal in terms of missions ministry, and CCCO must transmit the vision to them and let them see the need of the mission field.

The second advantage is their professionalism. Even though Chinese people are a minority in Oxnard, the percentage of professionals among the Chinese is very high, particularly as compared with other races. This trend of a high percentage of professionals will keep on growing when the Chinese parents emphasize education for the next generation and emphasize to their children the importance of studying hard. Due to their professionalism, believers at CCCO have the potential to serve on the mission field as tentmakers. Many mission fields do not accept vocational missionaries, but welcome professionals to their countries, particularly in many mission fields of Muslim background.

The third advantage is their multiculturalism. It is very clear that there is

significant growth in the Hispanic population in Oxnard, but the Chinese are a minority. As a result, the second generation and the third generation of Chinese are living in a multi-cultural city. They were born in Oxnard and grew up among Western culture, Mexican culture, and Chinese culture. They have many friends who are Mexicans and Caucasians. They have already become multi-cultural people. The advantage for these individuals is that they have a great potential to be cross-cultural missionaries on the mission field. CCCO ought to provide some short-term missions experiences for them to experience the need of the mission field and to examine their multi-cultural potential for missions.

CHAPTER 2

AN ANALYSIS OF MISSIONS MINISTRY IN CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF OXNARD

Introduction to Chinese Christian Church of Oxnard

CCCO is a non-denominational Chinese church located in southern California. The ethnic make-up of the church is Chinese. The church is the only Chinese church in the city of Oxnard. This chapter will analyze the missions ministry of the church. The chapter will include the characteristics and the vision of the church and its missions ministry context. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of missions ministry in the church will be presented. Finally, this chapter will point out that the previous pastor failed to lead the congregation in fully participating in world missions ministry.

Characteristics of the Church

The first characteristic of CCCO is that it is a “multi-Chinese culture” church. This means that even though all members are Chinese, some came from Mainland China, others came from Taiwan, while still others came from Hong Kong. In addition, some church members are American-born Chinese.

The fact that church members are from various countries of origin means that the

members have come from different cultures and political backgrounds. The Chinese who came from Mainland China were educated through a communist government. Due to the period of the Cultural Revolution, they were persecuted by the Red Guards, and this experience has made it difficult for them to trust other people. As a result, they are the most conservative members of the congregation.

The Chinese who came from Taiwan were educated through a democratic government. They are more open-minded and always make the effort to pursue democracy. They have been trying to lead the church towards democracy.

The Chinese who came from Hong Kong, which was a colony of the British until 1997, received the education of a colonial government. As a result, they do not have a sense of Chinese identity and always refer to themselves as Hong Kong people (rather than Chinese people). Furthermore, they do not have strong political opinions. This is in contrast to the Chinese who came from Mainland China or Taiwan, who have very clear political opinions.

The last Chinese group at CCCO is American-born Chinese. These individuals grew up in Western culture and received a Western education in the U.S.; yet their parents also taught them about the Chinese culture at home. These members are the most democratic Chinese among the congregation and always speak up for themselves.

The fact that CCCO is a “multi-Chinese culture” church makes it difficult for the congregation to join hands in church ministry. Due to the various countries of origin, the members are from different cultures, different political backgrounds, and different educational systems. Therefore, they have different positions and ideas in regards to church ministry. This characteristic of having a “multi-Chinese culture” has been the

reason for many arguments during the decision-making processes in business meetings for the past several years. This characteristic will also potentially hinder the development of the church missions ministry. For this reason, the missions education becomes a very important issue before leadership can develop the church to become a Great Commission church. Missions education can help the members build up a common knowledge on the foundation of the Lord's Great Commission. Further, most Christians do not necessarily respond well to the suggestions of others, but they are willing to obey biblical teaching. The missions education must come from the truth of the Bible, which most Christians will be likely to obey.

The second characteristic of CCCO is that the senior pastor is very powerful in the formal organization of the church. He has general supervision and oversight of all spiritual matters of the church and directs the administration of its ordinances. He exercises and is responsible for the general supervision and administration of the church staff. As a matter of fact, only two retired senior leaders are more powerful than the senior pastor of the church.

These two retired senior leaders do not even appear on the organizational chart and yet they still have great power. Everybody in the church shows them much respect. Traditional Chinese culture respects seniors very much, and beyond that, these two retired senior leaders were the church founders. It is natural for the church members to respect them. Yet over-respecting them is not healthy. When any problem arises in the church, the people will often go to them instead of me (the current senior pastor) to obtain their advice. Their invisible position influences the whole church. These two retired senior leaders act as an invisible church council in the church. Of course, any big

decisions still need to be passed through the business meeting because CCCO is a congregational system church. However, these former leaders can still influence the church members' decision-making in the business meetings.

One of these former leaders was the individual who first initiated foreign missions ministry seven years ago. But today he is a barrier to the foreign missions ministry. Therefore, one important strategy will be to convince these two former leaders to adopt the vision of developing the foreign missions ministry before placing the proposal of the Great Commission strategies for the foreign missions ministry into the agenda for the business meeting.

Vision and Values of the Church

The first value of the church is evangelism. CCCO was established twenty-eight years ago. The church founders had a vision to evangelize those Chinese who came from Mainland China and Taiwan. Today the church still maintains the same vision. All evangelistic meetings are only for Chinese people in the city of Oxnard. Even though some Caucasians and English-speaking Mexicans came to join CCCO's Sunday worship once a while, the church leaders have never felt the need to evangelize them because they thought that the vision of the church was only to evangelize Chinese. Evangelizing people of other ethnicities was not part of their vision.

It is appropriate for the church to have a vision to evangelize to a particular people group (in this case, Chinese people), but the church still cannot ignore the Caucasians and Mexicans who attend. They are also very precious before our Lord's eyes. This nationalism has affected the church missions ministry.

The second value of the church is worship. The church leaders take worship very seriously. They focus on worship because although everything else will end one day, worship will never end, even in heaven. For this reason, the church leaders take much time for preparing the Sunday worship. They have formed four worship teams to take turns leading the Sunday worship. Every week they take three hours to prepare and practice the worship hymns.

Some leaders would like for the church to have a church choir. Their hope is that the church choir can represent the congregation by dedicating at least one hymn to God in every Sunday worship service. Unfortunately, CCCO cannot afford to have a church choir at this time since it would require church too much manpower to lead choir. This issue has already caused some conflict between the music director and one particular church leader. As a result, the music director recently compromised to form a church choir for yearly special events like Easter and Christmas. Additionally, the church leaders also requested that the worship team leader hold a pre-worship singing practice with each worship team during the weekdays before the Sunday worship. Clearly, church members value worship very highly.

The third value of the church is prayer. The church leaders often quote Jesus' teaching, "My house will be called a house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13a). They emphasize that the church is a church of prayer. Currently, the church has five prayer

meetings each week: one is held on Wednesday evening, one on Sunday morning, and the other three are regional prayer meetings. Some church leaders disagree with the idea of having regional prayer meetings and insist that all prayer meetings must be held in the church. They contend that church exists for prayer, and prayer is a value of the church.

Unfortunately, the focus on these three values—evangelism, worship, and prayer—is that they are often over-emphasized and the church over-concentrates on them, particularly on the ministries of prayer and worship. For example, the focus on the church choir caused the church ignore other ministries; in particular, it ignored the ministry of missions. At this time, the church needs to develop the foreign missions ministry and balance the values of the church.

The History of Foreign Missions Ministry

CCCO developed from a Bible study group twenty-eight years ago. In 1982, the church founders started a Sunday worship service in their houses. After approximately four years, the church was formally established. The church founders never thought about the church's missions ministry; they were simply focused on how to get a place for them to worship God.

When the church was formally established and moved to a rental fellowship hall in 1986, the congregation and its leaders concentrated on evangelism to Chinese people living in Oxnard. The church had not yet been involved in any mission work overseas. The church leaders were focused on developing the Chinese ministry and they expected to have their own church property.

By God's grace, in 1991 they purchased and moved to the current church property for the Sunday worship. For eleven years, CCCO was not involved in any missions ministry. The church leaders felt that foreign missions ministry should be left to larger churches with greater financial means. But in fact, most churches in the U.S. are small. Leith Anderson, in his book, *Dying for Change*, points out that there are an estimated 375,000 churches in the United States, and that half of these churches only have seventy-five attendees or fewer at worship on a typical Sunday morning.¹ If all small churches believe that only the larger churches should participate in missions ministry, then half of all Christians in the U.S. will not be participating.

In 2002, a Christian friend of one of CCCO's leaders received a calling to be a missionary and was sent to Europe to do evangelism among the Chinese people who came from Mainland China. Following this, the church leader received newsletters from this missionary friend regularly. The next year, this church leader planned to travel to Europe with his wife, and was invited by this missionary friend to visit them in England. They enjoyed their time together, and the church leader and his wife were able to see the mission field. After coming back from Europe, the church leader recommended his missionary friend to the church board and suggested the church board support his missionary friend's mission work monthly. Due to the fact that they were without any budget for mission funding, the church board refused to support the missionary.

The following year, the church leader tried to encourage the church board to do something new for the mission field. Yet most church leaders did not like the idea because in their minds, CCCO, as a small church, had no ability to do any missions

¹ Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1990), 50.

ministry. Thankfully, this church leader did not give up. He made an effort to mobilize each church leader to support his missionary friend. One year later, the church board agreed to give one-tenth of the general fund towards foreign missions ministry. Therefore, in 2004, the church formally began its missions ministry. This church leader who persisted in convincing CCCO to give to foreign missions ministry was an innovator.

The Strengths of the Missions Ministry

When reading the mission history of United States, one finds that the United States has sent out hundreds of thousands missionaries to every corner of the world to engage in missions ministry for God. Since the end of the eighteenth century, God has greatly used the churches of the United States to support many missionaries financially. For the past two hundred years, most churches of the United States have been involved in foreign missions ministry. Yet most Chinese churches around the world still do not participate in foreign missions ministry, even though they have been recipients of the gospel by Western missionaries for the past two hundred years. A report from *Chinese Churches Today* in August 2009 discusses the number of Chinese churches around the world involved in foreign missions ministry (not including the Chinese churches in Mainland China). The article states, “全球海外華人教會 9000餘所，約1000所教會以不同形式參與普世差傳事工 (“There are approximately one thousand Chinese churches that are involved in world missions ministry among nine thousand overseas

Chinese churches”).”²

The fact that CCCO is one of the participating churches is one of its strengths. Some church members are very proud of this fact. In keeping with the article, the missions ministry of CCCO is better than eight thousand other overseas Chinese churches around the world because the church is already involved in foreign missions ministry and has been since 2004.

In addition, the general secretary of the Greater Los Angeles Chinese Ministerial Association, Reverend Morson Chiu, has stated that only 10 percent of the Chinese churches in Southern California are involved in world missions ministry.³ CCCO is one of the 10 percent. From this point of view, the world missions ministry of CCCO is stronger than 90 percent of Chinese churches in Southern California.

Another strong point of the foreign missions ministry at CCCO is that the church has supported missions ministry on a regular basis (rather than sporadically) for the past seven years. Of the 10 percent of Southern California (Chinese) churches which support foreign missions ministry, many of them do not give regular support; rather, they only support foreign missions ministries once a while. These missions ministries could be considered nominal church missions ministries.

The Weaknesses of the Missions Ministry

² Lee, “世界華人福音運動” [Chinese World Evangelical Movement], *Chinese Churches Today* 273 (August 2009):1. This quotation and all others following it are direct translations provided to aid the reader.

³ Reverend Morson Chiu, General Secretary of the Greater Los Angeles Chinese Ministerial Association, in a personal conversation with the author, January 16, 2011.

The current foreign missions ministry of CCCO has several weaknesses in addition to its strengths. First, the members have not genuinely participated in the ministry. The church leaders of CCCO have felt that by using one-tenth of the general fund for foreign missions ministry, the church has then fulfilled our Lord's Great Commission. However, the church members have not yet genuinely participated in foreign missions because they have not reached into their pockets to give to the ministry. Instead they have simply allotted a portion of funds that they were already giving. For this reason, church members ought not say that the church has already taken part the Lord's Great Commission.

Secondly, although CCCO contributes one-tenth of its general fund towards foreign missions ministry, the members do not have their hearts in the ministry. They have not cared about what mission organizations or what missionaries the church has been supporting for the past seven years. They have never prayed for the mission fields or the missionaries. If they had reached into their pockets and donated their own money to support foreign missions ministry, then they would be more invested. Just as the Bible says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34).

Thirdly, in many ways, taking one-tenth of the general fund to do the foreign missions ministry is not an ideal church missions ministry strategy due to the fact that it affects the local ministry. For the past seven years, when the English-speaking second generations grew, the church planned to have an English-speaking pastor to develop the English-speaking congregation. But CCCO has not been able to support an English-speaking pastor, and so finally, the church has turned down this plan. This lack of financial resources is due in part to the fact that the foreign missions ministry takes one-

tenth of the total budget.

Because the church did not have an English-speaking pastor to develop the English-speaking congregation, some second-generation English-speakers have already left the church for other English-speaking churches. Due to dissatisfaction with the church board's decision, some English-speaking parents even complained about the senior pastor and joined hands to force the senior pastor to resign in 2006. As a result, not only did some second-generation English-speakers and some of their parents leave the church, but the senior pastor had been forced to resign. The church almost split up. It is very clear that in the long run, taking one-tenth of the general fund to do the foreign missions ministry has affected the local ministry.

Fourthly, when the church took one-tenth of the general fund to do the foreign missions ministry, it actually limited the ability of the church to participate in world missions ministry. In fact, one-tenth of the general fund is a very small amount; the church could do much more than that. It would be more beneficial for all ministries to ask members to give to the missions ministry apart from giving to the offering (or the tithe). This way, giving to missions will not affect the general fund of the local ministry, and it will not limit people in giving to missions.

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that most Chinese people in the city of Oxnard are wealthy, as most are landlords and professionals. Certainly, the Chinese Christians at CCCO have enough financial means to participate in world missions ministry if they are able to understand the need of mission fields. They can be greatly used by God in world missions ministry.

The Problem of the Previous Pastor

The pastor is of utmost importance when it comes to the church missions ministry. Pastors are fully equipped in theological seminary before they serve God in the local church, and should therefore know the importance of the Great Commission in the Christian life. They should cast a vision for missions ministry within their congregations; they should develop the missions ministry; and they should lead their congregations towards becoming interested in missions ministry. They should fully understand that missions ministry is the Lord's commandment and that every church must obey it. Unfortunately, the previous pastor of CCCO failed to accomplish the above-mentioned three matters that relate to the church missions ministry.

First of all, he did not cast the vision of missions to the congregation. Reverend Mark Kor Cheng, who was the first Chinese pastor to commit to church missions ministry, in his book, *Answers to Your Questions on Missions*, points out that “傳道人的責任是讓全教會弟兄姊妹有差傳的異象與負擔” (“The responsibility of a pastor is to let all brothers and sisters in the church have vision and burden for missions”).⁴ And Reverend Kenneth Lo, who was the first pastor to mobilize the missions ministry among the Chinese churches in Hong Kong, in his book, *That Unfinished Mission: An Introduction to Mission*, also points out that “無論如何，牧者是教會最重要的領袖，牧者若看見差傳異象，推動教會參與差傳，問題就簡單得多了” (“However, [the] pastor is a very important leader in the church; if he sees the vision of mission, it will be easy for the church to participate in missions

⁴ Mark Kor Cheng, *Answers to Your Questions on Missions*, Chinese Edition (Petaluma, CA: Chinese Christian Mission, 1982), 60.

ministry”).⁵ The previous pastor of CCCO did not cast a vision of missions to the congregation because he had not seen the vision of missions himself. If he had attended some missions conferences or participated in short-term mission trips, then he would have seen the vision of mission himself. For this reason, the annual missions conference and short-term mission trips are very important for CCCO to develop in the future.

Secondly, the previous pastor did not develop the church missions ministry. Dean Wiebracht, in his book, *The World beyond Your Walls: A Manual for Mobilizing Your Church in Missions*, considers that a “Great Commission” church is a church which is aggressively seeking to do its part to fulfill the Great Commission. It is not passive in its concern about missions, and the members are not simply maintaining an existing program; rather, they are active in thinking, planning, and praying about world evangelization and the leaders have made world evangelization a visible priority in the life and goals of the church.⁶

The previous pastor knew that the church members did not reach into their own pockets to give to the world mission ministry, yet he did not confront this issue. He knew that the church members did not have a genuine interest in the church missions ministry and that they had never prayed for the missionaries the church had been supporting for the past years. Yet he did not try to improve it. He also knew that taking one-tenth of the general fund to do the foreign mission ministry was affecting the local ministry, yet he made no effort to change the situation. In fact, he did not attempt to develop the church to become a Great Commission church.

⁵ Kenneth Lo, *That Unfinished Mission: An Introduction to Mission*, Chinese Edition (Hong Kong: China Alliance Press, 1985), 115.

⁶ Dean Wiebracht, *The World beyond Your Walls: A Manual for Mobilizing Your Church in Missions* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc, 1992), 48.

Thirdly, the previous pastor did not lead the congregation to become interested in missions because he was not a “Great Commission” pastor. Wiebracht states that a Great Commission church is led by a Great Commission pastor.⁷ Jesus taught, “A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). Similarly, it is a basic principle that church members will be like their pastors. If a pastor has concern for the poor, this will also be seen in the lives of the church members. If a pastor desires to see his or her church become a “Great Commission” church, he or she must become a “Great Commission” pastor, and cultivate a concern for missions among the congregation. Unfortunately, the previous pastor was not a “Great Commission” pastor, which is why he never led the congregation to become interested in missions.

Summary

CCCO is characterized by its multi-Chinese culture. Due to the fact that church members come from different cultures and different political backgrounds, and have received different types of education, they have different positions and ideas for church ministry. Thus, missions education becomes a very important issue before the church can be developed as a Great Commission church.

In addition, CCCO is characterized by the tendency of its members to “over-respect” the retired senior founders of the church. It would be extremely helpful if the two retired founders would adopt the “Great Commission” church vision of developing the church missions ministry before the proposal is placed on the agenda of the church

⁷ Wiebracht, *The World beyond Your Walls*, 73.

council. Further, those who have over-emphasized worship and prayer as values of the church have ignored the ministry of missions. CCCO needs to develop the church missions ministry and balance the values of the church.

God has greatly blessed CCCO for the past twenty years, but the church leaders have acted like self-centered children. They have cared about their own needs, but have neglected the needs of others. They wanted to receive blessing from God, but they never wanted to give. Thankfully, God raised up a leader who suggested giving one-tenth of the general fund to the foreign missions ministry. Although this was not ultimately a good church missions ministry strategy, it was a good start. Although the missions ministry at CCCO has its strengths, there are more weaknesses than strengths. The church should not maintain the missions ministry just as it has been for seven years. The church needs to break through the current status quo for missions ministry and become a Great Commission church.

The pastor is of utmost importance in developing the church to become a Great Commission church because the responsibility of a pastor is to lead all brothers and sisters in the church to have vision and burden for world missions. If he or she sees the vision of mission, it will be easy for the rest of the church to participate in missions ministry. Unfortunately, the previous pastor was not a “Great Commission” pastor, which is why he did not lead the congregation into fully participating in world missions ministry. In the future, it is hoped that CCCO will be led by a “Great Commission” pastor and will become a “Great Commission” church.

CHAPTER 3

THE FOUNDATION OF CHURCH MISSIONS MINISTRY

Theology of the Missions Ministry

It is understandable to expect people who are not Christians to oppose missions ministry. Nobody is going to bother with this kind of opposition. But what is concerning is opposition from those who claim to be Christians. These are the people who say they believe the Christian message but oppose trying to win other people to same faith. The arguments for this position include: a belief that missionary service is an arrogant attitude; a belief that the Great Commission pertained only to the original apostles; and a belief in the Calvinist doctrine of election.

Argument One: Missionary Service Is an Arrogant Attitude

The ministry of missions is about spreading the good news all over the world so everyone on the planet has a chance to know God. Some Christians believe that this way of thinking is arrogant because it seems to oppose the idea that of treating all religions equally and respecting the right of everyone everywhere to make up his or her own mind about everything. These Christians believe that the assumption that one is right is old-fashioned, and that people in other countries, and the unchurched all around them, do not

need or want Christian interference in their lives.¹ However, the Church cannot agree with this position.

Religion Is Not a Matter of Country or Race

There are many people who have the false notion that religion is a matter of country or race or temperament. As a matter of fact, this idea is not a new one. It appeared in Old Testament times. The Syrians said about the Israelites, “Their gods are gods of the hills. That is why they were too strong for us. But if we fight them on the plains, surely we will be stronger than they” (1 Kings 20:23). People do not express it quite so blatantly today. But they do often say about those in other lands, “Their religion fits them.”

Some writers about Latin America have asserted that Christianity could never take root there because it is not congenial to the Latin culture; a recent census has revealed that there are more than three million Christians in the one Latin American country of Brazil.² Buddhism is a small minority movement in India, the land of its origin; its greatest successes have been in other parts of Asia. Also, Islam has fewer followers in Arabia than in lands that Muhammad never saw. Islam is sometimes called a desert religion; but Indonesia, one of the two largest Islamic nations, is as far from the desert as it is possible to be. In addition, Christianity began among the Jews, but most of the Jews

¹ Stephen Gaukroger, *Your Mission, Should You Accept It... :An Introduction For World Christians* (Chicago: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 7-8.

² Harold R. Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Mission* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 20-21.

have never accepted it; even though it began in the Orient, Christianity's strongest centers today are still in the West.³

According to above examples, it is very clear that Christianity cannot be simply a matter of private concern. Neither can it be limited to one country, one race, or one type of culture. In fact, people in other countries and the unchurched all over the world can become Christians. In light of this, it is also important that missionaries respect the decisions of the people to whom they minister. Missionaries should not interfere in their lives, but merely provide others with a chance to know God.

The Bible Does Not Present God as a “god”

When reading the history of the Romans, one finds that the Romans of the early centuries and the unbelievers of today have both resented Christianity's claim to be the one true religion. The Romans would have been willing to grant it a place among the many religions of the empire. Others would do the same today. They will admit that it is, on the whole, a good religion in many ways. But they object to the exclusiveness of the Christian faith. They resent its saying that other religions are false.⁴

There is no doubt that the New Testament claims exclusiveness for the Christian message. It does not present God as a “god”; rather, he is the only God. Paul writes, “We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one” (1 Corinthians 8:4). Similarly, the Bible does not present Jesus Christ as “a savior”; rather, he is the only savior of humankind. Further, Peter states, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”

³ Cook. *An Introduction to Christian Mission*, 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

(Acts 4:12). This is the witness of the whole New Testament (this is not the old-fashioned assumption). That is why missionary service does not mean having an arrogant attitude. It is Christians' responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to the unchurched people around the world. Harold Cook, in his book, *An Introduction to Christian Mission*, exhorts,

If Christianity is a religion and Christ is a savior, then my obligation to tell people about Christ and his salvation is relatively small. After all, there are other ways of salvation open to them. But if Christianity is the only true religion; if Christ is the only Savior; if the gospel is the only message that can offer men eternal life, then how can I keep quiet? Can I rejoice in my own salvation, knowing that others are dying without that salvation.⁵

The Purpose of Missions Is for Deriving Fruit

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he declares, "I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you . . . in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles"(Romans 1:13). It is very clear that the reason why Paul had been intent upon going to Rome was that he might obtain some fruits among Romans (meaning that he might gain converts as well as help believers grow in faith), even as he had done among other Gentiles. Deriving some fruits from the Romans is the ultimate goal for Paul as a missionary to Rome. For this reason, missionary service is not arrogant. The purpose of missions is for missionaries to derive fruit from the people in other countries for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Missions Is a Kind of Humility

In his commentary on Romans, John Murray writes that in Romans 1:13,

⁵ Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Mission*, 22.

The humility of the apostle [that is, Paul] is again apparent in that he reflects on the fruit he was to derive from his visit to them rather than on the fruit they would derive from him. The idea expressed is that of gathering fruit, not that of bearing it. Underlying this figure, however, is also the progress and advantage of the saints. For if the apostle is to garner fruit it is because those at Rome were to bear fruit that would redound to their account.⁶

In addition, Paul had been a missionary among Philippians when he wrote a letter to the Romans. He said, “Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be a credit to your account” (Philippians 4:17). In fact, when missionaries go to a mission field, everything is new to them. They need to learn the local traditions and culture from the local people; they are very humble to ask for help from the local Christians (or join hands with the local Christians) to develop the missions ministry. In this way, missionary service is far from arrogance. Conversely, missionary service is form of humility.

Missions Is a Christian’s Debt

In Romans 1:14-15, Paul declares, “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.” Paul was very eager to preach the gospel to the people in Rome because he felt that he was a debtor to them. Paul mentions that “he is debtor both to Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise” (Romans 1:14-15, KJV). Murray explains, “The purpose of these classifications is simply that the gospel is for all without distinction of nationality or cultural development and that he as the apostle of the Gentiles is under divine obligation to preach the gospel to all.”⁷ Thus, missionary service does not reflect arrogance, but rather the opposite, as the missionary feels a sense

⁶ John Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 23-24.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

of debt to all non-believers. This sense of debt is the motivation for missionaries and churches to do missions ministry around the world.

Argument Two: The Great Commission Pertained Only to the Original Apostles

One would naturally expect that the spiritual forces released by the Reformation would have prompted the Protestant churches of Europe to take the gospel to the ends of the earth during the period of world exploration and colonization which began about the beginning of sixteenth century. But such was not the case. The upsurge of Roman Catholic missions that occurred during the sixteenth-century Catholic Counter-Reformation had no parallel among the Protestant. Unfortunately, the Reformers' theology limited the vision of missionary enterprises. They believed that the Great Commission pertained only to the original apostles and that the apostles had fulfilled the Great Commission by taking the gospel to the ends of the then-known world, thus exempting succeeding generations from responsibility.⁸ However, almost no one would hold this view today for several reasons.

In her book, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*, Ruth A. Tucker writes, "Martin Luther was so certain of the imminent return of Christ that he overlooked the necessity of foreign missions. He further justified his position by claiming that the Great Commission was binding only on the New Testament apostles who had fulfilled their obligation by spreading the gospel throughout the known

⁸ Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 67.

world, thus exempting succeeding generations from responsibility.”⁹ It is very clear that Luther’s claim was to justify his position for the imminent return of Christ.

But his claim lacks biblical foundation. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus states, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” The words “the end” means “the end of the age.”

Christians know that Jesus will come at the end of the age. The fact that Jesus has not yet come means that the end of the age has not come, that the gospel of the kingdom has not been preached to all nations, and that the Great Commission was not completed by the apostles in the first century. For this reason, the Church still needs to engage in missions ministry until the end of the age has come and until the Lord Jesus comes.

Argument Three: The Calvinist Doctrine of Election

In the sixteenth century, the Calvinist doctrine of election made missions appear extraneous if God had already chosen those he would save.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the Calvinist doctrine of election limited the vision of missions. Calvinists believed that God would achieve his purpose, with or without man’s help. They considered that God would take care of the heathen under God’s sovereignty. This idea caused the churches in Europe to engage in no missionary outreach for almost two hundred years.¹¹ The question is not whether God will take care of the heathen, but how he does it. He has

⁹ Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 67.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 299-300.

made it abundantly clear in his Word that it is his will and purpose to care for the heathen through the Church. There is much evidence for this.

The Early Church Was Fully Aware of the Missionary Mandate

It is very clear from Acts that the Church was fully aware of the missionary mandate. In those days the Church was a mission agency. The history of the early Church is the history of missions. The entire book of Acts, with the possible exception of Chapter 15, deals directly with the proclamation of the gospel and the extension of the kingdom into all parts of the empire.¹² In fact, Chapter 15 has an indirect bearing on missions because it records the momentous decision of the Church to allow the Gentiles into the Church as first-class citizens. The apostles were sure that the mandate of redemption rested on them and that God had committed to them the ministry of reconciliation. That is why wherever they went, their testimony was the same: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Paul’s Teaching Establishes the Responsibility of the Church

In Romans 10:13-15, Paul writes, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” The phrase, “How can they hear without someone preaching to them?” is logic, and the logic is very reasonable. Paul’s teaching clearly establishes the responsibility of believers to bring the gospel to the non-believers.

¹² Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, 297.

When reading the history of the Church, one can see that the Calvinist doctrine of election has ignored the responsibility of believers. Just as Herbert Kane writes in his book, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, “God has ordained that men should be saved through the preaching of the gospel. . . . There is not a single line in the book of Acts to suggest that God saved human beings without employing human agents.”¹³

Several examples of this exist in the New Testament. One example involves an Ethiopian eunuch who was a proselyte to Judaism but still without knowledge of Christ. He had been to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. Philip the evangelist was called away from a citywide crusade in Samaria and directed by the Holy Spirit to go south into the desert to intercept the eunuch. Philip found him reading Isaiah 53, and he asked the eunuch, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The reply was, “How can I except someone guides me?” (Acts 8:30-31). In this case even a copy of the Scriptures was not sufficient; he needed someone to explain the Scripture to him. Another example of the human agent in Christian witness is that of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. Cornelius was a Roman centurion and no doubt a seeker after truth. His prayer and his alms prompted God to act on his behalf and make it possible for him to hear the gospel. God sent an angel all the way from heaven to Caesarea. Yet the angel had no mandate to preach; his role was simply to inform Cornelius where he could find a preacher who would tell him the gospel. A final example is that of Saul (Paul) and Ananias. When Saul was struck blind at Damascus (Acts 9), Ananias, a local Christian, was commissioned by God to contact Paul, restore his sight, baptize him, and introduce him to the local church. Then the mighty Saul of Tarsus, later to become the great apostle

¹³ Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, 298.

Paul, was initiated into the Christian faith by a humble, unknown disciple in Damascus.

According to above examples, God has ordained that men and women should be saved through the preaching of the gospel by Christ's followers. Because the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to men and women, the Church cannot excuse itself of this responsibility. Paul states, "For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me" (1 Corinthians 9:16-17).

The Responsibility of the Local Church in World Mission

The question of the local church's responsibility in world mission is very important. How each local church answers this question determines how the church sets goals, define objectives, and lays out strategies. The local church's responsibility in world mission ought to be whatever God intends it to be, and the Scriptures must be searched to discover God's intention for the Church. Many churches do not participate in world missions ministry because they do not see the responsibility that they need to take. Such churches erroneously believe that the missionary call is a personal call and/or that missionary recruitment is a volunteer system.

Argument One: The Missionary Call Is a Personal Call

When Christians feel that God has called them to be missionaries, they often find a mission agency rather than share their "call" to service with their local church leaders. Other than hoping that the Church will provide support once they have gone, many potential missionary candidates fail to see the relevancy of the local church to their own

particular call to go. They feel that their “missionary call” is their personal call. Even more disheartening is the fact that most churches are not aware of their role in sending missionaries because most church leaders also think that a missionary call is a personal issue and not the business of the local church.

However, Acts: 13:1-4 would indicate otherwise. The message reveals several critical elements with application for believers and local churches today. First, explains Daniel Bacon in his book, *Equipping for Missions: A Guide to Making Career Decisions*, “The local church had a part in guidance and sending of its missionaries. As a matter of fact, the apostle Paul had already received a personal call to be a missionary to the Gentiles at the moment of his conversion (Acts 9:15). Yet God did not direct Saul (Paul) to go to the mission field all by himself, instead God directed the local church to confirm that personal call and directed the timing of his going.”¹⁴ Second, the local church had a part in the release of Paul and Barnabas from jail as well as in their commissioning (Acts 13:3). This apparently established a relationship of accountability which is demonstrated in Acts 14:26 when the two missionaries returned to Antioch at the close of the first journey.¹⁵

In addition, Paul recognized the important role of senders to missions. In Romans 10:14-15, he sees a direct relationship between those sent to proclaim the Gospel and those who send. Paul describes the relationship: calling upon Jesus is built on belief which is built on hearing which is built on preaching which is built on sending. It means “sending” is the foundation of the entire process of missions ministry.

¹⁴ Daniel W. Bacon, *Equipping for Missions: A Guide to Making Career Decisions* (Littleton, CO: OMF Literature, 1992), 60.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Clearly, the missionary call is not simply a personal issue. It must be confirmed by the local church. The role of the local church today is as a sending church, and it should have a vital relationship with its missionaries. In reality, God often uses the body of Christ to lead the missionary, and to bypass the local church is to cut the missionary off from a valuable source of wisdom and practical help.¹⁶

Argument Two: Missionary Recruitment Is a Volunteer System

In recent centuries, the pattern for missionary recruitment has been the volunteer system. When this is coupled with the idea of a personal and subjective missionary call, the result seems to be that church leaders do not assume any responsibility for recruiting missionaries from their congregations. It also leaves the responsibility of making major decisions for missionary service to young people alone, without reference to their local churches. However, church leaders need to take a proactive role in selecting and screening missionary candidates. In fact, this volunteer system for missionary service is unbiblical in many ways.

The Volunteer System Is Unbiblical

In Acts, people are chosen for leadership roles. Their acceptability is not based on their availability (that is, whether or not they have volunteered). For example, Barnabas (who was sent to Antioch) was selected by the church leaders at Jerusalem, not based on his availability, but based on the fact that he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith (Acts 11:22-24). Judas (Barabbas) and Silas were selected as Paul's companion missionaries by Jerusalem's apostles and elders, not based on their availability, but based

¹⁶ Bacon, *Equipping for Missions*, 63.

on the fact that they were leaders among the brothers (Acts 15:22), that they were prophets, and that they knew how to encourage and strengthen the brothers (Acts 15:32). In addition, Timothy was selected by Paul to be missionary, not based on his availability, but based on the recommendation of brothers in Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:1-3).

The Local Church Should Screen Missionary Candidates

It is the local church's responsibility to discern and discover who in the congregation has the gift of evangelism. The volunteer system will screen the missionary candidates, but church leaders should watch for members with missionary potential and challenge them to missionary service. Church leaders need to take a proactive role in selecting and screening missionary candidates.¹⁷ If a church has prayed about and recruited an individual who is called of God, then it is hard for an agency to say no. On the other hand, the discerning church can also say no to someone who the church believes is not ready. The mission agency must seriously consider the church's reference.¹⁸ At any rate, the most that an individual can do is to express his or her willingness to serve as a missionary. Others must determine the person's worthiness. The individual may be free to go, but only his or her church knows if he or she is really fitted to go.¹⁹ Church leaders know their missionary candidates better than the mission agencies, and they recognize the candidates' gifts, character, faith, and interpersonal relationships. If the local church

¹⁷ Tom Telford, *Missions in the 21st Century* (Chicago: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1998), 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

takes on the responsibility to screen missionary candidates, this will eliminate or reduce the sending out of inappropriate persons to the mission field.

Weaknesses of the Volunteer System

A further deficiency in the volunteer system can be seen in the imbalance of types of candidates applying to agencies. Many specialists in limited areas of missionary service apply to go to the mission field, but the number of evangelists and/or church planters—who are needed to carry out basic missionary activity—is woefully inadequate. If churches take on a more active role, then greater numbers of the right kind of needed workers will be forthcoming.²⁰

In reality, the volunteer system has failed to produce either the numbers or the quality of candidates needed to meet the pressing needs in the world today. Nearly all mission fields are facing serious personnel shortages just to maintain their current levels of outreach. Stronger, more effective action is required to accomplish today's mission than simply waiting for people to volunteer.²¹ If local churches can help the mission agencies to recruit missionaries from their congregations, this will help to increase the total number of missionaries going out to meet the pressing needs of mission fields in the world today.

Clearly, the volunteer system is not a good pattern for missionary recruitment. It is, first of all, unbiblical; missionary recruitment is the local church's responsibility. Church leaders supposedly know their members very well and they can watch for

²⁰ Telford, *Missions in the 21st Century*, 64.

²¹ Bacon, *Equipping for Missions*, 64.

members with missionary potential and challenge them to missionary service. They also know if their missionary candidates are truly fit to go to the mission field. In light of these facts, local church leaders must take a proactive role in selecting and screening missionary candidates.

Developing Great Commission Strategies for CCCO

According to the above-mentioned teachings from the Bible and the precept that God has ordained that people should be saved through the preaching of the gospel by Christ's followers, the role of the local church today is that of a sending church. There is no doubt that the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to Christians, and the Church today cannot excuse itself from this responsibility. Churches have a responsibility to recruit missionaries from their congregations for the pressing needs of mission fields.

Yet, before a local church can recruit and send missionaries to the mission field, the church needs to identify specific strategy for cultivating and educating the church members to participate in world missions ministry. The church missions ministry strategy should develop a Great Commission church through missions education, short-term missions trips, and annual missions conferences.

Missions Education

Missions education is a very important strategy to develop a Great Commission church. Many Chinese churches like CCCO do not provide any type of missions education for the church members. This is one of the reasons why Chinese churches have not raised up more missionaries for the kingdom of God during the past two hundred

years since they received the gospel from Western missionaries. If the church does not develop missions education, it will not likely become a Great Commission church.

Reasons for this include the following: church members may not know that Jesus Christ is the only savior of humankind; the members who have missionary potential do not know the Great Commission; and members who are middle-aged and older ignore the possibility of becoming missionaries.

First, missions education is necessary because church members may not know that Jesus Christ is the only savior of humankind. Paul writes, “We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one” (1 Corinthians 8:4). Peter also states that “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus Christ is the only savior of humankind, and the local church needs to educate members in this truth. Members must be challenged with the following exhortation: “If Christianity is the only true religion, if Christ is the only savior, and if the gospel is the only message that can offer people eternal life, then how can we keep quiet? Can we rejoice in our own salvation, knowing that others are dying without that salvation?”

Secondly, missions education is necessary because many members who have missionary potential are not familiar with the Great Commission, particularly the youth. When young people become Christians, they are taught about prayer, Bible reading, Sunday worship attendance, and youth fellowship, yet often no one tells them about the Great Commission. If they were taught the Lord’s commandment, they would likely be willing to respond to the Great Commission.

There are several instances of young people who responded to missions education by making a commitment to the mission field. Tucker tells a story that she borrowed from David Brainerd and William Carey, who explain that missionary Henry Martyn was affected by David and William's testimonies, and he made up his mind to go to India for mission service for his entire life.²² Tucker also tells the story of George Grenfell, who went to Africa after reading the testimony of David Livingstone. Africa was called "white man's graveyard" at that time, and missionaries faced not only disease-riddled jungle, but also unfriendly tribesmen who practiced cannibalism that was a constant threat to Grenfell. He had twenty harrowing experiences of "running away from cannibals." His wife and four children were buried in the Congo. He served God faithfully in Africa for thirty-two years until he died.²³ Many young people have been affected by the missions education they have received in Sunday school or via Sunday preaching, and have become full-time missionaries, some for their lifetimes.

Thirdly, missions education is necessary because members who are middle-aged and older often ignore the possibility of becoming missionaries. When thinking of missions education, most church members normally focus on the children and young adults. This is understandable since they are the missionaries of tomorrow. The church must not overlook, however, those who are older. Middle-aged members and seniors have a key role to play in the church's mission outreach. Not only can they provide needed leadership and vision, but many of them can become actively involved in cross-cultural ministry. Some may make mid-career changes to become full-time missionaries.

²² Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 132-34.

²³ *Ibid.*, 155-56.

Others may accept secular employment in countries which are closed to traditional missionaries, using their vocations as keys to unlock doors into these restricted-access countries.²⁴ These exciting possibilities can become realities as missions education is carried out and encompasses people of all ages.

Paul declares, “How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Romans 10:14). If the local church does not develop missions education, church members will not know their “responsibility” for those who have never heard about Jesus. Furthermore, those members who have missionary potential will not know the Great Commission and will not take missions seriously. And the middle-aged members and senior will assume that mission service is only for young Christians, and they will ignore the possibility of themselves becoming missionaries. If this reality exists in a church, it is unlikely that it will recruit missionaries from the congregation. Thus, it is imperative for the church to develop missions education for all age groups.

Short-term Missions Trips

Short-term missions trips are an important strategy to develop a Great Commission church. Some will argue that short-term missions trips are second best compared with long-term missions trips. However, short-term missions trips are very biblical and provide several advantages, such as: they cause the short-term missionary to be more supportive of missions; they raise consciousness regarding missions; and they are helpful for people considering long-term missions.

²⁴ Wiebracht, *The World beyond Your Walls*, 139.

First of all, the Bible contains several examples of short-term missions trips. In the Old Testament, Jonah was a short-term missionary. His easily translated message of eight words was delivered over the course of three days. The first missionary work in the early Church, Peter's visit to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (in Acts 10), lasted no longer than a week. Another model of short-term missions comes from the missionary work of Paul: "The church in Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas for mission work; they first visited Barnabas's home country of Cyprus, where they stay for eight weeks. From there they journeyed by sea to Pamphylia for two weeks. Then after traveling by land, they wintered in Iconium for four or five months."²⁵ Indeed, based upon these examples, short-term missions trips are very biblical.

One advantage of short-term missions trips is that they cause the short-term missionary to be more supportive of missions. Short-term mission advocates Mack and Leeann Stiles, in their book, *Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions*, cite recent studies that show that when short-term missionaries return, they support missions at almost double the level they did before and pray more specifically for those they visited.²⁶ It is natural that the returning short-term missionaries are willing to support and pray for those they visited, since they have recognized the needs of the mission field.

Another advantage is that short-term missions trips can help raise consciousness about missions. Because of short-term missionaries' impact in galvanizing missions awareness in the churches, Stiles and Stiles report, "Short-terms have done much for helping raise missions consciousness in the church. . . . It is true; we see people's eyes

²⁵ Mack and Leeann Stiles, *Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions* (Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

opened to the global call of Christ around the world with every short term we direct.”²⁷ It is natural that when people come back from the mission field and share the needs of mission field to their congregations, the sending church will be affected by the message.

A final advantage is that short-term missions trips are helpful for people who are considering becoming career missionaries. Many people are unsure about going as career missionaries into another culture. Short-term missions trips can offer an opportunity to these individuals to experience the real life of missionary service, to see the needs of mission fields, and to ask God’s will whether or not to become career missionaries. Tucker even reports that more than 50 percent of short-term missionaries return to the mission field after completing the short-term missions trips in International Crusades.²⁸

Annual Missions Conference

The annual missions conference is another important strategy for developing a Great Commission church. It is one of the most exciting events a local church will ever experience. At such a conference, everyone gets involved in the work of missions, and it is unlikely that anyone in attendance will take a position against missions in the future. An annual missions conference has many purposes.

First, an annual missions conference is a good forum for the leaders to transmit the vision for mission to church members. Wiebracht writes, “An annual mission conference is certainly no substitute for year-round missions education. But it is a crucial component of a comprehensive missions program. It is the highlight of the mission calendar. It is

²⁷ Stiles and Stiles, *Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions*, 38.

²⁸ Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 146.

the most effective means of building world vision in the church.”²⁹ When they recognize the needs of the mission field at the annual mission conference, members generally are willing to support missions ministry.

Another purpose of the annual missions conference is to challenge the members for the needs of the selected mission fields. First, the mission conference challenges members to care about needs of the missions field. Second, the missions conference challenges members to pray for missionaries and missions ministry. Third, the missions conference challenges members to support missions ministry financially. Finally, the missions conference challenges members to respond to the missionary calling.

The most important purpose of the annual missions conference is to give members some means of responding to the challenge given. The church can provide members with a simple two-part response card at the end of the conference. The purposes are to encourage commitment and to identify missionary candidates.³⁰

Summary

Missionary service does not reflect an arrogant attitude, but rather it reflects a feeling on the part of the missionary of being a debtor to all non-believers. The Calvinist doctrine of election limited the vision of missions. Yet, the early Church was fully aware of the missionary mandate. It is very clear that the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to believers. The Church cannot excuse itself from the responsibility. The church understands that the missionary call is not just a personal issue, but it must be confirmed by the local church, and the volunteer system is

²⁹ Wiebracht, *The World Beyond Your Walls*, 153.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

not a good pattern for missionary recruitment, and not a biblical model. The role of the local church today is that of a sending church.

The church's responsibility in world missions is very important, and missionary recruitment is the church's responsibility. Because church leaders know their members very well, they can watch for members with missionary potential and challenge them to missionary service; they also know if a particular missionary candidate is truly fit to go into the mission field. These are reasons why church leaders need to take a proactive role in selecting and screening missionary candidates. The local church today cannot excuse itself from this responsibility. Churches have a responsibility to recruit missionaries from their congregations for the pressing needs of mission fields.

Before recruiting and sending missionaries to the mission field, local churches should engage in certain strategies that will lay the groundwork. These include missions education and short-term missions trips for cultivating and educating the church members to recognize the missions need. They should then be challenged to participate in world missions ministry and respond to the missionary call through the annual missions conference and faith mission promise pledge card.

CHAPTER 4

EXAMINING THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF OXNARD

The purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into the theological context of CCCO. This chapter will present four distinctives of the church, and it will also include the strengths and weaknesses of the church's theology. Additionally, ecclesiological insights from the Bible will be discussed which might support and empower the church missions ministry.

Distinctives of CCCO

CCCO began as a Bible study in 1983, twenty-eight years ago. It developed into an independent church which has never joined a denomination. The four distinctives of the church are: the authority of Scripture, the importance of evangelism to Chinese people in Oxnard, an emphasis on mission for Chinese around the world, and congregational leadership.

Authority of Scripture

The leaders of CCCO stress the authority of the Holy Scripture as they believe the Scriptures are the unique, inspired, and inerrant Word of God. The church leaders

believe the Scriptures themselves claim to be the “Word of God” and on that basis they believe in the “divine inspiration of Scripture.” This “self claim” of the Scriptures is significant for the leadership of CCCO because if the Scriptures did not claim divine inspiration for themselves, then Christians would have no right to make that claim. The leaders believe that not only does the Bible contain the revelation of God’s truth to humankind, but that God also safeguarded the truth by controlling the authors who wrote it by the Holy Spirit, thus keeping the Scriptures from error. The Scriptures are the leaders’ highest authority, rule of faith, and guide for living, and the ministers of CCCO are expected to teach and carry out the ministry of the congregation in strict accordance to them.

The church leaders greatly emphasize the authority of Scripture and do their best to form their opinions based upon Scripture. One example of this distinctive took place approximately twenty years ago, when some members suggested to the church leaders that CCCO ought to join a denomination so that the church could receive financial help and resources from the denomination in order to develop the youth ministry; but the church leaders insisted that church denominations are unbiblical. CCCO believes the Bible teaches that the name of a church is to be in accordance with its geographical location rather than a particular denomination. This theology is derived from the salutations in the Apostle Paul’s epistles: “To the church of God in Corinth” (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1); “To the churches in Galatia” (Galatians 1:2); or “To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi” (Philippians 1:1); and “To the saints in Ephesus” (Ephesians 1:1). The leadership made its decision in order to honor the authority of the

Scriptures, even though they had to give up all of the benefits of being part of a denomination and had to postpone the development of the youth ministry.

Despite this focus on the authority of Scripture, sometimes the church leaders will have a blind spot. One example of this is the fact that the church leaders believe that offering one-tenth of the church income to God for missions ministry is biblical. But in fact, the church could give more than one-tenth of the general fund to the missions ministry; in this way their “biblical” mindset has actually limited their ability to participate in world missions ministry.

The Importance of Evangelism to Chinese People in Oxnard

The second distinctive of CCCO is the importance of evangelism to Chinese people in Oxnard. When developing the gospel ministry in Oxnard, the church founders had a vision to evangelize those Chinese who came from Mainland China and Taiwan. Today the church still maintains the same vision; all evangelistic meetings are geared toward Chinese people in Oxnard city. The church leaders consider the evangelism of “Chinese in Oxnard” as very important (particularly the Mainland Chinese). Their identity as Chinese is extremely important to them. The leaders insist the evangelism of Chinese in Oxnard is important for several reasons: (1) Moses modeled love for one’s own race; (2) Paul modeled love for one’s own race; (3) CCCO is the only Chinese church in Oxnard; and (4) many people from Mainland China have not heard about Jesus.

First of all, state the church leaders, Moses and Paul both modeled love for one’s own race. In Exodus 32:31-32, Moses states, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their

sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” Moses loved his race so much that when the Israelites worshiped the golden calf and offended God, he was willing to sacrifice his own life in order to save them from God’s judgment. Similarly, in Romans 9:1-3, Paul declares, “I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race.” The Apostle Paul considered the salvation of his own race to be more important than his personal salvation. The leaders of CCCO believe that Moses and Paul have set up good models which call all Christians to love their own races with their whole hearts. Therefore, the church needs to follow these models.

Another reason the leaders of CCCO give for focusing their evangelism on Chinese people in Oxnard is that CCCO is the only Chinese church in the city. Americans and English-speaking Mexican-Americans have on occasion attended the Sunday worship of CCCO, but the church leaders have never felt the need to evangelize them because they can attend other English-speaking churches. CCCO is the only Chinese church in Oxnard, and so they believe it is their responsibility to focus their evangelism exclusively on Chinese people. However, this mindset has greatly affected their missions ministry as well, which will be discussed in the next section.

A final reason for CCCO’s focus on evangelism to the Chinese people in Oxnard is that most Chinese who have emigrated from Mainland China have not heard the gospel. Reverend Morley Lee, the International Director of Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism, in his article, “Chinese and World Mission,” points out that there

are an estimated fifty million Christians in Mainland China.¹ The fifty million Christians in Mainland China only account for approximately 4 percent of the total population, thus, the overwhelming majority of Mainland Chinese are not Christians. China is still a communist country whose government's philosophy is atheism, so the Chinese are not fully free to go to church. Most Chinese people have not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ even after they have immigrated to the United States and this is the primary reason the leaders of CCCO have a strong passion to evangelize the Chinese people of Oxnard.

Emphasis on Mission for Chinese around the World

The third distinctive of CCCO is an emphasis on mission for Chinese around the world. In 2003, one church leader made it his purpose to develop the church missions ministry. In 2004, the church formally started the church missions ministry and designated one-tenth of the annual general fund for foreign missions. For the past seven years, the church has only supported missions to Chinese people (in Mainland China as well as in other parts of the world), but the church has not supported any cross-cultural missionary work. CCCO gives three reasons to explain why it only supports missionary efforts to Chinese people: (1) this decision flows out of the church's vision; (2) the Chinese diaspora has created a sense of mission for the Chinese; and (3) this decision follows Paul's model of focusing on his own race in his ministry.

The first reason why CCCO only supports missionary efforts to Chinese people is that this decision flows out of the church's vision. The burden to evangelize the Chinese people in Oxnard is a good vision which has greatly affected the missions ministry. The

¹ Morley Lee, "Chinese and World Mission," *Chinese Churches Today* 206 (December 2007): 25.

church leadership has invested all of the church's mission funds exclusively into global Chinese missions for the past seven years because they believe that Chinese churches (like CCCO) should make the support of Chinese missions their first priority. In reality, however, this is a racist tendency.

The second reason why CCCO only supports missionary efforts to Chinese people is that the Chinese diaspora has caused a sense of mission for the Chinese. There have been five periods of Chinese diaspora over the past sixty years. The first diaspora was in 1949 when the Communist government took over Mainland China. Many Chinese did not feel secure for their children and left China for Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. The second diaspora was between 1966 and 1976; recent historians refer to this ten-year disaster as "The Cultural Revolution." During this period, thousands of people were persecuted by the Red Guards and escaped from Mainland China to Southeast Asia and North America. The third diaspora was caused by the Tiananmen Square democratic movement in 1989; in order to avoid the persecution of the government, many scholars and students made up their minds to leave their home country for a foreign one. The fourth diaspora was in 1997 when Hong Kong, which had been a colony of British, had to be returned to Mainland China. Many people in Hong Kong were afraid of the communist government in China and immigrated to Europe, Australia, and North America. The fifth diaspora was caused by the "Taiwan independence movement." Many Chinese people in Taiwan were afraid that the movement would lead to a military confrontation between the military of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Liberation Army of the People's Republic of China (Mainland China). As a result, many Chinese in Taiwan have immigrated to Australia, North America, and Central America

during the past fifteen years. The Chinese diaspora has resulted in a sense of mission among many Chinese Christians in the U.S. because all church members came to the U.S. as a result of one these periods of Chinese diaspora. The members of CCCO very much identify with the dispersion of Chinese and have a vision to evangelize all Chinese around the world.

The last reason why CCCO only supports missionary efforts to Chinese people is due to the example of the Apostle Paul's mission strategy. Jesus said to Paul, "Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). Paul also mentioned at least three times in his letters that he is an apostle and teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7; Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:8). Yet, after reading Acts, one finds that on Paul's missionary journeys, every time he went to a new place, he first went to Jewish synagogues to preach (Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:2, 10, 17; 18; 4, 19).² Luke even states, "As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17:2). It seems that in Paul's mission ministry, Jewish people are his first priority as he preaches the gospel.

For the past seven years, CCCO has designated one-tenth of its general fund to foreign missions ministry, which is a very small amount. Due to this limited mission fund, the church has had to focus on a select few missions ministries. Because the church has decided to focus on ministry to Chinese people, both locally and overseas, the limited missions fund has been used exclusively for Chinese people.

² This happened at least eight times, the references of which have been given.

Congregational Leadership

The fourth distinctive of CCCO is congregational leadership. CCCO is a congregational church which emphasizes congregational polity and democracy. All decisions, no matter how big they might be, must be ratified and approved at the church business meeting before being carried out. In a congregational church, decisions are made by the congregation and not by individuals. In this system the church must make every decision corporately and every member takes his or her responsibility to participate in the decision-making process very seriously. The result of this process is that congregational leadership is very important and highly valued.

The Strengths of CCCO's Ecclesiology

The strengths of CCCO's ecclesiology are in four areas. These strengths are: a high level of accountability to the Bible; a commitment to being missional people for the Chinese; personal responsibility; and a sense of equality and innovation. Each of these qualities contributes to CCCO in a positive way.

A High Level of Accountability to Bible

The church leaders respect the Scriptures very much; they are willing to be accountable to the Bible no matter the cost. They often emphasize the authority of Scripture because it is the Word of God, uniquely inspired and inerrant. The leaders believe that the Bible contains the revelation of God's truth to humankind, which is why they believe all Christians need to be accountable to the Bible. Scripture establishes the expectations for their minds and lives. In addition, the leaders believe that all church ministries need to be led by the teaching of the Scripture. The authority of Scripture is

extremely significant to them. When the church formed its by-laws several years ago, the Bible played a very important role in that process.

Many liberal theologians do not accept the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Their claims have raised many arguments among the Chinese evangelical churches, particularly the topic of the inerrancy of the Bible. In fact, their claims have affected many of the churches' positions on the inerrancy of the Bible, and some Chinese evangelical churches have become more liberal in their theology. Yet, the leaders of CCCO continue to emphasize the authority of the Scriptures, which is the highest authority to which their minds, lives, and ministries adhere. All members of the congregation consider themselves to be accountable to the Bible. Being accountable to the Bible regardless of the cost is one of the strengths of CCCO. This strength, if combined with missions education, will help CCCO develop into a Great Commission church.

A Commitment to Being Missional People for the Chinese

A second strength of CCCO is that the church members are committed to being missional people for the Chinese, both in Oxnard and overseas. The church leaders often mention the story of Esther, a Jewish girl who became the queen of the Persian kingdom. As Esther's uncle, Mordecai, told her about Haman's plot to destroy the Jews and asked her, "And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). In order to save her race, Esther was willing to go to the king, even though this was against the law (Esther 4:16). Esther became a missional person for her race.

The members of CCCO have a very strong conviction that the Chinese people are their missional and evangelistic focus both locally and globally. This is why church members make an extra effort to bring their Chinese neighbors, colleagues, and friends to church. In order to evangelize the Chinese people in Oxnard, the church holds several evangelistic meetings coinciding with special Chinese festivals each year, such as Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Dragon Boat Festival. In addition, in order to evangelize the Chinese restaurant workers, the church leaders have developed a special worship meeting for them which is held from 10:30pm to 12:30am every Wednesday. This special service shows commitment on the part of the leaders since it is not an ideal time for them to hold a service.

Personal Responsibility

A third strength of COOO is its emphasis on personal responsibility. Before anyone becomes a church member, he or she must attend a membership class which includes four lessons; one of the lessons is about personal the responsibility of church membership. The concept is that all newcomers or active members are guests; they do not have any responsibility to the church and their role is to receive and to enjoy the services provided.³ Yet, after becoming full church members, they are no longer guests but they become hosts of the church, and they are responsible to serve the newcomers. The church encourages its members to tithe to the church and to get involved in at least one of the church ministries. In addition, all members have the responsibility to participate in all business meetings and to vote on any decisions. If the church holds an

³ The term “active member” refers to someone who participates in all church activities, but has not yet become a full-member and does not vote in the business meetings.

evangelistic meeting, each member is expected to come and help. If the church has any project such as a church building expansion, each member has a responsibility to help and donate money to complete the project. Thankfully, most church members take this personal responsibility for the church very seriously. This strength has the potential to help the church develop a powerful missions ministry in the future.

Equality and Innovation

A fourth strength of CCCO is its sense of equality and innovation. COOO is a democratic church which emphasizes equality and fair treatment for every member. All members have the right to vote on decisions and to express their opinions in any matter; all members have the right to speak up for themselves. No one is allowed to control any person and no individual is allowed to dominate any issue in the church.

CCCO also enjoys a spirit of innovation. At CCCO, everyone is free to implement any idea as long as they can get enough members to support it. For example, one year ago, some leaders garnered enough membership support to develop a special worship service for the Chinese restaurant workers who could not attend Sunday worship. This special worship service is held at 10:30 pm to 12:30 am every Wednesday. This strength of innovation is a potential blessing for church missions ministry.

The Weaknesses of CCCO's Ecclesiology

The weaknesses of CCCO's ecclesiology include four areas. They are: a tendency toward individualism; a lack of emphasis of the Lord's Great Commission; and a slow and stifling congregational decision-making process. Each of these has a negative effect on the church, particularly on the hope for a more significant missions ministry.

A Tendency towards Individualism

The first weakness of CCCO's ecclesiology is its tendency towards individualism. CCCO is a democratic church. The church emphasizes the equality of all people. Every member has the right and freedom to express any opinion for any matter; every member has freedom to speak up. Sometimes this freedom is over-emphasized and abused, and church members will tend towards individualism. This is potentially dangerous in a church, because an over-emphasis on individualism can lead to severe strife and can eventually cause a church split. Further, when the church over-emphasizes personal freedom, it becomes difficult for members to submit to the authority of church leaders. A couple of years ago, when the church did not have enough resources to develop a youth worship service, the church board decided to postpone the plan. A few families did not obey this decision of the church board and left the church. They tried to start a youth worship service outside the church and this almost caused the church to split. The tendency toward individualism is therefore a weakness of CCCO.

A Lack of Emphasis on the Lord's Great Commission

The second weakness of CCCO's ecclesiology is its lack of emphasis on the Great Commission. This is due in part on worship and prayer being over-emphasized. Worship is very important at CCCO, and the church currently has four worship teams for Sunday worship. The worship team preparing for a given Sunday spends three hours preparing for Sunday worship. Worship team leaders also hold singing practices with each fellowship during the week. A church choir also exists for special occasions. CCCO also highly values prayer. Church leaders often quote Jesus' teaching: "My house will be

called a house of prayer” (Matthew 21:13a). They emphasize that the church is a church of prayer. CCCO currently holds five prayer meetings each week: one on Wednesday evening, one on Sunday morning, and the other three are regional prayer meetings. Because the church over-emphasizes the ministries of prayer and worship, it ignores other important church ministries, especially the Lord’s Great Commission.

Another reason why CCCO has under-emphasized the Great Commission is that most church members did not want to make any financial sacrifices for it. The congregation is aware that the general fund has been affected by the missions fund, but nobody has stepped in to solve the problem. The congregation is aware that the world missions ministry is not being funded by members’ gifts beyond their tithes, but nobody has raised the issue. It seems that no one has been willing to finance the Lord’s Great Commission. The last reason the church has under-emphasized the Lord’s Great Commission is that no one has provided mission education or cast a vision for missions in the church. If the church would have developed missions education, short-term missions trips, and an annual missions conference, it would have made a big difference towards making CCCO into a Great Commission church.

A Slow and Stifling Congregational Decision-making Process

The third weakness of CCCO’s ecclesiology is its very slow congregational decision-making process. As stated above, CCCO is a congregational church which emphasizes congregational polity and democracy. All decisions, no matter how big or small, must be ratified and approved at the church business meeting before being carried out. Every member has the right to vote and to express his or her opinion in any matter.

While this is a positive aspect in terms of member equality, it has the negative effect of creating long, argumentative business meetings. Sometimes a business meeting will last two to three hours because there are so many arguments before decisions are made. Sometimes church members believe that their opinions are better than the opinions of others. Recently, the church met to discuss a possible church name change; unfortunately this process took four business meetings because an atmosphere of tension, confusion, and arguing made an effective meeting impossible. A slow and stifling congregational decision-making process is weakness of CCCO's ecclesiology. Therefore, the proposal of the Great Commission strategy for the church's missions ministry must be strategic. Every effort will be made to persuade some of the key leaders to adopt the proposal before it is placed on the church business meeting agenda.

Ecclesiological Insights That Will Help CCCO

Two ecclesiological insights would be helpful for CCCO to grapple with. The first is "love one another": members need to focus on loving each other as well as loving the lost. The second is "being Jesus' witness": members also need to focus on the importance of sharing the gospel with those who have not yet heard it.

Emphasis on "Love One Another"

The first ecclesiological insight that CCCO should emphasize is "love one another." The Church exists because Jesus lives in the midst of the members of the community. John Mackay, in his article, "The Witness of the Reformed Church in the World Today," writes, "The Christian Church is basically a fellowship. . . . It is the community of those for whom Jesus Christ is the Lord. . . . The essential reality of the

church is community and that community is more basic to the church's reality than organization or structure, both of which are secondary."⁴ Thus, it is very important to examine the purpose of the Church's life in the world, as that is derived from the Church's nature as a fellowship of the redeemed.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus states, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Many readers have asked what was really "new" about this commandment which Jesus taught his disciples. In his book, *Growth of the True Church*, Charles Van Engen explains, "This type of love was new in kind, though it had continuity from Old Testament. It now meant a transformed kind of life, qualitatively new in its outward, sacrificial, self-giving sense."⁵ Similarly, in his book, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Charles, H. Dodd states, "His followers are to reproduce . . . in their mutual love, the love which the Father showed in sending the Son, the love which the Son showed in laying down his life."⁶ This love is not a sentiment spoken from emotion alone, but rather a certain type of action which Father and Son have taken upon themselves for the sake of the world.

What Paul states in 1Corinthians 13 applies to this discussion: if the church is one, holy, universally catholic, and apostolic, but it does not have love, it is nothing. Likewise, qualities such as identification with the oppressed, mission, proclamation

⁴ John Mackay, "The Witness of the Reformed Church in the World Today," *Theology Today*, 11 (October 1954): 375.

⁵ Charles Van Engen, *Growth of the True Church: An Analysis of the Ecclesiology of Church Growth Theory* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1981), 167.

⁶ Charles, H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 405.

witness, and yearning for numerical growth are meaningless outside the light of this supreme mark of the Church.⁷ The words, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20), describe the nature of the community of those who had walked personally with Jesus. If the churches who lose “love one another” lose fellowship with the Christ who linked the promise, “I am with you always,” with the command to “go and make disciples.”⁸ This means “love one another” is the foundation of “go and make disciples”; if a church does not practice “love one another,” it cannot be a Great Commission church. Therefore, the churches who do not “love one another” are not Jesus’ disciples (they cannot be known as Jesus’ disciples); in addition, if churches do not practice “love one another,” Jesus is not with them and they are not sent by him. There is no way a church can fulfill the Great Commission to “go and make disciples” if its members have lost fellowship with Christ and are not his disciples. It is very clear that “love one another” is the purpose of the local church in the world, and that love is the foundation of a Great Commission church.

The members of CCCO come from different cultural, political, and educational backgrounds, and thus they have different views on how the local church should be run. These differences have caused many disagreements in business meetings and in decision-making. God has called this church to imitate Christ’s humility and love one another.

In Philippians 2:2-3, Paul taught the Philippians to be “like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose [and to] do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.” Rather, in humility they were exhorted to “value others above”

⁷ Charles Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 91.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

themselves. Therefore, “love one another” is the purpose of the local church in the world and love is the foundation of a Great Commission church. If CCCO does not practice “love one another,” it might lose its purpose in the world and it will not be able to become a Great Commission church.

Emphasis on “Being Jesus’ Witnesses”

The second ecclesiological insight that CCCO should emphasize is “being Jesus’ witnesses.” Before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples, “You will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Kane asserts, “It is obvious that Luke built his entire book around that verse. The book divides into three clearly defined parts and traces the expansion of Christianity in concentric circles, beginning with Jerusalem (Chapter 1-7), progressing to Judea and Samaria (Chapter 8-12), extending ultimately to the ends of the earth (Chapter 13-28).”⁹ Similarly, Van Engen adds, “Much has been made of this commission in terms of the geographic and cultural expansion of the church. But maybe we have missed the full weight of Christ’s words: You will be my witnesses. The church’s existence shall be one of witness in all those places and cultures.”¹⁰ As a matter of fact, F. F. Bruce, in his commentary on Acts, writes, “An Old Testament prophet had called Israel to be God’s witnesses in the world (Isa. 43:10; 44:8); the task which Israel as a nation had not fulfilled was taken up by Jesus, as the perfect Servant of the Lord, and passed on by Him

⁹ Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, 51.

¹⁰ Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People*, 97.

to the disciples.”¹¹ According to the record of Acts, the disciples had made their effort to be Jesus’ witnesses from Judea and Samaria to the end of their world.

Arthur F. Glasser, in his book, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God’s Mission in the Bible*, discusses the fact that although the book of Acts records a continuous success story—how the gospel went from Jerusalem to Rome—nevertheless, Luke was not concerned with church growth, but rather with showing the victory of the new, liberating faith as it broke through barriers that were religious, racial, and national.¹² Luke noted that the diversity of the people who entered the Church—all ages, both sexes, Jews and Gentiles, individuals and households, the obscure and the prominent, and holding various occupations. Luke also portrayed the spiritual power of new converts. They represent quality as well as quantity.¹³

The disciples witnessed for Jesus Christ among people from all walks of life. In order to deliver the people from the dominion of darkness and translate them into the Kingdom of his beloved Son, the disciples paid a very high price. Glasser echoes this, stating that “all the while Luke illustrated what Paul later taught in Colossians 1:24-29, namely, that the church does not grow without paying a price. And this price, though paid in suffering, produced the direct return of church growth (e.g., Acts 4:23; 5:40-42; 8:1-4; 14:22).”¹⁴ In reality, Israel was called to be God’s witnesses in the world (Isaiah 43:10; 44:8); the task was taken up by Jesus who was the perfect Servant of the Lord, and

¹¹ F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 39.

¹² Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God’s Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2003), 274-75.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁴ Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 275-76.

passed on by him to the disciples including all churches today.

CCCO has been commended by the Lord Jesus Christ to be his witnesses in the world. The church should imitate the model of disciples who paid a high price for witnessing on behalf of Jesus Christ. In addition, CCCO's existence will be one of witness not only in "Jerusalem" (in this case, Oxnard), but also to "the ends of the earth" (that is, including world mission fields).

Summary

The four distinctives of the church are: the authority of Scripture, the importance of evangelism to Chinese people in Oxnard, an emphasis on mission for Chinese around the world, and congregational leadership. First, the church leaders of CCCO respect the authority of the Scriptures because it is the Word of God, uniquely inspired and inerrant. This strength will help CCCO to develop into a Great Commission church if it can develop education for missions.

Second, CCCO focuses on evangelism to Chinese people because it follows the model set forth by Moses and Paul, because it is the only Chinese church in Oxnard, and because most Chinese who came from the Mainland have not been told about Jesus.

This leads to the third distinctive, which is that CCCO only supports Chinese missions ministry. This decision is due to the fact that: the missions ministry has been influenced by the church vision; the Chinese diaspora has caused a sense of mission for Chinese around the world; and Paul models the mission strategy of focusing on one's own race. Additionally, the limited mission fund also results in the church needing to focus on a few missionaries to support, and they have focused on Chinese mission fields.

The fourth distinctive of the church is congregational leadership. No individual can make any decision; rather, the congregation as a unit makes decisions together. Each member has a right to vote on decisions and to speak on any church issue. One result is that each member has freedom for innovation; another result is that the church emphasizes personal responsibility to the church ministries. These two strengths will help foster innovation for church's missions ministry.

These four distinctives give rise to the church's strengths, which are: a high level of accountability to the Bible; a commitment to being missional people for the Chinese; personal responsibility; and a sense of equality and innovation. Oddly enough, they also give rise to some of the weaknesses of the church, which are: a tendency toward individualism; a lack of emphasis on the Lord's Great Commission; and a slow and stifling congregational decision-making process.

At this point in the life of CCCO, it would be helpful for the congregation to focus on Jesus' call to "love one another" as well as to "be God's witnesses." In the Old Testament, Israel was called to be God's witnesses in the world, but the task was taken up by Jesus, and he passed it on to his disciples and to the Church. CCCO has also been commended by our Lord Jesus Christ to be his witnesses in the world; that is why the church should not ignore the Lord's Great Commission. The command of Jesus, "love one another" is the purpose of the local church in the world and it is the foundation of a Great Commission church. If CCCO does not practice "love one another," it might lose its purpose in the world and will not be able to become a Great Commission church.

CHAPTER 5

REBUILDING A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS MINISTRY FOR CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF OXNARD

Chapter 5 will discuss the theological foundations of the church missions ministry for CCCO. First, the chapter will discuss the Antioch church of the New Testament as a model church that responded to the Lord's great commandment. Second, the chapter will point out that church missions ministry is not just to support mission fields financially. There are a few areas that CCCO has ignored but should be included in their ministry. Finally, the chapter will discuss Jesus' model for developing Great Commission Christians.

The Condition of the Church Does Not Preclude Participation in Missions Ministry

CCCO has a tendency to compare itself with the larger Western churches and believe it does not have the ability to support missions ministry. An often-heard response to a call for missions ministry is, "Let those large churches do it." If all Christian churches adopted this concept, the mission fields would lose a huge resource from the small churches in United States. Whether the church is small, large, strong, or weak, each one can participate in missions ministry. Participating in world missions ministry is

not based on the size of the church; it is based on obedience to the Lord's commandment. CCCO is similar to the Antioch church in the New Testament. The Antioch church had a Gentile background, was new to Christianity, and was a small-scale church. But the Antioch church was exceptional in that it became the first early church involved in world missions ministry. Similarly, the Macedonian churches faced many difficulties and still had the ability to help the Jerusalem Church in its need.

A Small Church Can Participate in Missions Ministry

In Acts 19-20, the author uses similar language to the language used in 8:4. There he related how those that were “scattered abroad” as a result of the persecution following the death of Steven traveled from place to place proclaiming the gospel. In 11:19-20, Bruce writes that Luke “tells how some of these in due course made their way north along the Phoenician seaboard, from which some took ship for Cyprus, where others continue along the coastal road until they reached Antioch.”¹ The work of these refugees in Phoenicia is reflected in the later existence of a church there (15:1-3; 21:2-4). As good Jews, they first evangelize only among fellow Jews (11:19). Commentator Chalmer E. Faw explains, “Luke is not specific, but of these same persons, or others originating in Cyprus or Cyrene in northern Africa, break across religious and ethnic lines when they reach Antioch and witness as well to Greek.”² This was the first known large ingathering among the Jews and the response was good. Faw continues, “What happened in a small way at the house of Cornelius is now starting to become a movement, thoroughly in line

¹ F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of the Acts*, 238.

² Chalmer E. Faw, *N. T. Acts Commentaries* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 130-31.

with the commission of 1:8 and something Luke sees as the hand of the Lord (11:12).

The work of converting Gentiles, along with Jews, will indeed become a major activity in Acts, from Chapter 13 to the end.”³ Vincent Cheung, in his commentary on Acts,

considers that “初期教會的福音運動，其實是一個平信徒運

動。腓尼基、居比路和安提阿教會並不是由使徒和先知等教會領袖建立，而是一群

有傳福音心志，有廣闊胸懷的門徒所建立。這樣，福音的工作，便由耶路撒冷、猶

太各地，進一步推展至巴勒斯坦之外的地方，遠至敘利亞之安提阿，亦有了教會

（“The gospel movement of the early churches is actually a lay believers’ movement.

Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch were not established by the church leaders like apostles

and prophets, but some believers who have broad minds and a burden for gospel. So the

gospel was spread from Jerusalem and all Judea to Palestine, even as far as Antioch of

Syria.”)⁴

Thus, the church in Antioch was established by lay believers, not by the church leaders like apostles and prophets. It means that the Antioch Church was not established by experienced and professional church planters. The existence of the Antioch Church was not a formal church planting; its foundation was not established by a church planting plan. The ability and leadership resources of the Antioch church could not compare with the mother church in Jerusalem. In addition, it was not a large church.

Similarly CCCO was not established by experienced and professional church planters. Like the Antioch church, it was established by lay believers, and its ability and

³ Faw, *N. T. Acts Commentaries*, 131.

⁴ Vincent Cheung, *Tien Dao Bible Commentary: Acts II* (Hong Kong: Tien Dao Publishing House, 2000), 218-19.

human resources cannot compare with a large Western church. Yet, the Antioch Church was greatly used by God in the world missions ministry. CCCO can be greatly used by God in world missions ministry as well.

A Church with a Gentile Background Can Participate in Missions Ministry

In Acts 11:20, the author records that some men who came from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. Yet, commentator William Mordaunt Furneaux writes, “The readers are not told the names of the men who began the new departure, to whom the question first presented itself, ‘Is this Lord, whom I believe to be the son of God, not a lord for these gentiles?’”⁵ Additionally, Bruce asserts that “to present Jesus as Messiah to people who knew nothing of the hope of Israel would have been a meaningless procedure.”⁶ As a matter of fact, it was not easy to evangelize the Gentiles. Bruce continues, “If the gospel was so good for Jews, it might not be good for gentiles. At any rate, they would make the experiment. So they began to make known to the Greeks of Antioch the claims of Jesus as Lord and Savior.”⁷ Luke went on to say that the Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord (Acts. 11:21). Furneaux writes, “The Lord’s hand was with them—this expression bears witness to the conviction of the author that Christ’ active energy was with his servants and was the source of all their

⁵ William Mordaunt Furneaux, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 171.

⁶ Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 239.

⁷ *Ibid.*

success.”⁸ However, to convert the Gentiles was not easy; God himself intervened to do so.

Based on the above, it is clear that converting the Gentiles in Antioch to Christianity was not an easy job. These Gentiles who converted to Christianity still had a polytheistic worldview that affected their spiritual growth. Certainly, the foundation of their belief could not compare with the new believers who came from Judaism. Therefore, expecting a diverse church with both Gentiles and Jews to do world missions ministry is more difficult than expecting a purely Jewish church (like the Jerusalem church) to do so, but, by the grace of God, the Antioch Church was successful.

The Chinese culture is influenced by many superstitions and several members of CCCO are still influenced by the rituals of idol worship and ancestral worship that impact their spiritual growth. The foundation of their belief cannot compare with Caucasians who generally come from a Christian background. Therefore, expecting CCCO to participate in world missions ministry is more difficult than expecting a Western church to participate in it. Yet, like the Antioch church, if CCCO is willing to seriously participate in world missions ministry, God will help as well.

A Young Church Can Participate in Missions Ministry

Acts 11:22-26 records that the leaders of the Jerusalem church recognized the novelty of the situation at Antioch when news of it reached them; in response they sent Barnabas as a delegate to Antioch to look into the strange events that were being enacted

⁸ Furneaux, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 171.

in that great city.⁹ When Barnabas reached Antioch, his spirit was filled with joy at what he found. He encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. Then he went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and brought him to the Antioch church for a whole year.

Luke writes of the supervision of the Jerusalem church over the Antioch church, a new venture in an outlying area. In fact, Barnabas had been doing good work in Antioch and had gained many converts, but when he found “a great door opened,” he immediately enlisted the help of one more gifted than himself.¹⁰ Howard Marshall, in his commentary, mentions that Barnabas recognized the rich potentialities of the situation for further advancement, and saw the need of additional help in evangelism and teaching. He therefore found his old friend Paul who was at work in Tarsus and persuaded him to join the work at Antioch.¹¹ When Barnabas took Paul to Antioch, the good work proceeded for an entire year. More converts were added to the Christian community, and when they were added, they received systematic instruction in the principles of Christian faith and life.¹² Although the work that Barnabas and Paul did in Antioch is described as teaching the church, it could also be referred to as evangelism because of the continual increase in the number of converts.¹³

⁹ Faw, *Acts*, 131.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹¹ Howard Marshall, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 202.

¹² Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 240-41.

¹³ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 202-03.

From the above exegesis, it is very clear that the members of the Antioch church were new converts. The Jerusalem church had sent Barnabas to them, giving them accreditation as an official church. The new converts of the Antioch church were still lacking knowledge about many spiritual truths, which is why Barnabas and Paul spent an entire year teaching them about these truths. In addition, due to a great door opening for evangelism and many converts being added to the church during this year, the Antioch church was considered a new church. Yet, after Barnabas and Paul collected gifts from the Antioch church and brought them to Jerusalem to help the believers living in Judea, this young church was now involved in world missions ministry. They sent Barnabas and Paul as their missionaries. Yi-Hong Tam, the missions educator of Hong Kong Association of Christian Missions, considers, “根據考證，保羅第一次的宣教旅程約於主後48至49年進行，那時安提阿教會大概成立了不足十年，便開展有組織的差傳事工。” (“According to the research, the mission work of Paul’s first missionary tour was approximately A.D. 48-49. At that time the Antioch church had been established for less than ten years, yet they had already developed an organized missions ministry.”).¹⁴ According to Roger Peterson, Gordon Aeschliman, and R. Wayne Sneed, as discussed in their book, *Maximum Impact, Short-term Mission*, it was approximately two years after receiving the teachings from Barnabas and Paul that the Antioch church supported the missions ministry.¹⁵ It very clearly shows the readers that a young and new church like the Antioch church could participate in missions ministry. Although CCCO has been

¹⁴ Yi-Hong Tam, “安提阿元素：從使徒行傳看合神心意的教會” (“The Element of Antioch: To See a Church after God’s Own Heart From Acts”), in *Go Unto All Nations* (Jan-Mar 2011): 16.

¹⁵ Roger Peterson, Gordon Aeschliman, and R. Wayne Sneed, *Maximum Impact Short-term Mission* (Minneapolis: Stem Press, 2003), 212-13.

established for more than twenty-eight years and is not a young or a new church, it can be greatly used by God in world missions ministry if the members are willing.

An Impoverished Church Can Participate in Missions Ministry

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Paul uses the example of the charity of the impoverished Macedonians to admonish the Corinthian church to collect money for the relief of the poor Christians in Jerusalem. The Macedonian churches faced a very severe trial and were in an extreme poverty. Yet, by the grace of God, they were willing to give as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. They also pleaded with Paul and Barnabas for the privilege of sharing in this service with the Lord's people. Philip E. Hughes, in his commentary on 2 Corinthians, points out that Paul speaks not of something which the Macedonians have achieved, as though by some superior quality of character, but of the grace of God which was given and which, rather than any personal quality, was the mainspring of their generosity. There is no question of human resources, but only of divine grace.¹⁶ In addition, commentator V. George Shillington considers that the Macedonians are said to have given "voluntarily" (8:3). This word appears only in 8:3, with the implication of "choice" the Macedonians had in giving.¹⁷ In 8:5, Paul writes, "They already given themselves first to the Lord, and then to us in keeping with God's will." Commentator R. V. G. Tasker mentions that the word "first" is probably not used here in a temporal sense; Paul is assuming that the Macedonians have already submitted themselves to the Lord, without which there can be no Christian faith and

¹⁶ Philip E. Hughes, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 287.

¹⁷ V. George Shillington, *Bible N. T. Corinthians, 2nd – Commentaries* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998), 174.

Christian charity at all.¹⁸ However, first and foremost, their giving had been a giving of themselves; from this their gifts of money followed as a natural consequence.¹⁹

The example of the charity of Macedonians illustrates that an impoverished church still can help poor Christians in need. CCCO can apply this example to its missions ministry. The question is what “choice” the church is willing to make. If church members are willing to give themselves first to the Lord, then they will submit to his Great Commission. In fact, “give themselves first to the Lord” is the foundation of missions ministry. In addition, if the church takes missions ministry very seriously, church members will be able to meet the need of mission fields as much as they are able, and by the grace of God, even beyond their ability.

Church Missions Ministry Is More than Financial Support

When discussing missions ministry, the leaders of CCCO have the concept that church missions ministry refers only to supporting mission field financially. However, the church missions ministry is more than this. There are few areas that CCCO has ignored which ought to be included.

Transmitting the Vision for Mission to Church Members: Organizing the Annual Mission Conference

The problem of the missions ministry at CCCO is that the church leaders have never transmitted the vision of missions to the congregation. The members have never really participated in world missions ministry because the physical and spiritual needs of

¹⁸ R. V. G. Tasker, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 112.

¹⁹ Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 292.

the mission fields have never been communicated to them. One way to help church members become world Christians and develop a vision for the world is to conduct an annual mission conference. A study of strong missions-focused churches in Asia revealed that all of them have some type of annual missions conference.²⁰ An annual missions conference is a practical way to provide mission awareness to the church members and encourage them to have missions involvement.

As discussed in Chapter 1 most of the first-generation Chinese who live in Oxnard have become rich after twenty to thirty years of striving and effort. They own their own businesses, are landlords, have embraced Christianity, and even serve as church deacons. At this point in time, they have the financial ability to contribute much to missions ministry. That is why the annual missions conference is very important for CCCO. If the church can transmit the vision for mission through the annual missions conference, it will be easy for the entire church to participate in world missions ministry.

Educating the Church Members about the Great Commission: Developing Missions Education

Church missions ministry also includes mission education. Because CCCO has largely ignored the importance of missions education, most church members have never prayed for the mission fields. Educating church members about the Great Commission will be an avenue for sparking interest in potential missionaries, and will lead to the possibility of recruiting missionaries from the congregation. Due to a lack of missions education, Chinese churches around the world have found it difficult to raise up

²⁰ Keith Brown, *Missions in the Local Asia Church* (Manila: Philippine Crusades, Inc., 1988), 14.

missionaries for the kingdom of God for the past two hundred years, since receiving the gospel from the Western missionaries.

Mark Kor Cheng, the first Chinese pastor to commit to church missions ministry, points out that “差傳教育就是使用教育的方法，將聖經中差傳的真理，教導給教會中的弟兄姊妹，讓全體會眾明白差傳真理，從而對差傳事工更有異象，更有負擔，也更有行動” (“The definition of missions education is to use education to teach the brothers and sisters of the church to understand about the truth of missions in the Bible, and then they can see the vision for missions and commit themselves to missions ministry”).²¹ The ultimate goal of missions education is to encourage church members to take action in response to the need of mission fields. For this reason, developing missions education is more important than the money issue. Missions education is a good strategy to develop CCCO into a Great Commission church.

Recruiting Missionaries for Mission Fields

Most Chinese churches have never thought that they have a responsibility to recruit missionaries for the need of mission fields. As discussed in Chapter 3, the church leaders of CCCO believe that the missionary call is a personal call and missionary recruitment is based on a volunteer system that is none of the church's business. But the missionary call is not simply a personal issue; it must be confirmed by the local church, and the role of the local church is to send and establish vital relationships with the missionaries. In reality, God normally uses the body of Christ to lead the missionary, and

²¹ Cheng, *Answers to Your Questions on Missions*, 79.

to bypass the body of Christ is to cut the missionary off from a valuable source of wisdom and practical help.²²

The introduction to this paper described the fact that the rich, professional, and cross-cultural Chinese Christians of CCCO have a “royal position” and are potential missionaries for the mission fields who can be greatly used by God in world missions ministry. They can use their freedom, wealth, and professional degrees to respond and accomplish our Lord’s Great Commission. The church needs to challenge them and recruit them for missionary service. If they waste all of God’s graces—including their democracy, freedom, wealth, and professional degrees—and fail to serve our Lord, they should be responsible to God on judgment day. The church has the responsibility to remind them about God’s graces as well as his judgment.

Leading the Church Members in Experiencing the Need of Mission Fields: Providing Short-term Missions Opportunities

CCCO has been involved in the mission ministry for seven years. Yet the church has failed to allow church members to experience the needs of mission fields themselves. For this reason, most church members have not taken an interest in church missions ministry, including the mission organizations or missionaries the church has been supporting. It is an “out of sight, out of mind” mentality.

Short-term mission is biblical and its advantages have been mentioned in Chapter 3. Short-term missions tend to bring more support for the short-termers and the missions ministry by helping raise missions consciousness within the congregation. It also offers an opportunity to those who would consider being career missionaries to experience the

²² Bacon, *Equipping for Missions*, 63.

real life of missionary service, to see the needs of the mission fields, and to ask God's will whether or not they themselves should go to a mission field. Cyrus Lam, the general director of Gospel Operation International, writes in his book, *Short-term Mission Handbook*, points out that “短宣使參與者對宣教產生強烈的興趣及自信，也大大提高參與長宣的可能性，沒有這種短宣機會作踏腳石，差會會面對人力的短缺危機” (“Short-term missions can make the short-termer strongly interested in missions and increase his or her self-confidence, which will greatly raise the possibilities of long-term missions. Without the opportunities of short-term missions as the stepping stone, missions organizations will face a crisis of having a shortage of long-term missionaries.”).²³ Chapter 1 described the advantage that second- and third-generation Chinese Christians have as multi-cultural people: they have a great potential to be cross-cultural missionaries in the cross-cultural mission fields. This can be realized if the church provides short-term missions trips that will allow them to experience the mission field and examine their multi-cultural potential for missions.

Jesus' Model for Developing Great Commission Church

Jesus sent out his disciples on short-term missions trips. He always provided “mission education” for his disciples and shared with them the vision for mission. In order to develop a Great Commission church, Jesus would be a good role model for CCCO to follow.

²³ Cyrus O. K. Lam, *Short-term Mission Handbook*, Chinese Edition (Hong Kong: Gospel Operation International, 2004), 19.

He Sent Out His Disciples on Short-term Missions Trips

Approximately one year after starting his earthly ministry, Jesus began sending out his twelve disciples for short-term missions trips (Matthew 10:1-20; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6). In reality, these disciples were far from being fully trained. Jesus still had another two years' worth of mentoring to do, prior to turning over his work to them.²⁴ However, it worked well with the twelve, and then Jesus sent the second team (Luke 10:1-23). This time Jesus used a large group of seventy-two, and just like the twelve they were also sent to preach the kingdom of God, heal the sick, and subject the demons in Jesus' name. This group does not appear to have included the original twelve disciples (as Luke tells readers in Luke 10:1, "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two 'others'").

Peterson, Aeschliman and Sneed make the following observations of the twelve's short-term missions trip:

- They were sent and commissioned by a Godly authority (Lk. 9:1-2).
- They went out in groups (in pairs) (Mk. 6:7).
- They were given per-field training (Lk. 9:2-5).
- They achieved measurable, kingdom-expanding result (Mk. 6:13).
- They received post-field debriefing and follow-up (Lk. 9:10).²⁵

The above five points for the short-term missions of the twelve disciples are identical to what occurred during the short-term missions trip of the seventy-two. The above observation is an ideal model coming from our Lord Jesus for the short-term mission. These five points could be the foundation for CCCO as the church moves forward in the missions ministry.

²⁴ Peterson, Aeschliman and Sneed, *Maximum Impact Short-term Mission*, 229.

²⁵ Ibid.

In addition, before sending out his disciples, Jesus provided “Pre-field Training” for them (Matthew 10:10:5-11:1; Mark 6:8-11; Luke 9:2-5.). This “Pre-field Training” includes four areas. First, in Luke 9:2, Luke writes, “He sent the disciples out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” As Leon Morris writes in his commentary, “They were to be concerned with men’s bodies as well as their souls.”²⁶ Second, in Luke 9:3, Luke writes, “He told them: ‘take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic.’” Norval Geldenhuys, another commentator, considers that the task assigned to them is so important and urgent that “they had no time to make preparation for the journey—they have to go just as they are and trust God that he will provide whatever is needful while they are engaged in accomplishing their task.”²⁷ Third, in Mark 6:10, the disciples were instructed to accept the hospitality which was offered. Whenever a home was opened to them they were to stay there until they departed from the village. William L. Lane, in his commentary, suggests that the disciples were not to dishonor the home by accepting more comfortable provisions offered by another host.²⁸ Fourth, in Luke 9:5, in order to make the hearers realize the earnestness of their preaching and work, disciples must, where they are not received, shake off the dust from their feet as a testimony against them. Geldenhuys explains, “By this action they indicate that they break all ties with, and show in this decisive and irrevocable manner, that they do not wish to have even a dust-speck from their streets upon them. This grave action

²⁶ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 163.

²⁷ Norval Geldenhuys, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 265.

²⁸ William L. Lane, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 208.

will then serve as a last and urgent call to the repentance.”²⁹ This “Pre-field Training” is worthy for CCCO to follow when sponsoring short-term missions in the future.

He Provided Missions Education to His Disciples

As recorded in the New Testament, Jesus provided “missions education” to his disciples (Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 10:1-2). In fact, missions education is different from “Pre-field Training.” Pre-field training is training for short-termers. The training helps them prepare for the short-term mission field by concentrating on how to equip and help the participants become good short-termers in the mission field. Missions education focuses on the Lord’s Great Commission, the spirituality of the mission fields, the needs of mission fields and the responsibility of the church (Jesus’ followers). In Matthew 9:35-38 and in Luke 10:1-2, the gospel writers record, “He said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” Two different events are taking place in the two gospels, but the content of both teachings are the same. These are missions education.

Morris also points out,

These instructions [were] used on more than one occasion in slightly different forms (cf. Mt.9:37; Jn. 4:35). ‘The harvest is plentiful’ means that there is much work to do; that ‘the laborers are few’ they must not delay. It means also that they must look to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to his harvest, as well as for their own strength and guidance. Pray for more workers for God is a relying on those laboring for him.³⁰

These instructions of missions education include at least four areas. First, Jesus educates the disciples about the spiritual situation of the mission fields: the spiritual

²⁹ Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265.

³⁰ Morris, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, 181.

harvest is plentiful. Second, Jesus educates them about the emergent need of the mission fields: the missionaries are few. Third, Jesus educates them to pray for the need of mission fields: ask the Lord of the harvest to send out missionaries into the mission fields, as well as for their own strength and guidance. Fourth, Jesus educates them about their responsibility to ask the Lord for the need of the harvest: ask the Lord. In order to develop a Great Commission church, Jesus provides a good role model of providing missions education.

He Transmitted the Vision for Mission to His Disciples

Before sending out the twelve and the seventy-two, Jesus had already intentionally engaged himself in cross-cultural missions in his encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:3-42). Jews do not associate with Samaritans (John 4:9d), and the reason for this hostility goes back many years. When the Assyrians took Samaria captive they deported large numbers of the inhabitants and replaced them with men from all over their empire (2 Kings 17:24). These people brought their own gods with them (2 Kings 17:29-31), but they added the worship of Jehovah to their worship (2 Kings 17:25, 28, 32, 41). In time their polytheism disappeared, and they worshipped Jehovah alone; they also were waiting for the coming of Messiah (John 4:24, 29-30, 42). Morris explains further the reason for the hostility:

Their religion was marked by a pronounced bitterness towards the Jews. When the Jews returned from exile in Babylon the Samaritans offered to help them rebuild their temple but the offer was refused (Ezra 4:2). This naturally engendered great bitterness. One might have expected that the Jews would have appreciated the fact that the Samaritans worshipped the same God as they did. But it did not work out this way. The Samaritans refused to worship at Jerusalem, preferring their own temple built on Mt. Gerizim (c.400B.C.). When this was burned by the Jews (c.128 B.C) relations between two groups worsened.

Occasions of friction were not lacking, and by New Testament times a settled attitude of hostility had resulted.³¹

Through the prevailing cultural bias and racial hostility between Jews and Samaritans, Jesus' penetrating yet loving discourse with the non-Jewish woman not only caused her to believe (4:29), but on the spot, converted this adulterer into an evangelist (4:39).³² She even left her water jar behind (4:28) and quickly made the trip back to town. So effective was her first-time witness that fellow villagers dropped what they were doing and made the trip back to the well (4:30). Now by invitation, Jesus spoke with other Samaritans for two days and many more believed because of his word. The Samaritans confessed, "We know that this man really is the Savior of the world" (4:42).

This short-term mission in Sychar ended well. The disciples had not considered that many Samaritans would become believers. They had not thought to evangelize Samaritans. They also had no knowledge that the Samaritans were waiting for the coming of Messiah (John 4:25, 29-30, 42). To the disciples, the Samaritans were those who prepare food for their lunch (John 4:8); they were their enemies and should be destroyed by heavenly fire (Luke 9:54). The disciples believed that the Samaritan woman did not deserve Jesus' time and that he should not bother to answer her spiritual questions. The disciples even suggested that Jesus take a break from talking and get something to eat (John 4:31). Perhaps the disciples thought the time was not yet right to evangelize Samaritans. Yet, Jesus told them, "Do you not say, 'four months more and

³¹ Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 256

³² Peterson, Aeschliman, and Sneed, *Maximum Impact Short-term Mission*, 209.

then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest . . . for eternal life" (John 4:35-36).

Clearly, Jesus transmitted the vision for mission to his disciples through this two-day mission. First, Jesus opened their eyes and caused them to look at the fields in order to understand the situation of mission field. Second, Jesus transmitted the vision of the emergent need of the mission field to his disciples. Jesus had an urgent sense of mission and his words conveyed it to the disciples. He exhorted them that they must not lazily relax or be comfortable in the thought that there was no need to bestir themselves. On the contrary, the fields were ripe for harvest. In fact, when many Samaritans became believers after Jesus and his disciples spent two days with them, this demonstrated to the disciples that the Samaritans were waiting for the coming of Messiah (cf. John 4:25, 29-30, 42), were ready to receive the gospel, and that there was no need to wait. Third, Jesus transmitted the vision of salvation for all people (not just for Jews) to the disciples. Tasker writes that the story of the Samaritan woman makes it very clear that, since the advent of Christ, the people of God should be comprised of all people, no matter their ethnic group, their religious background, or their moral standard. The people of God recognize Jesus as the Savior of the world, have accepted from him the life-giving Spirit, and worship God in spirit and in truth.³³

Jesus led his disciples to a cross-cultural short-term missions trip and transmitted the vision for mission to them during this short-term mission. CCCO cannot take all members on a short-term missions trip, but the church can sponsor annual missions

³³ R. V. G. Tasker, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 75.

conferences and invite missionaries to share the vision for missions with the congregation during the missions conference.

Summary

Participating in world missions ministry should not depend upon the condition of the church; it should depend upon willingness to obey the Lord's commandment. Just The Antioch Church in the New Testament had a Gentile background (the new converts may still have subscribed to polytheism, which affected their spiritual growth), it was a young church (approximately two years old after receiving one year of teaching from Barnabas and Paul), and it was a small church (it was established by lay believers not by the church leaders like the apostles and prophets). Nevertheless, the Antioch Church still participated in the missions ministry. Additionally, the Macedonian church was a poor church which faced severe trials and extreme poverty. Yet, by the grace of God, they were willing to give as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. They even urgently pleaded with Paul and Barnabas for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. The example of the charity of Macedonians illustrates that even an impoverished church can help Christians in need. CCCO should apply these examples to their missions ministry. Members ought to "give themselves first to the Lord," which is the basic foundation of the church missions ministry;

In addition, the church missions ministry is more than financial support. It includes transmitting the vision for mission to church members through an annual mission conference, educating the church members about the Great Commission through

missions education, allowing the church members to experience the need of mission fields through short-term mission, and recruiting missionaries for mission fields.

Not only was Jesus sent to the world as a missionary, but also as a short-term missionary. Before sending out his disciples to their short-term missions, he led them to a cross-cultural mission field and transmitted the vision for mission to them during the short-term mission. He provided mission educations to his disciples by educating them about the spirituality of the mission fields, the emergent needs in the mission fields, and their responsibility to ask the Lord for the need of the harvest. In order to develop a Great Commission church, Jesus is the best model for CCCO to follow.

CHAPTER 6

GOALS AND PLANS

This chapter will begin by illustrating the preferred future for CCCO. Next the chapter will present the plan of how to educate members about the Lord's Great Commission by missions education, how to lead the members experience the need of mission fields by short-term missions, how to transmit the needs of mission fields to the members by an annual missions conference, how to let members participate in world missions ministry by Faith Mission Promise Pledge Cards, and how to maximize the mission fund for the church missions ministry.. Finally, the chapter will specify the particulars of missions education, short-term missions trips, and the annual missions conference.

The Preferable Future: CCCO Becomes a Great Commission Church

Jesus' model for developing Great Commission Christian is a good church missions ministry strategy. If CCCO is willing to practice Jesus' model (including providing missions education, short-term missions, transmitting the vision for missions, and offering the "Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card"), the church will develop into a

Great Commission church. The desirable characteristics for the future of the church are as detailed in this section.

First, after knowing the Great Commission by the missions education, the church will take seriously the Scriptural mandate to make disciples of all nations because the Great Commission is not a thought to consider or a challenge to inspire; it is a command to obey. It is not a great suggestion, but a Great Commission. Second, as discussed in Chapter 4, CCCO should practice the directive to “love one another” so that it will not lose its purpose in the world and fail to become a Great Commission church. Third, as discussed in Chapter 5, CCCO should emulate the example of the Macedonian church, who submitted to the Lord, without which there can be no Christian faith and Christian charity at all. Church members are expected to follow the Macedonians to “give themselves first to the Lord,” which is the foundation of missions ministry. Fourth, world missions ministry should not be thought of as just one of the church’s many programs, but it should be understood as being central to the church’s existence. Church leaders should make world missions ministry a visible priority in the life and goals of the church. Fifth, the church should mobilize its resources in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The way the church invests its time, money, and personnel reflects the importance the church places upon the world missions ministry. Sixth, although seminaries and mission agencies have a key role to play in the world missions ministry, local churches do not need to leave to them the job of recruiting and sending. CCCO should not just be waiting for missionaries to request support. Rather, church leaders should be taking the initiative to recruit, send out, and support missionaries. Eighth, leaders and members of CCCO will understand that salvation is not only for the Chinese,

but for all people regardless of ethnicity. The church should support missions not only to the Chinese around the world, but also any cross-cultural missionary work.

Goals of the Missions Ministry Strategy

Jesus' model of providing missions education, leading short-term missions trips, and transmitting the vision for missions is a good missions ministry strategy. The goals of the missions ministry strategy of CCCO include five areas. They are: to educate church members about the Great Commission, to allow the church members to experience the need for missions ministry, to transmit the vision for mission to the entire congregation, to encourage each member to be involved in world missions ministry, and to maximize the missions fund for missions ministry.

To Educate Church Members about the Great Commission

It was mentioned in Chapter 3 that CCCO has never provided any missions education for its members. This is why most members do not know about the Lord's Great Commission. God's great plan was to prepare Israel as children of Abraham, to be a blessing to all nations; yet, Israel made choices that kept them from fulfilling God's perfect plan. But God would accomplish his purposes through Abraham's seed, Jesus Christ, who is not only sent himself, but also sent his followers after him. God's great plan is to use the Church to accomplish his redemptive plan. As Williams Dyrness observes in his book, *Let the Earth Rejoice*, "The Old Testament prepares a universal message for what will become in the New Testament a universal mission."¹ When people have become Christians at CCCO, they have been told about prayer, Bible

¹ William Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), 117.

reading, Sunday worship attendance, and fellowship, yet no one has told them about the Great Commission and God's great plan. Therefore one of the goals of this missions ministry strategy is to educate church members about the Great Commission, God's great plan and the responsibility of the Church. After the missions education and in the annual missions conference of December 2012, the missions committee expects that 50 percent of the congregation will be willing to pray for the missionaries supported by the church each week and 1 percent of the congregation will commit their lives to be full-time missionaries or work full-time in Christian service.

To Allow Church Members to Experience the Need for Missions

CCCO has been involved in missions ministry for seven years, yet most church members know nothing about the needs of the mission field because the church has not offered any short-term missions trips. Members then lack interest in missions because the mission field is "out of sight, out of mind." When experiencing the needs of the mission field, church members, particularly youth and those church members who have missionary potential, will respond to the Great Commission. A Chinese proverb states, "Seeing for oneself is a hundred times better than hearing from others." That is why one of the goals of the missions ministry strategy is to get the church members to experience the need for missions ministry in person. The missions committee expects to recruit 5 percent of the congregation to participate in next year's short-term missions trip after the annual missions conference.

To Transmit the Vision for Missions to the Entire Congregation

Another goal of this missions ministry strategy is to transmit the vision for missions to the whole congregation through an annual missions conference (particularly for those church members who prefer to remain in their “comfort zones”) because not every member will have an opportunity to go on a short-term missions trip. Having a united heart is a key issue for all members in order to participate in world missions ministry. The church must transmit the vision for missions to the whole congregation, let each church member see the need of missions and have the same vision for missions, so that they can engage in missions ministry in one accord. Just as Amos states, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” (Amos 3:3) The missions committee expects that 80 percent of the congregation will attend the annual missions conference.

To Encourage Each Church Members to Be Involved in World Missions Ministry

It was mentioned in Chapter 2 that although CCCO designates one-tenth of its general fund to missions ministry, there has been little interest in the missions ministry because members were not giving out of their own pockets. One of the goals of this missions ministry strategy is to encourage each member to be directly involved in world missions ministry. The missions committee expects that 90 percent of conference attendees will fill out the “faith mission promise pledge card” after the annual missions conference.

To Maximize the Mission Fund for World Missions Ministry

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that most Chinese people in the city of Oxnard are wealthy landlords and professionals. Thus, the Chinese Christians in CCCO have enough

financial means to participate in world missions ministry, if only the church would transmit the need of the mission field to them. Their wealth could be greatly used by God. Rather than taking money from the general fund away from the local ministry, the church will ask each church member to donate extra money for the foreign missions ministry. This way, it will not affect the general fund of the local ministry. As mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the reasons the missions fund was only used for Chinese missions was because the mission fund was very limited. One of the goals of this mission ministry strategy is to help the church maximize the mission fund for the world missions ministry. The missions committee expects that in 2013, 60 percent of the congregation will donate money for the foreign missions ministry over and above their regular giving in the church offering. The goal for the missions fund is to raise double the amount from the previous year by faith (the year will have been 2012, during which the missions fund will be comprised of one-tenth of the general fund).

The Content of the Strategy

To Educate the Church Members about the Lord's Great Commission by Missions Education

Educating people about missions can be quite a challenge, but it is an important aspect of building a Great Commission church and should not be overlooked. Teaching missions to the congregation should not stop with adults; it should also include youth and children. Specific plans must be developed for each group within the church.

Missions Education for Children

The first step will be to develop a one-year children's mission program. Children could and should be taught about missions at an early age to develop a heart for helping others. In fact, the church has an obligation to do so. Proverbs 22:6 exhorts, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Yet, the church needs to get creative when presenting missions to the children. The church will develop a one-year children's mission program that takes the children through the missions stories of the Bible in twelve lessons. For each lesson, the church will adopt the suggestions from Eric Wilder's book, *Strategic Intent: Building an Effective Missions-minded Church*. In his book, he explains that each lesson focuses on a country and includes a memory verse, a missions-related game, and a craft unique to that country. The church will serve unique snacks native to that country, and the teacher will develop missionary trading cards for each missionary who the church has been supporting, including the missionary's phone number, a small country map, a few country facts, and then ways to pray for the missionary and his or her country on the back.²

The church will offer this children's mission program on the first Sunday of every month, and when the children get used to enjoying this program, they will look forward to their "Missions Sunday." After a one-year missions program, the church still can use the first Sunday of the month to provide mission education for the children by presenting films, slide shows, and special speakers.

² Eric Wilder *Strategic Intent: Building an Effective Missions-minded Church* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2008), 102-03.

In addition, having missionary books for the students to read is very important. When the children missionary biographies, they can be challenged to make a positive difference in today's world. Ann Dunagan, in her book, *The Mission-minded Child: Raising a New Generation to Fulfill God's Purpose*, points out that in each generation God has raised up men and women to be missionaries who sacrificially gave of their lives so others could have the gospel.³ Believers have a responsibility to convey this godly heritage to the next generation. The Sunday school teachers will instill in their students an admiration for the servants of God who lived for his purposes instead of their own.

Mission Education for Youth

CCCO will provide a "Great Commission" curriculum for youth Sunday school as well. Mildred McMurry, in her book, *Educating Youth in Missions*, writes, "The cause of missions depends on the training of youth."⁴ Youth are the successors of the church missions ministry, which is why CCCO needs to educate its youth about the Great Commission. Therefore the church will provide the "Great Commission" curriculum for youth Sunday school and systematic teaching through missions education. The youth will decorate their classroom walls with maps and missions photos and make an international post-office box to collect letters from their church's missionaries.

World missions will also be a quarterly teaching theme. Many people stereotype missions education as boring and repetitious. Wilder writes, "Much of the information is too detailed and mired in missiological terms that most people can't relate to. That is

³ Ann Dunagan, *The Mission Minded Child: Raising a New Generation to Fulfill God's Purpose* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2007), 65.

⁴ Mildred McMurry, *Educating Youth in Missions* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1960), 16.

because it is usually presented in a boring manner by boring people. The key is to vary the way missions is taught and presented.”⁵ Missions education should be presented in creative ways, such as in skits that go with a message, missionary book reports, videos, slide shows, and visits to missions organizations.

McMurry considers that the aim of youth’s missions education is to cultivate in young people a Christ-like concern for people of every class, race, and nation, and to gain the participation of young people in the work of spreading the gospel.⁶ The youth fellowship’s mentors will lead the youth to support their own missionaries and raise money for their own significant mission projects. For example, the youth can try to clothe one hundred African children in a remote Congo village.

In addition, the youth fellowship will adopt the suggestion from Ann Dunagan to sponsor an annual “mission-minded scholarship contest” for the youth. Dunagan explains, “Have students participate by presenting a short speech on a particular missions topic, designing a missions recruiting poster, or performing a special music and/ or dramatic presentation. Require an application, several recommendations, and a personal interview to evaluate necessary spiritual maturity.”⁷ The church will offer a prize for this contest: an all-expensive-paid mission trip to visit one of the church’s missionaries. This would be something that the youth could look forward to as they get older.

⁵ Wilder, *Strategic Intent*, 101.

⁶ McMurry, *Educating Youth in Mission*, 64-65.

⁷ Dunagan, *The Mission-minded Child*, 65.

Adult Missions Education

The church will use the “World Mission Series” curriculum for adult Sunday school and encourage each member to attend. These courses will become a required course for each full member. These courses will be offered by the pastor or a special lecturer from missions agencies. The church will provide each member with a foundation in “Great Commission” Bible teaching.

The weekly small group meetings will regularly have Bible studies focusing on missions-related themes. These Bible studies could include a discussion about how to more actively fulfill the Great Commission, or a sharing time about an international passion from the teaching of the Bible. The Great Commission can be a major theme of a Bible study once a quarter in the small group meetings.

Teach on Missions Regularly in the Sunday Service

In addition to the missions education provided in children’s Sunday school, youth fellowship, and adult small group meetings, the “Great Commission” will be a regular topic of sermons in Sunday services. The entire congregation must understand God’s concern for all people to know him. Sermons are an ideal way to provide missions education to the entire congregation because all members generally attend weekly Sunday services.

To Allow the Church Members Experience the Need for Missions by Short-term Missions Trips

The second element of the strategy involves offering short-term missions trips for all church members to participate in. In particular, four groups of people should be

encouraged to participate in a short-term missions trip: the church leaders, those who are considering full-time missions ministry, those who would benefit from doing something outside of their “comfort zones,” and youth. Members from each of these segments of the church population will be especially encouraged to participate.

Church Leaders

Wilder writes, “For some people though, there is nothing like experiencing missions first-hand to develop a heart for missions and a love for people from other cultures. Perhaps the most powerful source of missions motivation for many people is to actually visit the mission field.”⁸ In order to get more support from the church leaders to develop church missions ministry, the senior pastor will lead the members of the missions committee to visit some missionaries whom the church has been supporting for the past seven years. It is very important that they experience the need for missions through short-term missions; otherwise the church cannot be in one accord in the missions ministry. When these members return from the mission field, not only will the missions committee be in one accord, but they will also help raise missions consciousness in the church. They will share their experiences about the needs of the mission field to the entire congregation.

Those Considering Becoming Career Missionaries

As mentioned in Chapter 3, short-term missions are good for people considering becoming career missionaries. There are currently a few individuals at CCCO who are considering full-time missions ministry, but they are unsure about going as career

⁸ Wilder, *Strategic Intent*, 103.

missionaries into other cultures. Short-term missions can offer an opportunity for them to experience the reality of missionary service, to see the needs of the mission fields, and to ask about God's will whether or not to become career missionaries.

Those Who Would Benefit from Participating in Something outside Their “Comfort Zones”

Chris Eaton and Kim Hurst, in their book, *Vacation with a Purpose*, discuss the fact that churches often drift into being very inwardly oriented. Energy is focused on only meeting the needs of those who are members. But the short-term missionaries' eyes and hearts are opened to the needs that exist in the world, and they will carry that concern home with them.⁹ In fact, after the short-term missions trip, the short-term missionaries' will likely be catalysts for stirring up a renewed outward focus for the church. The needs of the mission fields will then be noticed and addressed in the church's community.

Young People

The church will sponsor a short-term mission for youth during the summer. The “Student Volunteer Movement” was born in Mount Hermon, Massachusetts in 1886. In no time at all the movement spread to colleges and universities all over the United States and Canada and even to foreign countries. It has been instrumental in sending 20,500 students to the foreign mission field.¹⁰ Tucker writes, “During the early twentieth century it is estimated that student volunteers contributed half of the total protestant foreign

⁹ Chris Eaton and Hurst Kim, *Vacation with a Purpose: A Handbook for Your Short-Term Mission Experience* (Colorado Springs: Cook Ministry Resources, 1994), 26.

¹⁰ Herbert Kane, *Understanding Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 161-62.

missionary force.”¹¹ The earlier young people experience the need for missions in short-term missions experiences, the earlier they consider committing their lives to the mission field. In fact, young people are the best potential missionary candidates for the mission field as they do not have many obstacles, like spouses, children, home mortgages, and high-position jobs. It is also easier for young people to adjust to a new environment on the mission field. It is also easier for them to learn a new language because of their young age. In order to encourage the members to go on short-term missions trips, the church will subsidize a portion of their expenses.

To Transmit the Vision for Mission to the Entire Congregation
by an Annual Mission Conference

An annual missions conference is a very exciting event during which the entire congregation will receive the vision for missions. Here the challenge is raised and the commitments are made to advance the cause of worldwide evangelism and missionary work. This annual missions conference will include a “Missions Sunday Service” and a “Saturday Missions Night” event, which includes an international banquet. The church will also be decorated to create a missions atmosphere.

An International Dinner Banquet

The “Saturday Missions Night” event includes an international dinner banquet which will draw church members to participate in the annual mission conference. This international banquet, which will feature food from around the world, is a time when the members will have the opportunity to get involved and be creative, as each family will be

¹¹ Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 261.

requested to make a dish from a different country. Families may choose what dish to bring, and a few recipes for international dishes will be recommended if needed. In order to let the church members experience different cultures, the dishes will be labeled as to what they are and what country they represent. The committee will ask the missionaries to sit with the members. Each missionary (or missionary couple) will be assigned a table at which to sit. It will be beneficial for the people to personally get to know the missionaries and their families, and the missionaries will also have the opportunity to transmit the vision for mission to the congregation.

Saturday's Missions Night

After the international meal, a missions conference service will be held. To have a skit on the importance of missions from the youth fellowship can attract the parents to come. Apart from transmitting the vision for missions, the missionaries will share about their missionary work with the congregation. Allowing the missionaries to present the special needs of their projects during the conference will challenge the members. In order to draw the interest of the church members, the missionaries will lead a "Question and Answer Forum" where the church members may ask questions of missionaries. In the end, the special speaker will deliver a challenging message (related to the need of worldwide missions) to the entire congregation. The schedule will follow the format provided in figure 1, and the total time will be ninety minutes.

Congregational song (missions song, 5 minutes)
Skit from youth (10 minutes)
Missionaries' videos or slide presentations (6-7 minutes per missionary, 20 min. total)
Question and answer forum (15 minutes)
Special missionary needs presented (3 minutes per missionary, 10min. total)
Message (25minutes)
Congregational song (missions song, 5 minutes)

Figure 1. Saturday Missions Night Schedule

Missions Sunday Service

The conference will have a biblical theme which reflects missions. The missions committee will select a short phrase and display it on a banner across the front of the auditorium. The missions theme for the first year will be “Carry the Light,” “Send the Light,” or “So Send I you.” The large and more colorful the banner the more attention it will draw. The conference can use some special missions songs and have a speaker from a missions agency. The speaker must be a competent and skilled speaker on the subject of missions and making a faith promise. Not only will this speaker transmit the vision for mission to the entire congregation, but he or she will also teach the faith promise principles. This speaker will be the same individual who speaks at the “Saturday Missions Night.” In addition to the special speaker, two missionaries who the church has been supporting will share their stories of receiving a missionary call. If the missionary presents a slide or video on Saturday night, then he or she should not be the same one to share a testimony. Variety will keep the conference interesting. The Sunday service schedule will follow the format provided in figure 2, and the total time will be one hundred minutes.

Congregational song (missions song, 12 minutes) Prayer (pray for this conference, 3 minutes) Missionary call's Testimony (10 minutes per missionary, total of 20 minutes) Special Missions Music (10 minutes) Message (45 minutes) Invitation (5 minutes) Congregational Song (missions song, 4 minutes) Filling out the "Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card" (10 minutes) Benediction (1 minute)

Figure 2. Missions Sunday Service Schedule

Decorate the Church

Wiebracht writes, "Maps, posters, banners, photography- all can be used to bring missions before your people. These visual reminders of God's concern for the nations are certainly appropriate during special event such as the church's annual missions conference."¹² Therefore, apart from selecting a short phrase and displaying it on a banner across the front of the auditorium, missions posters can be affixed to the hall walls and auditorium walls or in the vestibule. They may contain slogans from missionaries or be pictures of people from other countries who need the gospel. Additionally, flags from around the world are excellent for creating an international flavor. Small table flags will be used for the international dinner banquet. Larger flags may be purchased or sewn together by a talented individual in the church. The larger flags will be hung around the auditorium at the front by the altar.

¹² Wiebracht, *The World Beyond Your Walls*, 140.

To Get Each Church Members Involved in World Missions Ministry
by Filling Out a “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card”

The most important element of this missions conference is the involvement of the church members. Receiving the “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card” will be the highlight of the missions conference. Therefore, several guidelines regarding the pledge cards are important. First, the commitment cards ought to be professionally printed. Second, cards should be handed out before the preaching. Third, the ushers will be ready with an ample supply of cards. Fourth, an announcement will be made that everyone is to receive a card whether they intend to participate in the commitment or not. Fifth, people will be instructed to leave the card blank and place it in the offering plate if they choose not to fill it out. Sixth, at the end of the “Missions Sunday Service” the ushers will be ready to pick up the cards quickly. Seventh, as soon as the cards are received they will be delivered to the church treasurer. As soon as the counting is done there should be an announcement to the whole congregation before they leave the building.

To Maximize the Church Mission Fund by Encouraging Each Member
to Donate Extra Money for the Missions Ministry by Faith

At the end of the “Missions Sunday Service,” in order to maximize the mission fund for foreign missions ministry without affecting the local ministry, the speaker can challenge the participants by asking them to donate extra money for foreign missions ministry apart from giving the offering (or tithe). The speaker must encourage each member to fill out an amount on the “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card” by faith, and see if God will bless their faith. Children as well as those on fixed incomes should also be encouraged that God can especially bless their faith.

Leadership and Participants

The pastor must lead people in their missions interest. As Cook comments, “The life of any missionary program in a local church depends largely on the leadership. Someone has to have the interest, the vision, the initiative to inaugurate a program, plus the persistence to carry it through. Normally the pastor should be that leader. People usually look to him for leadership, and in this matter they expect him to be much better informed than the members.”¹³ Therefore, the senior pastor of CCCO, as the facilitator of this new church missions ministry, will create interest and enthusiasm for missions on the part of as many members as possible. He will preach on missions during the Sunday service regularly; he will deliver the vision for mission to the church leaders and the entire congregation; he will organize a missions committee; he will coordinate each department for missions education (including Sunday school teachers, small group leaders and youth pastor); and he also will encourage the members to become missionaries.

The participants will include anyone from the congregation who is interested and willing. No member of CCCO can make excuses for the responsibility for world missions ministry because the Great Commission is not a thought to consider or a challenge to inspire; it is a command to obey. It is not a great suggestion, but a Great Commission. Therefore this new church missions ministry is something for each member of the church who is a follower of Christ to participate in. Of course, the church will not force any member to participate in this new church missions ministry. Each member must feel free to participate, particularly to go on a short-term missions trip and

¹³ Cook, *An Introduction To Christian Mission*, 222

to fill out the “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card.” Anyone from the congregation who wants to be a Great Commission Christian can participate in this new missions ministry, whether the individual is a child, youth, or adult.

Summary

Through the biblical study on missions, it is very clear that the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to the Church by Jesus Christ. CCCO cannot make excuses for the responsibility for world missions ministry because participating in world missions ministry does not relate to the condition of the church; rather, it relates to obeying Lord’s commandment. In addition, the church missions ministry is not simply a financial exercise; the church can do more than send money.

The preferable future of CCCO is to become a Great Commission church. If the church is willing to practice Jesus’ model (including developing missions education, offering short-term missions trips, and transmitting the vision for mission), it will become a Great Commission church. A Great Commission church means that the church is no longer passively maintaining the existing mission program; the members actively participate in the world missions ministry.

The goals of the missions ministry strategy of CCCO include five areas. They are: to educate church members about the Lord’s Great Commission, to allow church members to experience the need for mission, to transmit the vision for missions to the entire congregation, to encourage each church member to be involved in world missions ministry, and to maximize the mission fund for missions ministry. The content of the strategy includes: 1) educating church members about the Lord’s Great Commission by

missions education (for children, youth, and adults); 2) allowing church members to experience the need for missions by short-term missions trips (particularly church leaders, young people, those who would benefit by stepping outside of their “comfort zones,” and those who are considering becoming career missionaries); 3) transmitting the vision for mission to the entire congregation by an annual mission conference (including an international dinner banquet, Saturday missions night, and mission Sunday service); 4) encouraging each church member to be involved in world missions ministry by filling out a faith mission promise pledge card; and maximizing the church missions fund by encouraging each member to donate extra money for missions ministry by faith.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

This chapter will outline the implementation process for launching the new missions ministry at CCCO. The first section will summarize the pilot project and the twelve-month plan. The next section will provide a timeline. Leadership roles will be defined, and resources needed to implement the plan will be described. Finally, the assessment plan will be presented.

Pilot Project Summary: Twelve-month Missions Ministry Plan for the Whole Congregation

This section will detail the plans for launching the new missions ministry at CCCO. Action items include: getting the church board to adopt the proposal, starting with prayer, organizing a missions committee, leading the missions committee on a short-term missions trip, preaching sermons based upon the Great Commission, holding a missions education meeting for all teachers in the church, and planning the annual missions conference. Each of these tasks is critical as CCCO works towards becoming a Great Commission church.

Adoption of the Proposal by the Church Board

The first action item will involve asking the church board to adopt the proposal of the new missions ministry strategy. CCCO's senior pastor will first invite a well-known missions speaker from a missions agency to speak on missions at the Sunday service and request that the speaker present a sermon titled "Innovation in Church Missions Ministry." After the speaker delivers the vision for innovation in church missions ministry to the entire congregation, and in order to get the support from the church leaders about this new direction in church missions ministry, the senior pastor will invite the board members and the two retired senior founders to a dinner. The senior pastor will show the appreciation for their effort to launch the church missions ministry. Then the senior pastor will share the speaker's vision for innovation in church missions ministry as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the church's world missions ministry during the past seven years. The senior pastor also can point out how the new church missions ministry strategy will benefit the church without affecting its local ministry and how the world missions ministry can maximize the missions fund.

Prayer as a Starting Place

After the proposal is approved in the church board meeting and in the business meeting, prayer should be initiated for this new church missions ministry well in advance during the Wednesday night prayer meeting. Prayer is an essential building block in constructing the church leaders' world vision because it reminds people that God is in charge and it is a tool God uses to change the hearts of the church leaders. Richard Foster, in his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, writes, "To pray is to change. Prayer is the

central avenue God uses to transform us.”¹ When the church leaders go to the Lord of the harvest in prayer, he changes the leaders so that they see other people and themselves through his priorities.

Organization of a Missions Committee

After praying with the church leaders for this new church missions ministry, the senior pastor will organize a missions committee that will represent the whole church in missions matters. The chairperson of this missions committee should be selected from the church board members and appointed by the church board. Authority is delegated to this individual to oversee the entire missions program of the church. The purpose of the missions committee is to assist the church to become a Great Commission church. It is their responsibility to give guidance and supervision to the church’s missions program. The committee is responsible for mobilizing the church in missions, although the ultimate responsibility falls upon the church board and the congregation. It is also important for the missions committee to understand that it is not their job to do all the work. They need to recognize that the entire congregation is a potential task force for missions. Their aim, therefore, is to motivate and mobilize the members for effective involvement in world missions ministry. In order to develop the church’s missions ministry, they will meet at least once a month.

Several qualifications will be considered as the church seeks to appoint members to the world missions committee. First, the committee members must be willing to invest a significant amount of time. They must be willing to make their service on the missions

¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 30.

committee a primary ministry, not something they squeeze into an already overcrowded schedule. Second, a dynamic missions committee is composed of people who are continually seeking to increase their own understanding of missions through Bible study, reading about missions, and attending missions conferences and seminars. Third, they must take seriously the ministry of mobilizing the church in missions. Therefore, they should be committed to personal growth which will enable them to be good stewards of the tasks entrusted to them. Fourth, they must lead healthy spiritual lives, have a concern for the lost, and a be committed to the local church. Fifth, they must be cooperative. Even though they may have a concern for missions, strong-minded, inflexible members can derail discussion and demoralize other members.

Short-term Missions Trip for the Missions Committee Members

The next step will be to plan a short-term mission for the missions committee members. They will visit at least one missionary who the church has been supporting in the past years. This short-term missions trip will take place in June 2012. The purposes of this short-term mission are several. First, the missions committee members must know more about the mission fields because they will be helping to develop the church missions ministry in the future. Second, this short-term missions trip will help the missions committee members experience the need for missions. When they come back from the mission field, their sharing can help raise missions awareness in the church. Third, their sharing can also help to promote the annual missions conference before the event is held. Fourth, the short-term missions experience will help the missions committee to plan short-term missions trips for church members in future years.

Inclusion of Great Commission Teaching in the Sunday Services' Sermons

During the planning of the short-term missions trip for the missions committee members, in order to promote missions education the Great Commission will be a major theme of the teaching in the entire church. First, the senior pastor will put the Great Commission's teaching in his Sunday service's sermon every other month. Every other month is enough to communicate the message yet balance the teaching with other sermons. To excessively teach on missions in the Sunday services would imply having to ignore other teachings, and this might cause the congregation to oppose the missions focus. Instead, a long-term missions education will be pursued. It will take time to implement. The church will also invite special speakers to preach on missions in Sunday services once in a while. In addition to the teaching of the Great Commission in the Sunday services, the church can provide missions education to the congregation through the youth fellowship's activities, small group Bible studies, and the Sunday school curriculum. Through these four activities, the church members will receive enough missions education.

Missions Education Meeting

Following the first missions-focused sermon, a meeting will be called to discuss missions education. All Sunday school teachers, small group team leaders, and the youth pastor need to attend. These individuals will discuss how to provide missions education to the congregation in addition to the pastor's teaching during Sunday services. During this meeting the senior pastor will provide them with missions education materials that they can use in their various settings. These include the Lord's Great Commission

curriculum for Sunday school, missions-themed Bible study materials, as well as videos and slideshows for small groups and fellowship groups. The senior pastor will assign the youth pastor to be in charge of the missions education for the youth (including a mission-minded scholarship contest and a significant mission project to raise mission funds for African children), and assign the director of Sunday school to be in charge of the missions education to all Sunday school classes (including developing a one-year children's mission program). The head of the small group ministry will be in charge of the mission education for the adults. Each of these individuals will be responsible to the church missions committee.

The Annual Missions Conference

After the missions committee members return from the mission field and share the needs of the mission field with the congregation, it will be the end of June 2012. At this time, the missions committee will begin to plan the annual missions conference. Interest in missions should be heightened at this time because the committee members will have been sharing about their short-term missions trip and raising awareness about missions. The planning sessions need to determine when the conference will be held, who will be the speaker, and which missionaries need to be invited. It also includes the goals, theme, budget, program, schedule, decorations, human resources, faith missions promise cards, and advertisements for the missions conference.

In order to have a successful annual missions conference, the missions committee will accomplish several tasks. First, prayer will be initiated for the missions conference well in advance during the Wednesday night prayer meetings, worship services, and

bulletins. Second, the committee will find a missions speaker at least six months in advance. Third, the committee will invite some missionaries who the church has been supporting in recent years to come share about their mission fields with the congregation. This will help to build the relationship in between the missionaries and the congregation. Fourth, the committee will plan a biblical, missions-related theme for the conference. Fifth, the committee will create or purchase large and colorful banners, posters, and handmade paper flags to create a festive atmosphere for the missions conference. Sixth, the missionaries will be scheduled to present the special needs of their projects during the Saturday Missions Night. Seventh, the committee will prepare “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Cards” to let the congregation have the opportunity to respond to the missions challenge at the end of missions Sunday service. Finally, church members will be recruited to help with several aspects, including preparing for the “Question and Answer Forum” at the Saturday Missions Night, contributing dishes from various countries for the International Dinner Banquet, offering housing to visiting missionaries, helping the youth to plan a skit on the importance of missions for the Saturday Missions Night, and arranging for the small groups to decorate the pulpit and auditorium.

Timeline

Although the church has a good missions ministry strategy and enough human and financial resources, a timeline will help leaders to carry out the plan. A timeline will also serve as a reminder for each department to follow and finish its own activities.

Figure 3 details the timeline for the missions ministry implementation.

Date	Task
January 2012	Invite a guest speaker to deliver the vision for innovation in church missions ministry
January 2012	Get the church board to adopt the proposal and pass the proposal in the business meeting
February 2012	Start to pray for this new church missions ministry in the Wednesday night prayer meetings
March 2012	Organize a missions committee which represents the whole church in missions matters
March 2012	Plan a short-term mission for the missions committee members
March 2012	Start to put the “Great Commission’s Teaching in the Sunday services sermons
April 2012	Call a Meeting for Missions Education (Sunday school teachers, small group leaders and the youth pastor must come)
April-May 2012	Advertise the short-term mission trip (get attention and support from the congregation)
May 2010	Have a pre-short-term mission training for the short-termers from the missions agency
June 2012	Send the short-term mission team into the mission field during the Sunday service
June 2012	Plan an annual missions conference for the entire congregation (includes goals, the date, time, theme, speakers, content and budget)
July-October 2012	Prepare for the annual missions conference (including to invite the speaker and missionaries, recruit man-power, design the “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card,” arrange the schedule and advertisements)
November 2012	Decorate the pulpit and the auditorium (select a short motto and display it on a banner across the front of the auditorium)
December 2012	Prepare the booklet for the conference (including the daily schedule, introduction for missions agencies, speaker and missionaries)
December 2012	Accommodate the speaker and missionaries (the speaker and all missionaries must arrive the day before the conference)
December 2012	Hold the annual missions conference (the “Faith Missions Promise Pledge Card” needs to be filled out and collected at the end of the Missions Sunday service)

Figure 3. Timeline for the Implementation of the Missions Ministry Strategy

Leadership Identification

The senior pastor of CCCO is the facilitator of this new church missions ministry. He will create interest and enthusiasm for missions on the part of as many members as possible. He will be the missions educator; he will preach on missions on the Sunday service regularly and educate the church members about the Great Commission. He also will organize a missions committee and coordinate each department for missions education (including Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, and the youth pastor). He will also present the vision by going on the first short-term missions trip to the mission field by himself, in order to transmit the vision for missions to all missions committee members. He will then lead the missions committee to visit some missionaries who the church has been supporting in the recent past as the first short-term missions trip at CCCO. He will also encourage and recruit members to become full-time missionaries.

In addition to the senior pastor, the members of the missions committee are primary leaders of missions at CCCO. The duties of the missions committee include: 1) to mobilize the entire church in missions; 2) to draw up the missions policies, including the qualifications of missionaries, the acceptance procedure, the support priority, the termination of missionary support, and the responsibilities of missionaries, missions agencies, and church members; 3) to draw up the annual missions conference budget and the yearly missions budget for the church, subject to the church board's approval; 4) to be responsible for planning the annual missions conference, which includes the conference's goals, theme, speaker, program, schedule, decorations, human resources, advertisements, booklet for the missions conference, and the timeline for carrying out all the missions

programs; 5) to invite the speaker and the missionaries for the annual missions conference; 6) to encourage the members to attend the annual missions conference and make an effort to get everyone involved; to plan the annual short-term missions trip and help to recruit short-term missionaries; 7) to inform church members on a regular basis about what God is doing around the world through missions magazines and newsletters about missionaries who the church has been supporting; and 8) to evaluate the results after the first year of the missions program (including missions education, the short-term missions trip, and the annual missions conference).

Additional Personnel

The youth pastor will be the senior pastor's key helper for developing the church into a Great Commission church. He will be invited to participate in the first short-term missions trip. He will be the person to help deliver the message of the need for missions to the youth group. He also will help to lead the short-term missions trip (particularly the youth short-term missions trip) in the future. In addition, he will be in charge of the decorating for the annual missions conference and he will arrange for the youth to decorate the pulpit and auditorium.

The director of Sunday school is another one of the key people in the church to help teach the Great Commission to the church members. He was assigned by the church board to be in charge of missions education for all Sunday school classes. He is responsible for arranging for the Sunday school missions curriculum and for ordering the textbooks for all age groups of the Sunday school.

The head of small group ministry is also a significant person in the missions ministry. He will promote all missions activities among the small groups and he will organize all small group leaders to promote any missions activities. Not only will he arrange the world missions-related Bible studies among the small groups, but he will also help to promote the annual missions conference and short-term missions trips.

Resources

The Bible is the most important foundation for the church missions ministry because the Great Commission and the Lord's commandment come from the Bible. It is the best resource for teaching about the Great Commission. In order to educate the congregation, the senior pastor will use Scripture to speak on missions in the Sunday services. He will quote the Scriptures related to the Great Commission to support his teaching of missions. In addition, in order to develop a Great Commission church, Jesus' missions ministry is a good model for CCCO to follow.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the church will develop a one-year children's mission program that walks the children through the missions stories of the Bible in twelve easy lessons. The church will adopt a children's missions program called "Kids on a Mission" from iUniverse Publisher. The church also will adopt the suggestions from Eric Wilder's book, *Strategic Intent: Building an Effective Missions-Minded Church*, for each lesson.

Also mentioned in Chapter 6 was the fact that the church needs to have the members receive systematic teaching through missions education. Therefore the church will use the "World Mission Series" Chinese curriculum for the Sunday school and each

member should be encouraged to attend. These courses will become a required course for each full member.

Another resource will be missions videos and slideshows. Due to the fact that much of the information available on missions ministry is very detailed and mired in missiological terms videos and slideshows will offer an easily accessible alternative for people to engage with. Gospel Operation International is one missions resource center that provides such materials.

Another resources will be the mission field itself. The old saying, “Experiencing something once is better than hearing it a hundred times,” is true. As a matter of fact, the mission field is a very good missions resource for the church missions ministry. The missions committee will choose one mission field that will be the site of their first short-term missions trip. The short-term missionary can experience the need for missions through the short-term mission fields. Perhaps some will even become full-time missionaries.

Mission organizations are also good missions resource centers for CCCO’s missions ministry. Not only can they provide a recommended mission field to the church when the church sponsors a short-term missions trip, but they can also provide many mission materials such as missions videos and slideshows. They can also provide a missions training class to the short-term missionaries before their trip, as well as dynamic missions speakers who are competent and knowledgeable on the subject of missions and the use of a faith promise. Missions organizations can also send their missionaries that have been supported by CCCO to share their missionary call testimonies and the special needs of their missions projects during the Saturday’s Missions Night at the annual

missions conference. Their missionaries can also lead a “Question and Answer Forum” where the church members may ask questions of missionaries.

Assessment Plan

Two methods will be used to assess the new strategy for CCCO’s missions ministry. The first method will be an analysis of the pledge cards that will be distributed at the annual missions conference. The pledge cards will measure the success of the strategy in terms of the commitments that are made as a result. The second method will be a questionnaire for all church members, to be given twelve to eighteen months after the launch of the new missions ministry. The questionnaire will measure the success of the strategy in terms of what members have actually done related to the missions ministry.

Analysis of the “Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card”

The “Faith Missions Promise Pledge Card” will be used by the missions committee to evaluate whether or not the church achieves its goals after using the missions ministry strategy (see Appendix A). As mentioned in Chapter 6 the missions committee will make sure that it is announced that everyone who attends the annual missions conference is to receive a “Faith Missions Promise Pledge Card” whether they intend to participate in the commitment or not. After collecting all the cards, the missions committee can analyze what percentage of the congregation attended the conference and what percentage of the attendees filled out the “Faith Missions Promise Pledge Card.” When analyzing the data gathered from the cards, the committee will also discover what percentage of the congregation is willing to pray for the missionaries supported by the church each week, as well as how many individuals will commit their

lives to full-time Christian service. The pledge card also analyzes how many people will participate in a given year's short-term missions trip.

The pledge cards also show how many people have committed to donate extra money for the foreign missions ministry apart from their tithe, and whether or not the total amount of missions funds for 2013 can achieve the goal, which is double the missions fund giving for 2012. In addition, having the age of the person on the card helps determine the validity of the promise. This "Faith Missions Promise Pledge Card" is a very useful tool for the missions committee to use as they evaluate the missions ministry at the end of the first annual missions conference.

A Single Questionnaire Created by Mission Committee

All information from the "Faith Missions Promise Card" represents the missions faith promises of the church members. It does not reflect the actual giving after using the missions ministry strategy. A questionnaire created by the missions committee will be given to the congregation at the end of 2013 (see Appendix B). This questionnaire will help to analyze the real result after the missions ministry strategy has been in place for one year. This questionnaire will help to analyze the actual results for the church missions ministry.

The missions committee will collect the questionnaires on the same day that they are completed. The committee will then analyze the questionnaires and know the actual results after having implemented the missions ministry strategy. The result will reflect which areas met the goals and which areas are still weak. The missions committee will show its appreciation to the congregation for the areas that are achieving the stated goals

and encourage the congregation to double their effort on the weaker areas in the next year. The questionnaire will help the church to keep improving its missions ministry.

Summary

Although this missions ministry strategy is good, it still needs the support of the leaders. In order to keep a united heart and get the church board to adopt the proposal of the new missions ministry strategy, the senior pastor will first invite a well known missions speaker from a missions agency to speak on the topic “Innovation in Church Missions Ministry” at the Sunday service. Before using the missions ministry strategy, prayer for missions will take place at the Wednesday night prayer meeting because the Lord is the Lord of the harvest and prayer is a tool God uses to change hearts.

Besides the senior pastor of CCCO being the facilitator, educator, organizer, presenter and recruiter in this new church missions ministry, the missions committee will play a very important role. They are the primary leaders in the new church missions ministry. Therefore the senior pastor will organize a missions committee immediately. The purpose of the missions committee is to assist the church to become a Great Commission church. It is their responsibility to give guidance and supervision to the church’s mission program. They are the key people responsible for mobilizing the church in missions. To ensure that the senior pastor and the missions committee can get the job done, the new missions ministry needs to have additional personnel involved. The youth pastor will be the key person to help deliver the emergency for mission among the youth group and he will help to lead the short-term missions trips, particularly the youth short-term missions trips in the future. The director of Sunday school is one of the

key persons in the church to help teach the Great Commission to the church members.

The head of the small group ministry will be the key person to help the promotion for all missions activities among the small groups.

Besides having enough human resources, the new missions ministry also needs considerable resources from the outside to help get the job done. The Bible is the most important resource and the foundation for the church missions ministry, particularly Jesus' model for the church missions ministry. Apart from the Bible, missions organizations (including missions agencies) are the most important places for the church to obtain resources for the mission ministry. They can provide missions-related videos, slideshows, missions-related Sunday school curricula, and children's missions programs for the church's missions education. They also can provide information about various mission fields for the short-term missions trips. In addition, missions organizations also can provide human resources for the annual mission conference, such as experienced missions speakers and missionaries to help lead the missions conference. However, a timeline for carrying out the plan is necessary; it is a reminder for each department to finish their own part in a timely manner.

In terms of assessment, the "Faith Mission Promise Pledge Card" and a questionnaire will be used to evaluate the ministry after the ministry has been implemented. The pledge card will monitor commitments to the ministry and the questionnaire will monitor actual results. These evaluations will help to keep on improving the church's missions ministry.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The lives of the first-generation Chinese of Oxnard were very tough when they immigrated to the United States. Yet, after twenty to thirty years of effort, these individuals are rich among other ethnic groups in Oxnard. Some of these Chinese have become Christians, and some among them are church leaders. At this point, they have the financial ability to do a great deal in terms of missions ministry, and CCCO must transmit the need for missions to them.

In addition to supporting missions financially, members of CCCO are good candidates for serving as missionaries themselves due to their professionalism and their multi-culturalism. Even though Chinese people are a minority in Oxnard, the percentage of professionals among the Chinese is very high, particularly as compared with other races. Due to their professionalism, believers at CCCO have the potential to serve on the mission field as tentmakers. Many mission fields of Muslim background do not accept vocational missionaries, but welcome professionals to their countries.

Due to significant growth in the Hispanic population in Oxnard, the Chinese are a minority. As a result, the second generation and the third generation of Chinese are living in a multi-cultural city. They were born in Oxnard and grew up among Western culture, Mexican culture, and Chinese culture. They have many friends who are Mexican-Americans and Caucasians. They have already become multi-cultural people. The advantage for these individuals is that they have a great potential to be cross-cultural missionaries on the mission field. CCCO ought to provide some short-term missions trip

experiences for them to experience the need of the mission field and to examine their multi-cultural potential for missions.

Those who have over-emphasized evangelism, worship, and prayer as values of the church have ignored the world missions ministry. CCCO needs to develop the church missions ministry and balance the values of the church. In addition, most church leaders have a wrong concept that CCCO, as a small church, has no ability to participate in missions ministry. But participating in world missions ministry does not relate to the size of the church; it relates to the commandment of the Lord and the responsibility of each church.

CCCO is similar to the Antioch church in the New Testament. The Antioch church had a Gentile background, was a new church, and was a small church, yet it still participated in the world missions ministry. Even an impoverished church like the Macedonian church was willing to give as much as they were able and even beyond their ability. The example of the charity of Macedonians illustrates that even an impoverished church can help Christians in need. CCCO can apply these two examples to their missions ministry.

God has greatly blessed CCCO for the past twenty years, but the church leaders have wanted to receive blessing from God rather than give. Thankfully, in 2004 God raised up a leader who suggested giving one-tenth of the general fund to the foreign missions ministry. Although this was not ultimately a good church missions ministry strategy, it was a good start. Although the missions ministry at CCCO has its strengths, there are more weaknesses than strengths. The missions ministry needs to be revised and improved.

Church leaders respect the authority of the Scriptures, and this strength will help CCCO to develop into a Great Commission church if it can develop education for missions. The other distinctive of CCCO is congregational leadership. One result of this is that each member has freedom for innovation; another result is that the church emphasizes personal responsibility to the church ministries. These two strengths also will help foster innovation for church's missions ministry.

It is very clear that the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to believers. The church leaders also need to understand that the missionary call is not just a personal issue, but it must be confirmed by the local church, and the volunteer system is not a good pattern for missionary recruitment, and not a biblical model. The missionary recruitment is the church's responsibility because the church leaders know their members very well, and they can watch for members with missionary potential and challenge them to missionary service. Before recruiting and sending missionaries to the mission field, CCCO should engage in certain strategies that will lay the groundwork. These include missions education and short-term missions trips for cultivating and educating the church members to recognize the missions need. They should then be challenged to participate in world missions ministry and respond to the missionary call through the annual missions conference and faith mission promise pledge cards.

Jesus has already set up a model for the church missions ministry. Jesus was a short-term missions leader; he sent out his disciples on short-term missions trips. He transmitted the vision for mission to his disciples during the short-term missions trips. He also provided missions education to his disciples by educating them about the

spirituality of the mission fields, the emergent needs in the mission fields, and their responsibility to ask the Lord for the need of the harvest. In order to develop a Great Commission church, Jesus is the best model for CCCO to follow.

The goals and the strategies of the missions ministry of CCCO include five areas. They are: to educate the church members about the Lord's Great Commission by mission education, to allow the church members to experience the emergency for mission by short-term missions, to transmit the vision for mission to the entire congregation by an annual mission conference, to encourage each church members to be involved in world missions ministry by filling out a faith mission promise pledge card, and to maximize the church missions fund by encouraging each member to donate extra money for missions ministry by faith. Anyone from the congregation who wants to be a Great Commission Christian can participate in this new missions ministry, including children, youths, and adults.

The leadership team is significant to the implementation of the new ministry. The senior pastor is of utmost importance in developing the church to become a Great Commission church because the responsibility of a pastor is to lead all brothers and sisters in the church to have a vision and burden for world missions. If he or she sees the vision of mission, it will be easy for the rest of the church to participate in missions ministry. The senior pastor of CCCO will be the facilitator, educator, organizer, presenter, and recruiter in this new church missions ministry. The missions committee will also play a very important role. They are the primary leaders responsible for mobilizing the church in missions. The purpose of the missions committee is to assist the church to become a Great Commission church. The youth pastor, the director of Sunday

school, and the head of small group ministry are also key persons in this new church missions ministry.

Besides the human resources, the new missions ministry also needs a lot of other resources as well. Missions organizations can provide missions education materials, such as missions videos, slide shows, missions Sunday school curricula, and children's missions programs; they also can provide mission fields for the short-term missions trips. In addition, missions organizations can provide human resources for the annual mission conference, such as experienced missions speakers and missionaries to help lead the missions conference.

After using this Great Commission strategy for the church missions ministry, evaluating the success of the ministry is very important and necessary. The evaluation will help to improve the church missions ministry. The faith mission promise pledge card and the questionnaire will provide data for evaluation.

Through the biblical study of missions, it will be helpful for the congregation of CCCO to focus on Jesus' call to "love one another" as well as to "be God's witnesses." In the Old Testament, Israel was called to be God's witness in the world, but the task was taken up by Jesus, and he passed it on to his disciples and to the Church. The Great Commission pertained not only to the original apostles; the mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations has been given to the Church by Jesus Christ. The apostles' church was fully aware of the missionary mandate. CCCO has also been commended by the Lord Jesus Christ to be his witnesses in the world. That is why the church should not ignore the Lord's Great Commission. The command of Jesus to "love one another" is the purpose of the local church in the world and it is the foundation of a

Great Commission church. If CCCO does not practice “love one another,” it might lose its purpose in the world and will not be able to become a Great Commission church.

Jesus also set up a model for the church missions ministry, and CCCO cannot excuse itself from this responsibility. Although the church has been supporting some missions ministries, it should not maintain the missions ministry just as it has been for seven years. The church needs to break through the current status quo for missions ministry and become a Great Commission church. Church members have not yet genuinely participated in foreign missions because they have not reached into their pockets to give to the ministry. Instead they have simply allotted a portion of funds that they were already giving. That is why most members have not taken an interest in church missions ministry at all. As the gospel states, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”(Luke 12:34). In fact, the most important thing of the church missions ministry is to get every member involved. This Great Commission strategy can help the church members genuinely and directly participate in world missions ministry.

The preferable future of CCCO is to become a Great Commission church and to practice “love one another” as the foundation of the Great Commission church. If the church is willing to practice Jesus’ model and commit to missions ministry via the pledge card, it will develop into a Great Commission church. As such, it will no longer be content to passively maintain the existing missions program, but the members will become active to participate, to think, to plan, and to pray about the world missions ministry.

APPENDIX A

FAITH MISSIONS PLEDGE CARD

My 2013 Faith Promise for Missions

Please complete the following pledge after prayerful consideration.

Knowing that I have been given the Great Commission to take part in making disciples of all nations, by faith I promise to:

- ___ Pray for the missionaries supported by our church each week
- ___ Write to missionaries by emails or letters quarterly
- ___ Read missionary biographies or mission related articles
- ___ Prepare myself to share the Gospel at all opportunities
- ___ Participate in short-term missions
- ___ Commit myself to be a full-time missionary
- ___ Commit myself to other full time Christian service
- ___ Give (in addition to my regular tithe) to the missions fund \$_____ monthly,
\$_____ bi-monthly, \$_____ quarterly, \$_____ one-time offering. Total \$_____.

I understand that I will not be billed for this. It is my commitment to God.

My age is _____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MY MISSIONS FAITH PROMISE

Questionnaire for My Missions Faith Promise 2013

Please complete the following questions after prayerful consideration.

- I have prayed for the missionaries supported by our church each week in past year
- I have written to some missionaries by emails or letters quarterly in the past year
- I have read missionary biographies or mission-related articles in the past year
- I have prepared myself to share the Gospel at all opportunities in the past year
- I have participated in a short-term missions trip in the past year
- I have committed myself to be a full-time missionary in the past year
- I have committed myself to some other full-time Christian service in the past year
- I have given (in addition to my regular tithe) to the missions fund in the past year

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