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This ministry focus paper entitled

A STRATEGY FOR PLANTING A NEW CHURCH IN HAIDIAN DISTRICT

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:



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A STRATEGY FOR PLANTING A NEW CHURCH IN HAIDIAN DISTRICT

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

WEIQING WU
NOVEMBER 2015

ABSTRACT

A Strategy for Planting a New Church in Haidian District

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Doctor of Ministry

School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary

2015

The purpose of this project is to develop a strategy to assist the establishment of a new church that will share responsibility with Haidian Church of meeting the ever-increasing need of spiritual care in general, and of discipleship in particular. To achieve this purpose, a church-planting pilot project will be developed. A leadership-training program will follow.

The first part provides an overview of Haidian District. Particular attention is given to the unique nature of the district, from its demographics and cultural stereotypes that permeate every aspect of life, including political and social turmoil that impact faith communities. This paper then explores the need for planting a new church in the Haidian District, and the obstacles and opportunities associated with new church ministry.

Part Two engages critical theological and biblical literature for the foundation of planting a new church in Haidian District. While focusing on exploring the theological themes from which the church plant can gain momentum to start and develop a theology for enabling the formation of a missional church, this chapter seeks to demonstrate Paul's ultimate purpose for church planting and his way of actively planting new churches by presenting a case study.

Part Three seeks to conclude the theological implications for planting a new church in Haidian District based on the theological probing of Chapter 3. While articulating a six-step, church-planting strategy and a six-step training for leadership development in their thoroughness, this section also seeks to present a process of implementing and assessing planting a new church in Haidian District. While stipulating a timeline for planting the new church and identifying a potential leader and supporting groups, a certain criteria and special training program are also discussed. Finally, this section provides a plan to apply tools of evaluation to assess the pilot project to refine it.

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INTRODUCTION

Haidian Church, located in the Haidian District in Beijing, is a large, vibrant and growing church with a congregation of approximately 10,000 members, and 7,000 to 8,000 worshipers every Sunday. It is not affiliated with any specific Protestant church denomination. It is organizationally and administratively part of, and under the umbrella of, the Beijing Christian Council. The latter is affiliated with the China Christian Council,¹ which claims “Three Selves”² as its principle of church operations in China.

Having been attracted by passionate preaching based on biblical and inclusive theology, people from diverse backgrounds come together to form a rapidly-growing community, where people line up waiting for their turn to enter the church to worship at one of six services taking place every Sunday. Haidian Church focuses on encouraging messages of empowerment, such as every follower of Jesus being an ambassador of the Gospel to the world, and all Christians going into the world rather than being separated from it. The church welcomes all who confess their sins and confirm their faith in Jesus no matter who they were in the past.

The Chinese government is gradually relaxing its religious freedom policy and releases more free physical space to religious groups. Haidian Church, like churches

¹ China Christian Council, “Home page,” www.ccctspm.org (accessed May 31, 2015). “In spring 1979, Chinese church was restored after it went through the ‘valley of death.’ The China Christian Council was established in the third national conference in 1980 in response to the urgent call that a thousand things wait to be done. Its purpose and mission is to unite all Christians nationwide while vigorously engage in evangelical activities based on the principle of ‘Three Selves.’ Its aim is to better churches in China.”

² The Three Selves are: “Self-administration, Self-financial support, and Self-evangelism.”

throughout China has been enjoying rapid growth in the number of worshipers over the last thirty years. However, the six services taking place at Haidian Church every Sunday have strained the church in pastoral resources, facility availability and space for fellowship gathering. The church also has difficulty providing individual Christians with quality discipleship and loving personal pastoral care, with which they can continue to be encouraged to grow in spirit, in strength and in faith. Meanwhile, the small fraction of Christians, when compared to the large population³ of non-believers in the Haidian District, constantly reminds the church of the mandate of the Lord's Great Commission and evangelism. As a result, it has become quite urgent for Haidian Church to either expand in its current location or establish a new church.

While Haidian Church is seeking ways to deal with the challenge of limited space and overcrowding, it intends to be a missional and incarnational church by living in the community. The church takes the initiative in living out the Christian faith as people loving and caring for their immediate neighbors. David Bosch says, "It should not bother us that [during different epochs,] the Christian faith was perceived and experienced in new and different ways. The Christian faith is intrinsically incarnational; therefore unless the church chooses to return a foreign entity, it will always enter into the context in which it happens to find itself."⁴

³ According to the last census (2014) there are 3.251-million permanent residents and migrant workers and their family member comprise an additional 1.28-million.

⁴ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 211.

Therefore, the goal of this paper is to develop a strategy of planting a new church from Haidian Church in the Haidian District, while developing and training a lead pastor for the new church with both spiritual and administrative qualities and his or her support teams. The leadership firmly believes that remarkable Gospel outreach and discipleship training will result when focusing on both church planting and pastor development. As Alan Hirsch says:

It was by being true to the gospel that they unleashed the power of apostolic Genius. . . . And the awakening of that dormant potential has something to do with the strange mixture of the passionate love of God, prayer, and incarnational practice. Add to this mix the following: appropriate modes of leadership (as expressed in Ephesians 4), the recovery of radical discipleship, relevant forms of organization and structures, and the appropriate conditions for these to be able to catalyze. When these factors come together, the situation is ripe for something remarkable to take place.⁵

As the senior pastor of Haidian Church since 2001, I have personally experienced this rapid church growth process. The church has established four large meeting points⁶ of up to 100 to 500 worshipers to deal with this urgent challenge. Leadership has learned from Aubrey Malphurs' *The Process of Church Planting*,⁷ which involves six stages to plant a new church, and from Robert Logan and Tara Miller's *The Path of Leadership*

⁵ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 21.

⁶ Meeting Point is where Christians gather for Bible study or fellowship during weekdays and worship on Sunday due to the limited sitting capacity in the church and in some cases, the long travel distance to local churches. Though they are called meeting points, they are, in fact, churches in nature. The local authorities usually and generally are reluctant to acknowledge the fact that there are many churches in their administrative and judicial area. Meeting point as a name sounds self-deceivingly much smaller and much less significant than a church.

⁷ Aubrey Malphur, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and those Desiring Renewal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 115.

*Development.*⁸ While planting one of these four meeting points, *Xishanqi*, the strategy laid out in Chapters 4 and 5 was tested and executed. The experiences with planting this church in particular have reinforced that the key to successful church planting is in selecting the right leader and equipping him or her.

Though Haidian Church is the mother church of the *Xixiangqi* meeting point, it intends eventually to have *Xishanqi* become an independent church administratively. The hope is that *Xishanqi* will grow in terms of its leadership capacity, financial support and long-term vision for the years to come. Therefore, selecting a capable lead pastor and equipping him or her from the very outset goes hand-in-hand in the development of the church-planting strategy. It is also hoped that this process helps the selected lead pastor gain important experience and learn necessary lessons in planting a local church.

It can be a daunting job to initiate a new church community with Christians and newly converted people of various life backgrounds—seekers for truth, answers or merely comfort. While the Spirit and the mother church would guide the selected lead pastor in every way, it would still take him or her enormous energy, effort and wisdom to face challenges in different forms. Malphurs expresses in his master piece that the

Church planters also have to be initiators when it comes to reaching people and building churches. They cannot sit in their studies and wait for people to come to them, because most people will not come. The days of maintenance ministry are over. Instead, leaders will have to develop strategies and lead their people in

⁸ Robert Logan and Tara Miller, *From Followers to Leaders* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2007), 27.

reaching the unchurched in their communities. Initiation takes far more mental, emotional, and physical effort than maintenance. The result is often exhaustion.⁹

While I serve as the primary spiritual mentor and a key supporter of the selected lead pastor who implements the strategy that is already developed, the new pastor has to test these ideas and try this strategy in the front line.

Malphurs does not hesitate pointing out a hard fact:

In a church culture, the thing to do is to attend church on Sunday; whereas the thing to do in an unchurched culture is anything but attend church on Sunday. People spend time with their families, go to a shopping center, take in a movie, go to a ballgame, watch their children play soccer, or go to the health club. Sunday may be their only day off. It's a day to relax and have fun. So why would anyone want to go to church? And that's the question you as a church planter must answer.¹⁰

He continues to say, "Church planting is an exhausting but exciting venture of faith that involves the planned process of beginning and growing new local churches, based on Jesus' promise and in obedience to his Great Commission."¹¹

In *From Followers to Leaders* Logan and Miller choose the metaphor of a hiking path to present the basic path of leadership development. It starts with the decision to leave the parking lot and going up or going back home with the motivation of potential leaders through encouragement from a guide. Then the guide appears to add instructions to the overview seen at the trailhead. At the beginning, the guide will lead the way.

⁹ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, 20.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 19.

People will follow, “matching her pace, taking notice of her technique, imitating her.”¹²

As instructions taper off along the trail, more confidence is gained in what will be going on ahead. In step 5, upon seeing a campsite over the next ridge, the guide calls for a break by a campfire in order to have some rest, get refueled, catch breath, exchange tips and experiences, rehydrate and encourage each other. This allows potential leaders for a period of time of “recharging, learning and connection when we need it, providing renewed energy for the journey still ahead.”¹³ Finally, at the end of trail, congregations reach the destination, which is at a much higher altitude, and there they exchange plans for future hikes.

Having chosen the key leader and support team, the real and substantial stage of the church-planting process has been reached. First, the leader and his or her team can implement the strategy orderly with timely adjustments. Then, they can gain more hands-on experiences with both positive and negative aspects of the church-planting process. In the meantime, these experiences can build up the leadership skills and capability of the selected leader.

Malphurs insists, “The actual planting of a church also involves a process.”¹⁴ He says that this process can “involve six stages, which are analogous to the human birth process: conception, development (parental stage), birth, growth, maturity, and

¹² Logan and Miller, *From Followers to Leaders*, 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁴ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, 115.

reproduction.”¹⁵ He also uses another metaphor to delineate this process. He says that, “The seed is sown. As it begins to sprout and grow, it will be watered, fertilized, and protected from various insects. Eventually, it will be harvested, packed in some way, and taken to market where it will benefit many.”¹⁶

In addition to discussing the significance of the lead pastor and his or her support team, this paper will describe their vital contribution to the church being planted. It is critical that all members of a church-planting team have the same vision, even though there is room for variation in their passion. It is the vision of the team that unites the team and gives it direction as a whole. The purpose of this project is to develop a strategy to assist the establishment of a new church that will share the responsibility with Haidian Church of meeting the rapidly growing need of spiritual care in general, and of discipleship in particular. To achieve this purpose, a church-planting pilot project followed by a leadership-training program will be developed.

This paper has three parts. The first part gives an overview of the Haidian District and the church. Special attention is given to the unique nature of the district context, including the demographics and cultural stereotypes that permeate every aspect of life; and the political and social turmoil that impacts faith communities. This paper then

¹⁵ Ibid., 116.

¹⁶ Ibid., 115.

explores the need for planting a new church in the Haidian District as well as the obstacles and opportunities associated with new church ministry.

Part Two of this paper presents the critical theological and biblical literature for the foundation of planting a new church in the Haidian District. Theological themes from which church planting can gain momentum to start and develop a theology for enabling the formation of missional church are explored. A case study is also presented, to demonstrate Paul's ultimate purpose for church planting and his way of actively planting new churches.

Part Three discusses the theological implication for planting a new church in the Haidian District based on the theological probing in Chapter 3. While articulating a six-step strategy of church planting and training for leadership development in their thoroughness, this chapter presents a process of implementing and assessing planting a new church in Haidian District. While stipulating a timeline for planting the new church and identifying a potential leader and supporting group, some criteria and special training programs are also discussed. Finally, a plan to apply tools of evaluation to the assessment of the pilot project is explored so as to refine it.

PART ONE

HAIIDIAN CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

THE HAIDIAN CHURCH, ITS HISTORY, ITS CONTEXT, AND ITS VISION FOR MINISTRY

Demographics of The Haidian District

Haidian Church sits in the Haidian administrative district in the Northwest of Beijing city. The church was formed in the 1920s. It was, however, closed for around fifteen years during the “Cultural Revolution,” as happened to many churches throughout the country in most of the early-1960s through the late-1970s. Jason Kindopp and Carol Hamrin describe that period of history as such:

Armed with an atheistic ideology that viewed religion as an unscientific “opiate” of the masses and adopting a revolutionary policy agenda that sought to re-create society in its image, China’s Communist Party promulgated a policy framework for religion that explicitly sought to isolate it from the broader society, with the intention of eradicating it entirely. Extreme measures against religious group culminated in a total ban on religious activity during the Cultural Revolution.¹

However, the number of committed Christians has been growing leap and bounds from all walks of life, in particular from intellectuals, university students, and migrant workers.

¹ Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin, eds., *God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 14.

As a result, Haidian Church has inevitably become a church of “cultural diversity.”² It has also become a congregation of “socioeconomic pluralism,”³ similar to many mega-churches in urban areas. Therefore, the avenue of outreach shall change hand-in-hand with the shift of culture and social trend. Paul wrote that his ministry faced the challenges of diversity in tradition, ethnicity and varied social classes. He believed they were all objects of the salvation plan of Christ: “And having put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Col 3:10-12).⁴

The first part of this paper provides an overview of the Haidian District where Haidian Church is located. A brief view of the general situation of church development is presented. Special attention is also given to demographics and cultural stereotypes.

The “Silicon Valley” of China

The Haidian District, one of the sixteen districts of Beijing directly governed under the Chinese central government, has a population of 2,035,300 people, and a

² Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Mission* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 115.

³ Ibid.

⁴ All Scripture cited is from the *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (Nashville: Biblica, Inc., 1973).

permanent residency of 3,057,600 people. In May 1988, the State Council of China ratified the establishment of *Zhongguanchún*⁵ Science and Technology Park in the Haidian District. Since then, the area has led the development of science and technology compared to the rest of the provinces in the country. Many internationally-renowned technology enterprises and corporate groups, such as Microsoft, IBM, Lenovo, Founder and Stones, have moved into the area to set up their headquarters in China or have located their research and development facilities here. Over the years, though many have encountered some pains of growth, most of these giant companies have shaped people's life here; and have apparently continued to grow stronger and larger, having visible and strong impacts on the country as a whole and on individuals in this area in particular.

Currently, the Haidian District is known as the primary home in the country for: the management decision making of high technology, communication for information, and exhibition center for research and development achievement; capital market for high technology industry; and the distribution center and sale market for high technology products. As a result, Haidian District has become the "Silicon Valley" of China. Haidian Church has found itself in the core area of the district of science and technology with God's purposes to advance his Kingdom among a large and diversified population.

⁵ This is in the core zone and center of Haidian District near where Haidian Church sits.

An Area of Top Universities and Various Schools

As the capital city of China, where quality educational resources tend to abound more than ever before, Beijing has attracted as many as sixty-eight top national universities, research institutes and institutions of higher education. Two of the best known in the world are *Tsinghua* University and Beijing University, with the latter being within walking distance of the church. Therefore, it is not surprising, but quite convincing that this area has also been referred to as the supreme “intelligence bank” of China.

Significantly, Haidian Church is the only visible established Protestant church (compared to many invisible ones that are commonly recognized as the house churches or underground churches) in terms of its physical building and established pastoral personnel resources. The church is uniquely located to advance the Gospel among people of all walks of life although primarily with young people and intellectuals. In particular, many young intellectuals and information technology practitioners pursue their dream career here. This has posed a serious challenge to Haidian Church about how to provide effective spiritual guidance and leadership so that talented young people and intellectuals can come to the Lord, while rationally holding onto their scientific view of the world.

Henry and Richard Blackaby point out in *Spiritual Leadership*: “A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christ-like character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership

to take place.”⁶ They are saying though it is imperative for God’s servants, who serve by their leadership through Christ-like character among the so-called intellectuals and young talented individuals, it is also significant for leaders to apply their rich life-maturing experiences in their evangelical activities with strong confidence and assertion. Blackaby provides the following idea from Robert Clinton’s *The Making of a Leader*:

The Life Maturing period is when spiritual leaders begin to focus on their strengths and to find leadership opportunities in which they can be most effective. Whereas until this time, God was working primarily in the leader, now God begins to work increasingly through the leader. An experiential understanding of God matures at this time. Through significant life experiences God teaches people about life and relationships. It is through the normal experiences of failures and success, criticism and praise, loyalty and betrayal, illness and loss that God matures people. Again, much depends upon the leader’s reaction to the life circumstances through which God brings them. Positive responses to these circumstances will guide the person into a more mature level of leadership.⁷

In the meantime, many churches, particularly Haidian Church, face another challenge: the shift of mission impetus from traditional “evangelistic-attractational” to “missional-incarnational” in aspiring to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus. Haidan Church believes this shift is the guiding ideology of church planting. Paul says emphatically in 1 Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”

⁶ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2001), 44.

⁷ Ibid.

A District with a Large Concentration of Migrant Workers

The Haidian District is known for its concentration of many top national universities and high-tech companies. Young, well-educated intellectuals and their families constitute a fairly large portion of the total population in the area. The Haidian District is also a place where migrant workers or floating populations can find cheap housing, as the district sits between downtown and rural areas. Unfortunately, a majority of these migrant workers are ill educated, having a hard time making ends meet. However, poorly educated people are likely to find a low-paid job in the Haidian District, and the costs for housing, transportation are relatively low in the outskirt area of the district.

At present, the number of migrant workers in this area is about 2.5-million. They leave their poor hometowns to come to Beijing to serve in restaurants, factories, farms, taxi companies or construction sites with a hope to change their life a little for the better. They come to the city for jobs and then travel back to their hometowns during a few long national holidays to reunite with their families left behind.

Most of these migrant workers, however, have been working hard and strenuously to hopefully fulfill their dream. In particular, they hope that one day they will earn permanent Beijing citizenship, allowing them the opportunity to have social welfare and various benefits that only Beijing permanent citizens can enjoy. They desire a better chance and a possibility for their children's future if they can earn permanent citizenship. What is happening in Beijing is just a small part of the big picture. This movement of

population from countryside to urban cities not only has diversified the texture of the urban population and the spectrum of church, it has also generated an urgent need for more churches for the diversified population. The great growth of the Haidian District and its local church is illustrated in Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz's *Urban Ministry*, "In the twenty-first century, the need for urban church planting is growing. 'We will live in a world of seventy-nine supercities (fifty-nine of them in developing countries), each with over four million inhabitants.'"⁸

Factors that Affect Faith Communities

The Effect of the Cultural Revolution and the Restoration of Various Faiths

Deng Xiaoping's coming to power and his Reform and Opening-up Policy was both the inevitable consequence of social havoc and a necessary solution to the tragic national social status and economic conditions of an impoverished populace about thirty year ago. It is the rejection of communism in which the Chinese had been tricked to believe and follow. It is the consequence of losing faith in the Communist teaching Chinese people had going through during all those years. Tony Lambert writes:

Beijing in 1976, a very different, drab, sad world of rundown back lanes with ancient courtyard homes. In Wangfujing, a sea people in Khaki green or blue Mao jackets jostle outside the one frowzy department store. In corners of courtyards, piles of half-rotten cabbage are piled alongside coal dust briquettes to see the impoverished populace through the bitter winters. The endless phalanxes of cyclists pedal wearily past the huge red and the white billboards of Mao Thought

⁸ Conn and Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Ministry* 26.

– “Take Class Struggle as the Key Link.” Indeed, life is a constant struggle—just to survive. Eggs, meat and fresh vegetables are in short supply. Vicious political struggle at the top makes people wary . . . 1976-2006 – in a brief three decades China has totally transformed itself. The economic reforms begun by Deng Xiaoping in 1979 have made China an economic superpower.⁹

Because all religions were banned during the Cultural Revolution, people had nowhere to turn to for spiritual comfort and guidance in harsh situations. Because people were also disillusioned with false communist teaching, a faith vacuum was created. Consequently, a spiritual awakening was activated as soon as churches in China reopened in the late-1970s with limited religious freedom:

In early 1979, there were still no churches officially open anywhere in China. However, Deng Xiaoping had come to power and was busy reversing the extreme policies of Mao. As part of his “open door” policy, he decided to return to the limited religious freedom of the 1950’s. The various “patriotic” religious organizations for the five officially-recognized religions (Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism) were reactivated, and religious activities again tolerated.¹⁰

The number of baptized Christians increased drastically,

There is plenty of evidence from official sources of the explosive growth of Chinese church. For instance, in 1995, the magazine *Religion (Zongjiao)* which is a publication largely written by government researchers, contained a detailed article on the growth of the Church in the northern province of Shanxi. In the early 1950s, there were about 30,000 Protestant Christians in the province, but by 1990, they had increased to 125,000, and are continuing to increase at present. Baoji City had about 1,500 Christians in 1950, but now they have grown to 32,000, a 21-fold increase. Tongchuan City on the eve of the Cultural Revolution (1965) had only about 300 Christians; today they have increased to 11,000.¹¹

⁹ Tony Lambert, *China’s Christian Millions* (Abingdon, UK: Monarch Books, 2006), 15-16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

The Contribution to the Growth of Social Tolerance Made by Confucius' Teaching

Confucianism contributes in two aspects to the Chinese people's tolerance of Christian thinking. One is in the ways people relate with those who are different than themselves in faith systems and ideology. The other is the belief on which Confucianism bases its teachings. Without an acknowledgement of the significance of social tolerance for the diversity of cultures and faith systems in the majority of the population of China, it would not have been possible for Chinese churches to grow so rapidly over the last thirty years. This social tolerance has been deeply rooted in Confucius' teaching, which most Chinese believe as their life guidance and philosophy and base their worldview.

The following are a few such teachings from Confucianism. Confucius deems that "a gentleman shall be able to maintain a harmonious and friendly relationship with other people, while they do not have to agree without giving serious thought over specific matter."¹² When asked by one of his students "Is there a maxim as a life principle by which we can benefit all our life?" Confucius responds, "Forgiveness and that people in their relationship with others shall never impose their own beliefs on anyone else and do not do anything to other people that you do not intend other people to do to you."¹³

Confucius suggests doing all things for the good of others. In other words, everything shall be done with good intention towards others. Meanwhile, there should be tolerance for people far away in thinking and in ways of doing things, allowing them

¹² Jiang Xiqin, ed., *A Selected Collection of the Analects* (Beijing: Sinolingua, 2006),155.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 188.

space to exist. Mencius, another leading representative personage of Confucianism said, “A gentleman differs from ordinary people in that he has different ideas in his mind. What he has in his mind is benevolence and rites. A benevolent person loves others and a polite man respects others. The ones who love others will always be respected by others.”¹⁴ The core of benevolence, Mencius insists, is love. He urged people to love others as a person, a person of social existence of due honor and proper respect from the rest of the society, and a person of different ways of thinking and faith systems.

While focusing its teaching on the significance of love, Confucianism does not hesitate to emphasize that Providence is the deciding force, determining the course of history, though it did not give an established faith system for the Chinese to follow. In his *Analects*, Confucius quoted Yao¹⁵ as saying, “The Heaven has decided that you would be the one that the lordship will fall upon. You better stick to the proper strategies of running the country. And the blessing will forever end if the whole is in poverty.”¹⁶

He then indicated that Heaven is the endower of personal virtues and wisdom: “It is the Providence turning him into a saint and gifted with a variety of talents,”¹⁷ and he is the determining force of the fortune of one’s life, “For if you offend Heaven, it is useless

¹⁴ Ibid., 140.

¹⁵ The first monarch in Chinese history.

¹⁶ Zhu Xi, *The Commentary of The Analects of Confucius*, interpreted by Jin Liangnian (Shanghai: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2006, 253.

¹⁷ Ibid., 141.

to pray.”¹⁸ Confucius further suggested that Heaven is the law of the nature, “Four seasons take turn, all things on earth grow and each is in its proper place, though the Heaven has not said anything. He got all things under His control.”¹⁹

Haidian Church and its Dynamics

On October 6, 1915, the Chinese Christian Mission, which was affiliated with Congregational Church of Christian Mission of Beijing, was founded in the Haidian area. Though newly founded, the church was not hesitant in advocating social improvement in various aspects of life in their evangelical activities. A few charities and elementary schools for girls were also founded at the same time. In just a few months, more than a hundred people joined the church.

In 1921, Leighton Stuart from the US was appointed as the principal of Yanjing University. He obtained many donations from American Christian philanthropists. He then bought land, which included the mansions and gardens of a *Qing* dynasty’s prince, and on this land, he established one of the fourteen church universities then in China. This university has the biggest scale, highest quality, and most beautiful campus in modern China. In a local, unpublished history, the beginning of the church is recounted: “In 1922, Mr. Qi Guodong came to Haidian church after his graduation from Yanjing seminary of Yanjing University and served here as a missionary and later took over as the

¹⁸ Cai Xi Qin, *A selected Collection of the Analects* (Beijing: Sinolingua, 2006), 30.

¹⁹ Zhu Xi, *The Commentary of The Analects of Confucius*, 235.

senior pastor. By the year of 1933, the number of Christians of this church had increased to more than 500.”

Though the fervent prayers went on at home, activities of various kinds related to the practice of Christian faith were forbidden at the church in late-1950s. What was worse was that churches throughout China were closed during the Cultural Revolution²⁰ and the properties of the churches were confiscated. Haidian Church was without exception; its buildings were confiscated by the State, then turned into a workshop, poultry farm and apartment building as soon as pastoral members of the church were sent to a labor farm and Christian gatherings were severely forbidden.

When Haidian Church reopened in 1979, Christians did not complain about what happened over the previous twenty years. On the contrary, they prayed that suffering and persecution should not stop. In fact, they prayed for more persecution and suffering. This has become one of the Haidian Church’s dynamic strengths for continuing growth in faith and in spirit. For neither persecution nor suffering for Christ was experienced as an unbearable torture, but regarded as a privilege of being a sacrifice like Jesus’ death on the Cross. Persecution was taken as a precious opportunity to test the heritage of Christian faith and endurance. The congregation believed suffering was a great opportunity to live out Jesus Christ in daily life. It is another way of fulfilling the Great Commission. It is part of the cost of discipleship, as it was with the first-century church. Paul Hattaway said

²⁰ Lambert, *China’s Christian Millions*, 435.

in his *China's Christian Martyrs*,

It was this understanding that sacrifice, suffering and even death were the normal cost of discipleship that fuelled the evangelistic efforts of the first-century church. They did not expect to experience all of the blessing of heaven in this world. They knew that by their faithfulness, even unto death, they were storing up rewards in heaven. Contrary to our belief that it is a blessing not to be persecuted, they knew that it was the persecuted who are blessed (Matthew 5:1-12). Rather than following our example of thanking God for the privilege of not suffering for him, they thanked God for the honor of suffering for his sake (Acts 5:41).²¹

Persecution did not quench Christians' faith at Haidian Church. It instead strengthened faith in Christ and encouraged the sharing of experiences as precious testimonies that almost all were eager to give and were eager to serve in one way or another. The early members of Haidian Church had truly "become servants of God, called to be apostles, set apart for the Gospel" (Rom 1:1b). They are "therefore Christ's ambassadors" (2 Cor 5:20).

Haidian Church currently has about 10,000 members. Sixty percent are young people, who tend to be open to trying new things with a mind of innovative thinking, and who like to challenge the so-called authorities. However, these young people have embraced the service and spiritual guidance provided by the pastoral team of seventeen ordained pastors and young preachers due to their enthusiastic, missional and visional evangelical approaches.

²¹ Paul Hattaway, *China's Christian Martyrs* (Raleigh, NC: Monarch Books, 2007), 19.

Restored with Missions

Just as many other churches in China, Haidian Church was restored in 1979 with a mission to declare to the world that God never left his children as orphans in China. As Paul wrote, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom 8:35-37).

Suffering is part of God’s glory; children of God who go through it may become strong, firm and steadfast in faith in Him: “And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast” (1 Pt 5:10). God desired Christians in China to be living testimonies to manifest to the world to never take faith in Jesus for granted. Sometimes Christians must be willing to sacrifice for their faith.

The calling of God on his children is not always to exclusively experience joy, happiness and success. Time and time again, people of God suffer not because of sins, but because suffering enables faith in Jesus to grow and become stronger so as to be victorious in the Day of the Lord. To quote Hatthaway:

Persecution is hardly an exclusively New Testament phenomenon. Numerous passages refer to the suffering inflicted on the people of God throughout the historical narratives. It is likely that the psalms of lamentation address the issue of the suffering of God’s people more clearly than any other portion of Scripture (including the New Testament). The thrust of Job is how the man of God suffers not because of sin but because of the righteousness and the call to trust in the face

of such a paradox. This train of thought is amplified by the call of the prophets to look ahead to the day of the Lord, believing that history is under the control of an almighty God who, from the foundation of the world, has set his plans in motion of reconciling the world to himself.²²

A Vision to Reach the Young, Adult and Intellectuals

Haidian Church believes that the younger generation is the future of the church.

Intellectual Christians can make Christian faith culturally more acceptable by acquiring more cultural space and cultural capital that the foothold of Christian faith can be consolidated in the context of Chinese culture. *Jesus in Beijing* describes Liu Xiaofeng, a prominent Christian intellectual who was known for his translated works related to literature about Christianity:

Liu Xiaofeng has a gigantic ambition with his theory: to promote the expansion of Christian scholarship in China's university system; and at the same time, present his intellectual views through book series and periodicals in order to build a foundation for Christian scholarship in the midst of tension and competition in Chinese intellectual cultural space, so that the values system of the "sacred" may have its own cultural capital.²³

Consequently, it has been the strategic goal of Haidian Church to reach young, adult and intellectuals at this strategic Haidian area. It is the mission field of Haidian Church where discipleship training and equipping can take place. Then many will spread out elsewhere with the Gospel message.

²² Hattaway, *China's Christian Martyrs*, 18.

²³ David Aikman, *Jesus In Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: An Eagle Publishing Company 2003). 250.

Laity Commitments

It has never occurred to the leadership team at Haidian Church that evangelism and the fulfillment of the “Great Commission” are tasks assigned only to pastors. Haidian Church practices the mobilization of all laity or common believers in any way possible to get them actively involved in Kingdom ministry. Conn and Ortiz write, “Laity mobilization must be a high priority of the church if it is to be stable and dynamic in this age of despair and instability.”²⁴ With the terribly unbalanced ratio of seventeen teaching and administrative pastors versus 10,000 members and continuing rapid growth, the church is firmly convinced that the growth of the church and the reproduction of the church depends on the entire Body of Christ. Conn and Ortiz agree in *Urban Ministry*:

Actually, today there are more and more churches following this biblical pattern by training their people to reproduce the church in the city and equipping their members to become the major force in this move. This is what happens when a church directly takes on the challenge of urban mission and finds that the responsibility for the growth of the church and the reproduction of the church depends on the total body of Christ.²⁵

In order to mobilize all members to get involved in the multiplication of God’s Kingdom, a consensus was reached that the leadership team shall be committed to the mobilization of laity. Every individual Christian must be a Christian in such a way prescribed by Haidian Church that he or she must participate in at least one worship service, one small group for Bible study and one voluntary evangelical service.

²⁴ Conn and Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Ministry*, 453.

²⁵ Ibid., 457.

Uncovering the community's need and the church members' gifts has been a vital ministry for the pastoral team at Haidian Church in that it bridges the gap between contributions and needs. In the meantime, carefully designed trainings for lay ministry and spiritual growth have been provided according to the talents people have shown. Thus, the trained individuals are "confirmed in the direction they are going."²⁶

An Implemented Strategy for Leadership Formation

While growing pastoral staff to a team of seventeen teaching pastors, Haidian Church has gradually developed a strategy of selecting potential leaders which to a certain degree coincides with Conn and Ortiz's leader selection ideas. It is the process of selecting candidates, and having the potential leaders go through a teaching curriculum and mentoring the leaders. First, a leader must meet the following three prerequisites. They must be willing to be a servant: "Leaders are Christ's servants doing what he beckons us to do. They must be those servants who sit at the feet of Jesus waiting for his instruction in humility."²⁷

They must also be willing to be a steward:

Paul also tells us that leaders are stewards of the secret things of God (1 Cor 4:1). They are stewards of truth that God has revealed, the wonders of salvation both for Jew and Gentile. . . . A steward is one who manages the house for the owner. Stewarding is more than keeping and securing those things that are sacred. It primarily has to do with being a servant manager. Christ's stewards art his

²⁶ Ibid., 464

²⁷ Ibid., 404.

servants. I am obligated and bound to the task of sharing the good news with my community (1 Cor 9:17). Paul makes this an important element for leaders when he exhorts the Corinthian Christian in their deliberation over what is a biblical leader (1 Cor 4:1-4). The steward is another aspect of the leader that is essential.²⁸

Finally, they must be willing to be students. A potential leader must be teachable, and “agree with you that he or she needs just the training that you offer, and finally to be open to team with others in ministry and to expect to study and apply the Word forever.”²⁹

Over the years Haidian Church, with technical guidance from the writings of Conn and Ortiz has developed a curriculum that takes seriously model-imitating and on-the-job training for potential leaders. The components that have helped design this curriculum were the context, mission and students. These three are separable but intertwine and interact with each other. While these three components are vital considerations of the curriculum, spiritual formation, mission formation and social formation are the substantial contents in curriculum at Haidian Church as it is explained in *Urban Ministry*. While “the urban curriculum must begin with knowledge of God,”³⁰ “mission formation consists of doing theology in the context of the city. It is more than developing an urban strategy. It is learning how to use Scripture as a guide both for life and for community transformation.”³¹ Conn and Ortiz continue: “The final section of the urban curriculum has to do with understanding the unique context in which urban leaders

²⁸ Ibid., 407.

²⁹ Ibid., 408.

³⁰ Ibid., 422.

³¹ Ibid., 425.

are living and serving in order to theologically approach actual social issues in a particular city.”³² The last part of the strategy for leadership formation at Haidian Church is to mentor leaders. As described in *Urban Ministry*, “Mentoring refers to the process where a person with a serving, giving, encouraging attitude, the mentor sees leadership potential in a still-to-be-developed person, the protégé, and is able to promote or otherwise significantly influence the protégé along in a realization of potential.”³³

Theological Convictions of the Church

Although Haidian District is a place where the highest scientific achievements of man are developing; possessing great wealth, learning, culture; and embodies, to a certain degree, the greatest achievement in human history, Haidian Church is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus. He is the one who the church believes is Son of God, risen from the dead. Though a son, a shabby carpenter and crucified on the cross together with two criminals, Haidian Church trusts he is Christ.

Though located in a high-tech area geographically, surrounded by the top secular universities and scientific institutions, disturbed every day by the noise and excitement from the neighboring commercial market, Haidian Church is not to determined be distracted by the world. Instead, the church is committed to a Cross-centered Gospel in self-denial, suffering and joy by making it the main goal in daily decisions and daily

³² Ibid., 426.

³³ Ibid., 428.

living and to die to the world and to be a martyr for Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “The cross means sharing the suffering of Christ to the last and to the fullest. Only a man thus totally committed in discipleship can experience the meaning of the cross.”³⁴ He continued, “The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ—suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ.”³⁵ Though confined by law and regulations in the church building, Haidian Church is resolved to fulfill the Great Commission by turning toward a “mission field,”³⁶ by transforming into an “organic movement”³⁷ so as to release the power of the Cross from inside the box of restrictions.

A “Holistic Service” Approach

Haidian Church puts a high value and significance to the practice of faith in Christ who came to world with the Good News to: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Mt 4:17) and showed the love of God by forgiving sinners of their sins, offering healing, and feeding the poor. In addition to preaching the Gospel every Sunday, new churches also have been planted where the Gospel is preached—the message about the birth,

³⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 89.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ By current Chinese law, no church activities shall be undertaken outside of the church building. No evangelism shall take place in the open. Therefore, Haidian Church has been training individual Christians and teams, and students in particular that they can introduce Jesus to non-believers while the students can go back to their hometown or where they pursue their career with the message of Christ.

³⁷ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 42.

mission service, and the death of Jesus on the cross are delivered and the Great Commission is being fulfilled. In the meanwhile, Haidian Church has never forgotten the inculcation on having mercy on the needy, “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever” (2 Cor 9:9). The way Haidian Church has been applying its ministry to cultivate the living lives of Christians that they can grow mature and be Christ-like is holistic service. As Ralph Winter says, “Spencer insisted that Christianity consisted not only of knowledge, but must also include the practice of the faith. Along with his emphasis on the necessity of the new birth and a holy life, he includes a great concern for the needy.”³⁸

Obstacles and Opportunities Associated with the New Church Ministry

Concern that Haidian Church will be Weakened

As the congregation of Haidian Church was edified to the importance and significance of planting new churches, concerns about the possible dwindling number of Christians who come to Haidian Church for worship arose, though the excitement and expectations were great. Though the population of this district is huge, it is unfortunately in a compact area of 437-square kilometers. Consequently, a potential location for the new church would not be far away from Haidian Church, maybe just a few miles away.

³⁸ Ralph D. Winter and Steve C. Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectives: On the World Christian Movement* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1999), 264.

There are concerns that some core volunteers might go to the newly planted church if the location is close and convenient. Busses are still the primary transportation tool. Haidian Church would be strained financially since much of the offering would have to go to the new project and some of the financial resources intended for extending Haidian Church would have to be postponed or discarded. In the meantime, worries about the fast growth of Christian churches might catch attention from public security emerged.

Concern about Over-commitment on Staff

Haidian Church is blessed with a faithful service offered by a team of seventeen pastors. In most cases, however, all pastors have to lead administratively and teach at four-to-five meeting points every week, while doing home visit and leading small Bible study groups. When people who work in the secular sector of the society normally and generally take two days off their work, pastors have to work almost six days a week while having to be on call twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week.

There are emerging concerns whether pastors have enough time for personal devotion that they can maintain the strength to face the challenges of demanding ministry. There is fear that the pastors who would be involved in the new church-planting project might get psychologically and physically exhausted. Indeed, ministry burnout is something that a church should help its staff avoid in all ways possible by knowing limitations. Malphurs says, “Knowing our limitations can help us in our ministry in two

ways. First, we can avoid potential ministry burnout. . . . Knowing our limitations also helps us work toward maximizing our ministry effectiveness.”³⁹

A Training Opportunity for Young Pastoral Staff

Though concerns about possible diverging pastoral resources arose, the majority of the decision-making team trusted that a new church would also be a practical platform on which the selected lead pastor and members of various support teams from the local community would be able to stand and walk on their own feet. They must think independently, work creatively, lead missionally and serve visionally, though support from Haidian Church and its leaders would always be available. They must exercise leadership through failure and frustrations before they are sure where their strength and weakness are. This process is imperative before they become mature in ministry so that they would be able to embrace leadership maturity, Henry Blackaby said,

When people first attempt to exercise leadership, they often fail or experience great frustration. It is as they develop leadership skills, as well as a resume of experiences, that people begin to understand their strengths and weakness. At this stage the focus is more on who leaders are rather than what they do. What leaders learn from these early experience will largely determine how they advance in leadership ability. . . . It is through the normal experiences of failure and success, criticism and praise, loyalty and betrayal, illness and loss that God matures people. Again, much depends upon the leaders’ reaction to the life circumstances through which God brings them. Positive responses to these circumstances will guide the person into a more mature level of leadership.⁴⁰

³⁹ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, 82.

⁴⁰ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 58.

An Open Window for more Laity to get Involved and Committed

It has been a fervent goal for Haidian Church to mobilize both the active members of the church and Sunday Christians to participate in at least one service, one small Bible study group and one voluntary service in the church. This is not only the way to multiply the Kingdom, but also the thrust from Bible. Malphurs writes,

The primary task of lay mobilization is to equip and mobilize laity for ministry. This is the thrust of Ephesians 4:11-12: “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” The local church must be a place where people are pursued, won, enfolded, disciplined, and mobilized for ministry. The goal is “Every member a minister!”⁴¹

Planting a new church creates an open platform to mobilize and train the laity, while giving a sense of significance to their life, and an opportunity to accomplish their goal:

One very basic need of every person is a sense of significance . . . the feeling of significance is crucial to man’s emotional, spiritual and social stability, and is the driving element within the human spirit. Understanding this single need opens the door to understanding our actions and attitude. . . . Significance relates to what we do, a sense that what we accomplish has value. Good significance means we feel good about what we do. In essence, we want to believe that our lives make a difference that they really count for something. We do not want to think that we’re just taking up space here on planet earth.⁴²

This sense of significance would keep the laities committed in the church, and they would become the vital force contributing to the stable growth of the church.

⁴¹ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, 299.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 298.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE FOR PLANTING A NEW CHURCH IN THE HAIDIAN DISTRICT

Missional Church

Chapter 2 first explores literature germane to the theological and ecclesiastical foundation for church planting. The chapter then pays attention to literature pertinent to strategies of planting new churches. Finally, it debunks some myths of cultivating new missional leaders, hoping to facilitate missional innovation in the church-planting process. A number of books are viewed to find a suitable way to missologically, theologically and contextually guide the church planting of the Haidian District.

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Life Together informs what a Christian community or a church is supposed to be by nature and in its own right. In another word, this book presents a fundamental concept of church in simple, almost biblical words. The worship in common, the role of personal prayer, everyday work and Christian service come together to seriously and passionately

form a true and faithful Christian community, a Christian Church today. Though believing that dwelling together as Christians is a great joy by referring to Psalm 133:1, Bonhoeffer exhorts not to take Christian fellowship for granted:

It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes.¹

What Bonhoeffer said here resonates with what most Christians of Haidian Church have repeatedly experienced: that Christians have never lived in a hospitable environment. Instead, Christians always have lived in a hostile world. Though this has been a sad truth about Christian communities in the world and churches in China in particular, it deepens faith in the joy of the salvation that comes from Jesus only.

Protestant faith in Christ came to China in the first half of nineteenth century. It has been forbidden and persecuted three times, and each time was harsher than the previous one. As Haidian Church spreads the Gospel by planting new churches, Bonhoeffer says that challenges will be great and also rejection will be enormous.

By the grace of God, however, “a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God’s Word and sacrament.”² In answering the question, “Why do Christians come together?” Bonhoeffer writes about significant elements involved in a

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: HarperOne, 1954), 17.

² *Ibid.*, 18.

Christian's gathering that teach Haidian Church what kind of Christian fellowship it shall establish. These elements include "to sense something of the joy that comes when night is past and brethren who dwell together in unity come together early in the morning for common praise of their God, common hearing of the Word, and common prayer."³

Bonhoeffer gives the answers to several key questions about Christian fellowship: "Why do Christians come together? Why do Christians come together to establish a community?" They come together to serve each other in, meekness, listening, helpfulness, bearing and proclaiming. They come to confess their sins and for their sins to be forgiven as a preparation for the common reception of Holy Communion. The confession "serves the Christian community especially as a preparation for the common reception of the Holy Communion. Reconciled to God and men, Christians desire to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ."⁴ When the members of the Church are united in the body and blood of the Lord, the life of "Christians together under the Word has reached its perfection in sacrament."⁵

In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer gives a picture of Christian community by ecclesiastically and Christologically analyzing most of the significant components of Christian fellowship. Though much of the book does not focus on church planting and the holistic service of the church, it does encourage the Church to be among its enemies in

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 120-121.

⁵ Ibid., 122.

order to love them and to evangelize them. Bonhoeffer quotes Martin Luther, saying that “The kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies.”⁶

The Equipping Church by Sue Mallory

As Haidian Church was planning to plant new churches, it dawned on its leadership team that support from lay members for ministry was critically vital from the outset to the success of the new project. The leadership team has never thought that fulfilling the Great Commission relies on just one, or on a team like Paul and Silas or Paul and Timothy. Paul says in Ephesians 4:11-13, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Haidian Church believes that a church shall be a house of believers built on the rock of Jesus Christ. This house has three columns sustaining the roof. These columns, respectively, are the pastoral team, the professional team for logistics and the lay ministry team. Although the lay ministry team comes at the end of the list, it is by no means the least. On the contrary, it is vitally important. Consequently, it has been the desire and motivation of Haidian Church leadership team to turn this seemingly one man or one team ministry into a ministry of the entire congregation's.

⁶ Ibid., 17.

That is where Sue Mallory's *The Equipping Church* comes in. She starts almost all chapters with different versions of Ephesians 4:11-13 and in different languages. She assures readers that ministry is not the pastors' business alone, and pastors do not have to be all things to all people. In fact, all Christians are called to be ministers for Christ, and pastors shall be passionate in training them for that work. She writes

According to Ephesians 4:11-13 there is some doubt about whether the main function of pastors is to ministry at all, in the way we frequently use the term ministry. For ministry is service, and this key passage in Scripture directs pastors and others to prepare God's people for work of ministry . . . it will be to increase the number of believers who discover the they were called to be ministers for Christ, and it will motivate their pastors to have a new passion to prepare them for that work!⁷

Mallory points out in the second chapter that the church leader or the so-called senior pastor must "relinquish control" and to "replace committees with teams."⁸ As I mentor the lead pastor selected for the planned new church and the lay ministry support team, I am acutely aware of the need and importance of relinquishing control, and having teams take initiative in ministry unleashing their God given gifts. A pastor shall enable church members to share in ministry. Malloy also writes the harsh truth: "The church by definition is the greatest gathering of potential servants in the world, but she is also the most notorious vehicle for disappointing, discouraging, and even destroying them."⁹

⁷ Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 15.

⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁹ Ibid., 37.

That is why Mallory suggests language change, system change and cultural change before a new vision was launched.

In Chapter 7, Mallory generously and analytically offers a discovery model for equipping the church with which people's gifts, talents and life calling are located. The key concepts of the discovery model include the following listening carefully: "At the heart of discovery is an intentional conversation of the head and the heart that emphasizes listening."¹⁰ She then indicates for the church, "To visualize the church as an organic whole: The process seeks to recognize the group strengths and resources as well as the overall needs that develop. In order for the connection to be effective, discovery must produce a sense of both individual and corporate resources and needs."¹¹ Finally, "To include the world beyond the doors of the church. The gifts within a church will not be fully used if their application is limited to what can be done within the church."¹²

Having identified people's gifts, Mallory suggests church leadership connect their gift with the ministry. This connecting process shall involve two steps. The first step involves matching and placement: "Connection happens when we place the right person in the right place for the right reasons at the right time."¹³ After creating the liaison process, "We then add a crucial next step. We close the loop by making a point of

¹⁰ Ibid., 107.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 124.

following up on each ‘information handoff’ to see what has been done with these people’s gifts, needs, or suggestions.”¹⁴ As Haidian mobilizes followers of Christ to participate in lay ministry for the launching of a new church, the discovery model and connecting process suggested by Mallory helps a great deal in making right decisions.

China’s Christian Millions by Tony Lambert

Tony Lambert writes:

Large numbers attracted by the preaching of the Gospel, and then converted and baptized, is surely evidence of a powerful movement of the spirit of God. It would be untrue to suggest that revival is sweeping the entire country, but in many areas the growth of the Church has been staggering, with huge numbers of converts in recent years. It is the biblical gospel centering on the need for repentance from sins, combined with the faith in the atoning work of Christ, which is the means of this revival.¹⁵

The above description about churches in China verifiably portrays this rapid growth over the last thirty years. While Lambert tells about what has been going on with churches in China, he also wonders if the established church is able to meet the needs. He is asking and sometimes questioning if the Chinese church is ready for the movement of this rapid growth. He is confronting churches in China with the question: “Are you able to provide adequate and appropriate spiritual care and spiritual guidance to the fast growing number of Christians?” He writes:

¹⁴ Ibid., 128.

¹⁵ Lambert, *China’s Christian Millions*, 34.

Since 1979, churches have been reopened with government permission throughout China. By 2001, according to Deng Fucun, the vice-president of the TSPM, there were 16,000 registered Protestant churches open, as well as 32,000 registered meeting-points. Many new churches have been built over the last two decades. Every day six churches are either reopened or newly set up somewhere in China. This is a considerable achievement and a testimony to the reality of the revival of Christianity in a country where it had been written off as totally extinct only thirty years ago.¹⁶

As part of the Protestant Church in China, Haidian Church has also experienced the same kind of rapid growth in the number of baptized Christians. There have been, on average, about four-hundred-to-five-hundred people baptized at Haidian Church every year since it reopened in 1980. The church preaches the Gospel every Sunday and launches various Bible studies of basic Christianity and discipleship during the weekdays to meet the spiritual needs of members. The church organizes small groups at the church after Sunday worship. In the meantime, new meeting points are being established, as are new branch churches of Haidian Church, where Christians gather for worship, fellowship and Bible studies in a location near their home.

Lambert, however, does not hesitate to acknowledge that many churches in China must serve according to their social and political context so as to survive the harsh political environment. In other words, they have to take very seriously restrictions, regulations and laws on religion and religious groups and their activities into consideration in order to testify to the power of resurrection of Jesus from within the tightly controlled and closed watched system. He writes:

¹⁶ Ibid., 38.

Many are on fire for God, taking calculated risks for the sake of the gospel as they go right up to (and sometimes beyond) the borders of what is permitted. Many in private are as critical of the political control element in the TSPM as the house church leaders. Yet they have chosen to work within the system. In a very Chinese way, it may be said that they are subverting the system which has been set up to subvert the church. The power of the Holy Spirit enables them to work patiently from within, alongside “colleagues” whose motivation may be totally ideological and political. In such an environment there are constant dangers which lead Chinese Christians to a total reliance on the Holy Spirit. Intense spiritual warfare is being fought, often quietly and under the noses of the Party cadres and their informers.¹⁷

Though walking a tight rope every day, risking violating the strict “regulations and laws,” God’s calling continues to be alive for members of the pastoral team of Haidian Church “to be an apostle, set aside for the Gospel” (Rom 1:1). As the senior pastor, I feel confined in a box of restrictions, laws and regulations every day in ministry. I must try to push the walls back before they are closing in. I must figure out where the red lines are to see what would happen to the church if they are violated.

One of the challenges Haidian Church faces as it plants new churches is considering persecution of the Church in China as a precious opportunity for Christians to grow into maturity and to wait with faith and joy for the fulfillment of promise of Jesus Christ. That is why Haidian Church together with the house churches are determined to brave the social and cultural challenges to bring intellectuals to the presence of Jesus Christ and plant new churches to multiply the Kingdom. Lambert’s *China’s Christian Millions* serves as an encouragement for Christ’s servants in China as they spread the

¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

Kingdom by planting new churches in China and as a technical survival manual for churches in China.

Church Planting

Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century by Aubrey Malphurs

The motivation of Haidian Church to plant another church is not so it can have more people worship somewhere else since the current worship center is already too crowded. Nor is the purpose of Haidian Church to have a daughter church so that it looks like a successful, urban mega church. The incentive is not to produce a subsidiary or affiliated church where it can arrange job opportunities for troublemakers in the pastoral team whom people want desperately to get rid of. Though more worship locations obviously can help Haidian Church reduce the pressure of over-crowdedness, the primary motive of Haidian Church to plant another church is to do what it can for the fulfillment of the call of God.

In *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, Malphurs really uncovers the core of church planting. He says, church planting is “an exhausting but exciting venture of faith that involves the planned process of beginning and growing new local churches, based on Jesus’ promise and in obedience to his Great Commission.”¹⁸ What Malphurs writes here is that church planting involves a process of establishing and growing

¹⁸ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches in the 21st Century*, 19.

churches that is a response to Jesus' Great Commission. This concept greatly encourages Haidian Church to plant more churches as a proactive response to the Great Commission.

While stressing the importance of assessment for prospective church planters, including their Godly character, spiritual gifts, temperament and families, Malphurs emphasizes the fact that church planting is a team work with members possibly having different passions. He writes:

If there is a church planting team, however, the situation may be different. While it's critical that all members of a church planting team have the same vision that unites it and give it direction as a whole. Everyone on the team knows the direction of the entire team, which is the Great Commission mandate. But there is room for different passions within that mandate. For example, one member of the team may have a passion for helping people worship and value God apart from the sermon. Another person could be a Christian education specialist with a passion for ministering to children. As long as both of these team members have caught a vision for reaching the lost, their individual passions will contribute to, not distract from, the overarching vision of the entire team. The important thing is that someone on the team, preferably the team leader, have a passion for the Great Commission.¹⁹

As Haidian Church planted the branch church in *Xishanqi* area, it has not only selected and trained the prospective lead pastor, but also formed two support teams. One of the two teams is the administrative team consisting of both full-time church employees and volunteers, and the other one is the lay ministry team of volunteers only. All are expected to share the same church-planting vision, and to contribute to church planting in their own passions and with their own unique gifts.

¹⁹ Ibid., 87.

Malphur's *Planting Growing Churches* was greatly appreciated when Haidian Church was planting the *Xishanqi* church. This work led leadership step-by-step from the conception stage of the church. It then guided leadership to the development, birth, growth, maturity and finally the reproduction stage.

Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age by Ed Stetzer

While helping the new church planters think theologically, missionally and practically about the process of planting new churches, Stetzer generalizes three models of church plants and church planters. They are the apostolic harvest church planter, the founding pastor, and team planting. Haidian Church obviously has adopted model team planting as its church planting strategy for planting *Xishanqi* Church in order to ensure success. Team planting, Stetzer indicates, involves a group of planters who are relocated “into an area to start a church. Often the team has a senior pastor.”²⁰ This corresponds exactly to the strategy applied to the planting of *Xishanqi* church. There is a difference though as Stetzer thinks it is necessary to have one full-time senior pastor and a team of bi-vocational staff. By contrast, Haidian Church actively seeks and invites strong and devoted volunteers to form support teams. These teams serve together with the selected lead pastor to be part of the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.

²⁰ Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 64.

Stetzer indicates, “The team method has a strong biblical support. . . . The first example of this model found in Paul’s ministry is seen in Acts 13:2-31; the church at Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel. . . . In Acts 16:1-5, Timothy joined Paul’s team. In Acts 18:18-19, Paul traveled with Priscilla and Aquila to Ephesus. . . . We know that all of these people were involved in some form of ministry with Paul.”²¹ This biblical foundation really encourages Haidian Church to plant the church in *Xishanqi* area by sending a lead pastor and a committed group of volunteers who formed various kinds of support teams. Stetzer writes this book against a background of postmodernity in North America where the population is divided chronologically into distinct generations: Builders, Boomers, Busters, Millennials, and Babies, with each generation having its own distinct culture.

Stetzer writes that church planters “must seek to understand the culture they have been called to reach.”²² Although *Xishanqi* area is part of the Haidian District, the majority of its population is middle-class with an income of six-hundred-dollars on the average per month. Meanwhile, the general structure of the population in this area is distorted with information technology practitioners who earn high incomes on one side and the low-income, hard working migrant workers on the other. Stetzer writes that church planters must know the culture of the populations in order to speak to them. In

²¹ Ibid., 65.

²² Ibid., 105.

this paper, one of the points made is that the planted church must know the culture in order to be truly incarnational.

The Analysis of 101 Churches in Hong Kong by Ye Songmao

Compared to Haidian Church, *Xishanqi* Church is much smaller in the number of believers, in styles of worships, in choices of small groups, in finance, as well as in the number of programs that cater to people of different ages and social backgrounds. While Haidian Church will do all it can to help grow *Xishanqi* church, *Xishanqi* has to rely on its own resources in the long run to maintain its momentum. Accordingly, at the outset of launching *Xishanqi* church, the leadership team did research to see what experiences would help to grow the church.

Churches in Hong Kong began growing at a pretty slow pace and many of these churches even started to decline in the number of new baptisms in the 1980s. It was often the case as Ye Songmao observes that “when the birth of one mega-church occurred, many of the small and middle-sized churches lost their younger generation to these mega-churches and it is precisely the believers of younger generation are the fresh troops of the churches if they desire to grow.”²³ By analyzing his experiences with the growth and decline of some of the small and middle-size churches, Songmao intends to introduce some of the principles of growing small and medium-size churches.

²³ Ye Songmao, *The Analysis of the experiences of 101 churches in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Logos Hong Kong Product 2004), v.

The first principle Songmao points out is that the entire Church needs spiritual armor. In other words, everyone at this church must become a good soldier for Christ. He states briefly that there are four types of churches in Hong Kong currently. He writes:

The first is a kind of one-man show. Pastors and his coworkers are performers or servants while the believers are audience with eyes open to watch and ears ready to listen. The second is the church where pastors and a handful of believers are busy with the ministries, while the rest of the congregations are not involved in ministry. The third is the church where the majority of believers are involved in the various ministries. Unfortunately, the ministries in which they are engaged are not related to preaching, caring, training or discipleship training, but to daily administrative ministries. The fourth is the so-called church where all followers of Jesus Christ are in spiritual armors serving the Lord by being engaging people on the frontline of the church preaching the gospel, caring for the soul and discipleship the new comers.²⁴

Churches must be the last kind of church to keep growing. That is the strategy that Haidian Church applies to the planting of *Xishanqi* Church. Ideally, all members both old and new will be mobilized to participate in at least one worship service, take part in one small Bible study group and one voluntary service as what has been done at Haidian Church over the recent years.

With everyone in the church involved in ministry one way or another to grow the church, Songmao stresses the vital importance that everyone is practicing discipleship by advocating and upholding faith visibly in Jesus. This principle reinforces the idea that leadership should encourage all members of the planting team for *Xishanqi* Church together with the whole congregations to share the Gospel with the general public, rather

²⁴ Ibid., 23.

than simply having the pastoral team preach the Gospel while others keep their mouths shut. Henry Blackaby writes, “Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by a leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.”²⁵

Leadership Development

From Followers to Leaders by Robert E. Logan and Tara Miller

Henry and Richard Blackaby indicate in their book, *Spiritual Leadership*, that the spiritual nature of leadership is located “in that God’s people are led toward God’s purposes.”²⁶ As is said, “We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it” (2 Cor 5:8-9).

It is critical to select the right person for leadership in planting new churches. Also, it is vital to give quality, down to earth and hands-on field training with “on-the-job, in the moment equipping”²⁷ to those being selected for the leadership role and the support team. While the preceding statements are all correct, Logan and Miller’s view of the leadership growth progress helps guide Haidian Church. Significantly, Logan and Miller call this process leadership development rather than leadership training, as they

²⁵ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 17

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

²⁷ Logan and Miller, *From Followers to Leaders*, 16.

believe “training constitutes one small piece of leadership development.”²⁸ And “effective leadership holistically takes into account the individual as a personal, social, emotional, spiritual being.”²⁹

Although the leader selected from Haidian Church for the *Xishanqi* Church is a mature Christian and an ordained pastor, it is fully expected for him to develop holistically in terms of both character transformation and ministry skills. In other words, he will develop in spirit, rationality, emotion and relationship in the process.

In searching for a better way of equipping the leader and his support teams for the prospective church, Logan and Miller’s method of developing leaders in which they use a metaphor of a hiking path is impressive. This method, they trust, works for walking alongside a non-believer until he or she becomes a follower of Christ; for helping a Christian become mature in faith to serve, grow and pray; for getting other Christians to be equipped to lead; and for multiplying the Kingdom by investing in others.

This process involves a hiking path of six cohesive steps. First is, “the parking lot, where we sit comfortably in our cars in the parking lot, and decide whether we want to make the journey up the path . . . the parking lot is a decision-making place.”³⁰ Then there is the trailhead, where the guide appears and begins to give a few instructions. She will give an overview of the trail, explaining where it is leading, and describes the terrain,

²⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 28.

the rough path and the uphill along the way. Next is the beginning of the trail when the guide leads the way. People agree to go together with her and will follow, “matching her pace, taking notice of her technique, imitating her.”³¹

Along the trail, which is the fourth step of the path, the instruction tapers off. Although gaining confidence along the trail the terrain gets rougher and begins to go uphill where some followers begin tripping on tree roots and breathe harder. At the campfire, which is the fifth step of the path, “Tip are exchanged and adapted to the needs of each hiker.”³² The hikers are also rehydrated with experiences, ideas and courage, and share their common struggles and get ready to start out again. Smaller breaks are scheduled. Logan and Miller point out that recharging, learning and connection are allowed for in order to renew energy for the journey still ahead. At last is the destination where congratulations are exchanged all around and the plans for future hikes are exchanged as well.

The Missional Leader by Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk

Due to the limited number of churches in China, almost all churches are flooded with worshipers, which is a good problem. Haidian Church is one such church. Although this has yielded great results and many salvations, this model of church has been operated on a “come-to-us basis.” Haidian Church is still not fully following Christ’s earnest and

³¹ Ibid., 29.

³² Ibid.

urgent teaching that followers should go out to fulfill the the Great Commission.

Although part of the reason for planting new churches is to gain more space so that people living far away do not have to travel far or wait outside the crowded main church for opportunities to enter to worship, fulfilling the Great Commission is also a driving motivation for Haidian Church. Church planting requires a missional church with a missional leader. This church must be a gathering of followers of Christ who are concerned about the bigger purpose of taking God's word into the larger community outside their walls.

Roxburgh and Romanuk point out that, the “imagination of the missional leader”³³ must be cultivated biblically, organizationally and culturally. They then show that a missional leader must be able to discern God active in changes and creating the culture of a congregation. The four important elements of “leadership as cultivation”³⁴ offered in the book are appreciated. They enlighten the Haidian Church leadership team to the necessity of being well prepared for planting new churches in terms readiness.

Roxburgh and Romanuk urge leaders to cultivate awareness and understanding; a co-learning network; fresh ways of engaging Scripture, and new practices, habits and norms. The book states that, “Formation of a missional mind-set is not primarily a matter

³³ Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

of technique and program. It is formation of a people in the habits and practices of Christian life.”³⁵

In the meantime, it is extremely helpful to be informed by Roxburgh and Romanuk that creating a missional environment and culture is vital for planting new churches at Haidian. Regarding this aspect, Roxburgh and Romanuk give an example of what happened at Southside Church where the “the leaders have set up clear processes whereby everyone coming into the congregations understands what the whole church is about and how he or she can effectively participate.”³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 34.

³⁶ Ibid., 167.

PART THREE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 3

A THEOLOGY OF CHURCH PLANTING

Thinking about a theology of church planting in Beijing, three specific theological themes come to my mind. The first theological theme, with respect to its relevance to this ministry challenge and based on the historical and current situations of the Church in China is suffering. This is especially true for Christians in China due to the fact that the suffering endured by Chinese Christians has reasons found in Maoism. K.K. Yeo writes, “Mao saw the Christian gospel as an otherworldly fantasy that was oppressive and exploitative. Mao saw Christianity as paralyzing ‘the mind of the working people, disintegrating their combative will.’”¹ Suffering for faith in Jesus and in his resurrection is the cost for being a disciple of Jesus. It refines and forges Christians that their whole being can be transformed to the likeness of Christ, as it says in Romans 5:3-5: “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint

¹ K. K. Yeo, *Chairman Mao Meets the Apostle Paul: Christianity, Communism, and the Hope of China* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002), 163.

us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

In the process of church planting, perseverance, character and hope are produced, nourished and forged through suffering. These are the key elements for church planters and their strategies. Church-planting implementers are in serious need of having these essential characters solidified. Meanwhile, suffering provides momentum for rapid church growth, which leads to church planting.

The second theological theme to this church-planting ministry challenge is forgiveness. The Church in China suffered a great deal during the Cultural Revolution, just as it does by authorities today. If hatred arose from the persecution of the Cultural Revolution toward authorities and is still harbored by the Christian community, then this lack of forgiveness through reconciliation will become a stumbling block for church planting. Some Christians have embraced an idea of exclusivity, that lets the Lord save the justified and those who have suffered for their faith, while sending those who do not have faith in Christ or once inflicted suffering upon the followers of Jesus Christ to hell to perish for eternity there, but this is not biblical. Philippians 3:13-14 says, “Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Finally, the various combined struggles of Chinese believers must be considered.

The collaborators of *iChina* write:

In one of the most inspiring recent ethnographies about family life and relations in rural China, Yunxiang Yan concluded that since the period of de-collectivization and the gradual introduction of a market economy, the high price paid for increased individual space and determination among younger people was a loss of civility and the growth of ego-centered consumerism (Yan 2003). Having gained insight into intriguing and complex relationships between parents and children, lovers and spouses over a long time span, Yan showed that the dismantling of state collectives and the collapse of socialist morals in the 1990s left young Chinese villagers in an ideological vacuum. With first Confucian and then communist structures of mutual obligations and responsibilities lying in ruin, the every-man-for-himself values of the market economy and globalized consumerism came to dominate family life and relationships among people.²

Though the conclusion reached by Yunxiang Yan is based on research of rural ethnic groups, the same is truer with people in urban areas in recent China. Therefore, church planting is an imperative church-development stage involving suffering, forgiveness and struggle according to the current situation in China. And these three theological themes are positive missional and missiological initiatives.

The Concept of Nirvana: “If it Dies, it Produces Many Seeds”

Death, in this instance, the shutting down of churches in China compulsively approximately 1950-1970, has never been the end of the Church in China. It is part of suffering and a significant growing process for churches in China through which more people were converted and stronger testimonies were generated. Even in the darkest years,

² Mette Halskov Hansen and Rune Svarverud., eds., *iChina: The Rise of the Individual in Modern Chinese Society* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2010), 12.

churches as scattered individual believers, like seeds were buried under the earth, nourished and cultivated with suffering and tears and above all ever-growing, unending faith in the risen Lord. As it says in John 12:24 “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” They never ceased to grow and waited to make impact when the time came.

Nirvana, in this instance refers to the continuous attempts of fusion of an imported theology with Chinese culture by Church theologians. Many Chinese theologians concluded that

The Eastern Orthodox Church was introduced into the Northwest of China in Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties and then blended together with The Book of Changes, Taoism and the Theory of the Five Elements, which led to a notion that God is the origin of continuous reproduction in endless succession; and to a Christology that Christ was born for salvation out of God and born for achieving and consummating the plan of God. The reaching of these notions about God and Christ helped ancient Chinese Christians embrace such views of life that human beings shall constantly strive to become stronger with the support of heavenly power so as to protect life.³

This concept of nirvana has proved to help the Church get rooted in Chinese culture and not be considered alien and Western anymore.

Suffering from Persecution: Ways to Grow from Rebirth to Church Planting

Liao Yiwu once figuratively described his feelings about the aftermath of the persecution of Christians during the Cultural Revolution as he traveled to Yunnan

³ Zhuo Xinping, *Christianity and Cultural Context in China* (Beijing: Religion and Culture Publishing Company, 2013), 60.

province to visit some ethnic Christians: “Every inch of soil beneath my feet was red, shining under the frail winter sun, as if it had been soaked with blood.”⁴ Many people wonder what specific strengths have created momentum for church planting in China. Suffering in persecution during the dark years of Cultural Revolution and being true to the Gospel as a result of persecution play a significant role in motivating Chinese churches to grow. This is why many Chinese Christians pray that persecution which leads to suffering for Christians would never stop. Many Chinese Christians truly believe persecution and suffering will not damage the growth of churches but instead, will propel the Church to move forward and consolidate faith in Christ.

Tianen Zhao presents four benefits of suffering that contribute to the growth of churches in China. First, “They discovered that suffering and ‘delight in insults’ was inevitable for the disciples of the Lord. They deeply and profoundly realized Paul’s teaching in Phil 1:29 ‘For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.’”⁵ Before 1949, when the Communist Party took over China, Christians desired nothing but the blessings of God through faith in Jesus. They had a hard time understanding people were called to receive more than grace from God as result of their faith in Christ. Now they understand that people were called to suffer for the Lord, both faith in Christ and suffering are God’s grace and the privilege

⁴ Liao Yiwu, *God is Red: The Secret Story of How Christianity Survived and Flourished in Communist China* (New York: HarperOne, 1984), xv.

⁵ Tianen Zhao and Wanfang Zhuang, *A History of Christianity in Socialist China 1949-1997* (Taipei Shi: *Zhongguo fu yin hui chu ban bu*, 1997), 207.

of those who are called. Second, “Christians in China experienced a fact that God’s grace was enough in our suffering.”⁶ He also wrote, “Suffering enabled Church in China to have realized the significance of ‘participate in the sufferings of Christ’, ‘die with Christ’ and ‘raised with Christ’ so as to have experienced the mighty power of the Lord’s resurrection.”⁷ Finally, “Christians in China have discovered sufferings have especially become the spiritual academy for forging and refining our faith.”⁸

Suffering from and in persecution also awaked Christians in China to the calling to be apostolic people. They were to be true to the Gospel, willing to sacrifice and passionate about planting God’s Church. Alan Hirsch writes:

Persecution drove the early Christian movement and the Chinese Church to discover their truest nature as an apostolic people. Persecution forced them away from any possible reliance form of centralized religious institution and caused them to live closer to, and more consistently with, their primal message, namely the gospel. . . . This persecution, under the sovereignty of God, act as a means to keep these movements true to their faith and reliant on God—it purified them from dross and any unnecessary churchly paraphernalia. It was by being true to the gospel that they unleashed the power of Apostolic Genius.⁹

In fact, sufferings from and in persecution encourage Christians in China today to plant as many churches as possible. They know and are fully affirmed their endeavor and suffering—facing political hardship and dealing with cultural difficulties—will not go in

⁶ Ibid., 207.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 208.

⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 21.

vain, but generate abundant fruits and valuable testimonies. A theory proposed by Fenggang Yang tangibly describes fruitfulness as a result of religious persecution. He indicates there are currently three markets of religion. They respectively are the red, black and gray markets of religion: “A red market of religion consists of all legal (officially permitted) religious organizations, believers, and religious activities.”¹⁰ He continues, “A black market of religion consists of all illegal (officially banned) religious organizations, believers, and religious activities.”¹¹ And, finally, “A gray market of religion consists of all religious and spiritual organizations, practitioners, and activities with ambiguous legal status.”¹²

Furthermore, suffering en masse, as a collective incarnational action by the entire Chinese Christian population on account of the death of Jesus Christ motivates many to look back on the history of evangelical movement in China. From there they conclude that the Church in China must turn evangelical-attractive types of evangelism into a more missional-incarnational way, with unconditional forgiveness filling their hearts in order to reach sinners, that they can repent of their sin which leads to their salvation. Hirsch writes, “The missional-incarnational impulse is in effect, the practical outworking of the mission of God (the *missio Dei*) and of the incarnation. It is thus rooted in the very way

¹⁰ Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule* (Oxford: University Press, 2012), 86.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹² *Ibid.*

that God has redeemed the world, and in how God revealed himself to us.”¹³ Christians must not stay in the boat when God’s calling them to step out on the water.

Forgiveness: A Threshold for Church Planting

All religions were viewed as “contradictions between ourselves and the enemy”¹⁴ by authorities during the Cultural Revolution, between 1966 and 1976. The predominant policy for religious affairs of the ruling party was to “weaken the force and influence of religion and accelerate its dying out.”¹⁵ Over the course of ten years, churches in China were closed; clergy either had to undertake secular careers by force or were sent to labor farms to undergo reform through severe labor. Meanwhile, piles of Bible were burned in church’s yards in the presence of persecutors, believers and those who were compelled to disown their faith in Christ. Portrayals of Jesus and the cross were dismantled and destroyed. Religious people were not allowed to practice their faith. As Zhao writes:

The Protestant Church, as one of the five religions soon after the beginning of Cultural Revolution, was severely attacked and churches were taken over; Bibles were burned, church fellowship and Bible study were strictly forbidden. Both the patriotic and progressive leaders of the three selves Church and ordinary clergies and believers were all viewed as “the monsters and demons,” and must be the object of dictatorship. They must be criticized and denounced brutally. Some of them were persecuted to death, some of them got delirious as a result of endless excruciation. In fact, many of them chose resolvedly to take their own life.¹⁶

¹³ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 128.

¹⁴ Zhao and Zhuang, *A History of Christianity in Socialist China*, 182.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

Christians in China, nevertheless, came to an understanding during and after the Cultural Revolution that the Christian population is a fraction of the entire population and the difficult situations and hardships that Christians underwent were not simply the result of political persecution, but also cultural conflicts. Christians have been called to go to different cultures and nationalities with the greatest life-changing and live-saving message—the Gospel. People whom Christians engage with the Good News might be the same people who inflict great pain upon them. Jesus would have died in vain should Christians turn away from their persecutors because of a lack of forgiveness.

Dozens of churches would not have been planted outside of Palestine, in Asia Minor and southeast Europe, two thousand years ago if Paul harbored hatred toward gentiles and insisted on Jewish national superiority over other nationalities. As a Jew in the Roman Empire, Paul constantly experienced ethnic oppression and ethnic exploitation. He, however, understood that the Gospel was for all nations. He forgave those who inflicted pain and persecution upon the Jews, so that he could plant churches in the Roman Empire where the Good News was preached and spread.

Zhao indicated that, “Christians’ faith through sufferings experienced trials and triumphed in the ordeals, and during the course of ordeals, the protection by the mighty power of God was felt which led to the growth of faith. And furthermore, Christians have learnt through sufferings how to forgive and bear with each other.”¹⁷ Thanks to the

¹⁷ Ibid., 207.

ordeals Chinese Christians went through, churches in China became stronger, and thanks to the forgiveness that Christians nourished in their heart, many persecutors and other non-believers have heard the Good News in China. Thanks to Jesus’s teaching of forgiveness: “But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked” (Lk 6:35), Protestant churches and the Christian population has grown rapidly from nothing to a great number in just ten years after churches reopened. The statistics in Table 1 show how drastically the Protestant Church in China had changed in from 1986-1988.

Table 1. Church Statistics

| | 1986 | 1988 |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Churches | 4044 (1067 were newly built) | 6357 (2683 were newly built) |
| Meeting Point | 16,868 | 20,602 |
| Registered believers | 3,386,611 | 4,5551,981 |
| Baptized Christians | 151,062 | 299,097 |
| Clergies | 4,575 | 12,060 |
| Church volunteers | 26,336 | 40,108 ¹⁸ |

Source: Zhao and Zhuang, *A History of Christianity in Socialist China*, 504.

Missionally-minded Church Planting

Missionally minded church planting involves, first of all, a willingness to take risks, a shift in traditional missiological philosophy and a change in focus to sending

¹⁸ Zhao and Zhuang, *A History of Christianity in Socialist China*, 504.

rather than attracting people.¹⁹ Planting new churches requires vision. Neither a leadership team, nor an entire congregation might unanimously agree upon vision. A church planter's decision might encounter opposition from some people who might have a different vision. Perhaps, they believe their vision is more realistic and more reasonable than a "stupid daydream." Determination of a vision might cause frustration among those who are against it or are double-minded. Planting new churches always requires training a leadership team and having financial supply prepared at least to a certain degree beforehand to be sustainable. Tremendous effort and a great deal of work have to be put in by the lead pastor or the leadership team. Questions must be asked like, "Will we have enough faith to be willing to take the risk? Are we ready to press on to the realization of our vision no matter what struggles we may have to face in the course of the mission?"

To plant a church with and of a missional mind, there must be a massive "shift as being a church-centered one to a God-centered one."²⁰ As Darrell Guder puts, "We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation."²¹ Sadly, many churches today engage in spiritual warfare as if they are managing the affairs of a secular company. Various programs are enacted to deal with problems with employees

¹⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 133.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

²¹ Darrell Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 4.

and the company alike with an exclusive view to maximize the benefit of the company. New churches are planted in different areas so that financial burden can be squarely shared. A new church building is built because the old area where the church is located is dying while the new area has more financial and population potential. Churches are moving out to new areas due to the fact of slow and gradual ethnic change over a long period of time in the old area. Part of the church attendees choose to set up their gathering in a different area with a new leadership due to the differences and contradictions happening in the church. These reflect a self-centered church-planting attitude. Church planting must be an organic, God-centered movement by sending people out for the glorification of his Kingdom. We must also embrace an important idea that:

Mission means “sending” and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history. God’s mission began with the call of Israel to receive God’s blessings in order to be a blessing to the nations. God’s mission unfolded in the history of God’s people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and it reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God’s work of salvation in Jesus ministering, crucified, and resurrected.²²

Hirsch points out that, “We have learned to speak of God as a ‘missionary God.’ Thus we have learnt to understand the church as a ‘sent people.’ . . . As God sent the Son into the world, so we are at core a sent or simply a missionary people”²³ John similarly writes of Jesus, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (Jn 20:21). He also writes, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18).

²² Ibid.

²³ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 129.

Live Together: Church Planting through Proclaiming and Embodying the Gospel

As Haidian Church decided to establish a branch in the Xi Sanqi area, the leadership team determined to shift Haidian from a local church into a missional church. With that idea and determination in mind, Haidian Church intends to enable Xi Sanqi Church to become actively missional as well. It is expected, first and foremost, to cultivate an incarnational lifestyle within the church. As Hirsch points out:

If God's central way of reaching his world was to incarnate himself in Jesus, then our way of reaching the world should likewise be incarnational. To act incarnationally therefore will mean in part that in our mission to those outside of our faith we will need to exercise a genuine identification and affinity with those we are attempting to reach. At the very least, it will probably mean moving into common geography/space and so set up a real and abiding presence among the group. But the basic motive of incarnational ministry is also revelatory—that they may come to know God through Jesus.²⁴

According to Hirsch, church planters need four aspects for a substantial incarnational lifestyle: presence, proximity, powerlessness and proclamation. An incarnational lifestyle of a church planting community must involve church planters' presence among those being reached. The church planters "simply become part of the very fabric of a community and engage in humanity of it all. . . . Our very lives are our messages. . . . One of the profound implications of our presence as representatives of Jesus is that Jesus actually likes to hang out with the people we hang out with."²⁵

²⁴ Ibid., 133.

²⁵ Ibid., 133-134.

An incarnational lifestyle also requires proximity. That is, Christians are to interact with people from every level of society as Jesus did. Hirsch writes, “If we are to follow in his footsteps, his people will need to be directly and actively involved in the lives of the people we are seeking to reach. This assumes not only presence but also genuine availability, which will spontaneity as well as regularity in the friendships and communities we inhabit.”²⁶

Powerlessness is essential on the planters’ part in planting new churches, it implies that, “In seeking to act in a Christ like way, we can not rely on normal forms to communicate the gospel but have to take Jesus’ model with absolute seriousness (Matt. 23:25-28; Phil. 2:5ff.). This commits us to servanthood and humility in our relationships with each other and the world.”²⁷

And finally, being present, approximate and powerless among those being reached is not the end of the mission, but are means to transmit the life-saving Gospel. The end of planting new churches is not simply enlarging the number of followers in order to gain more financial contribution, but to bring more sinners to the presence of Christ to be forgiven and the name of God be ultimately glorified. Therefore, according to Hirsch, “A genuine incarnational approach for the sake of church planting will require that we be always willing to share the gospel story with those within our world. . . . We

²⁶ Ibid., 134.

²⁷ Ibid.

are essentially a ‘message tribe,’ and that means we must ensure the faithful transmission of the message we carry through proclamation.”²⁸

In the meanwhile, Xi Sanqi Church is expected to be a church where Christians live together to proclaim the Word of God to each other as well as to neighbors and outsiders by embodying the teaching of Jesus Christ. Bonhoeffer once noted,

What we are concerned with here is the free communication of the Word from person to person, not by the ordained ministry which is bound to particular office, time, and place. We are thinking of that unique situation in which one person bears witness in human words to another person, bespeaking the whole consolation of God, the admonition, the kindness, and the severity of God.²⁹

Many people in the church today have a misunderstanding that evangelism is the responsibility of clergy alone. Sharing the Good News, preaching the Gospel, and living out Christian values and principles, as Bonhoeffer stressed however, is the responsibility of all believers by living together to proclaim and embody the teachings of Christ.

Looking out for New Horizons

The people of a missional church are supposed to continually look back to the vision of apostles, and recall the Great Commission of the Church, which is to bear witness to Jesus Christ globally. They are expected to understand Christ’s teaching more fully so that they can cling to the calling of Jesus as they live out their faith more openly and exemplarily to impact the world in their daily lives. Based on the teachings of Jesus

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 105.

and the apostles, they are also called to live the Kingdom of God in a passing world with pastoral and ecclesiastical care and the love of Christ who died for sinners. They will have the greatest honor as God's missionaries while facing "the greatest challenge to their life,"³⁰ because "all spiritual ministries are based upon and associated with a life of sacrifice."³¹

In the meantime, they should also be passionate about looking out for new horizons for their mission. God "has ordained His missionaries to serve one particular need of the world, the spiritual need,"³² for "man is first of all and primarily a spiritual being."³³ Being a missionary or planting churches is a great and precious opportunity to have one's life enriched for eternity. Therefore, a church shall never sit back enjoying what it has achieved or try to maintain its status quo because of fear of uncertainties, risks and challenges which might lay ahead. Hirsch affirms, "A church which pitches its tents without constantly looking out for new horizons, Which does not continually strike camp, is being untrue to its calling. . . . [We must] play down our longing for certainty, accept what is risky, and live by improvisation and experiment."³⁴

³⁰ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1984), 286.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 288.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 15.

Church Planting According to Paul

Because of his calling to be an apostle for both Jews and gentiles, Paul went on three great missions. As the Spirit intended, Paul was persecuted, causing him to move from one place to another where the Gospel was preached and the name of Jesus Christ rang out throughout the Asia Minor and South Europe. Exalting the name of Jesus as Messiah to unbelievers was certainly one of the focuses of Paul's mission. Paul also was determined to enrich believers in faith so that they could be mature enough to share the Good News with non-believers. When on his mission trips, Paul encountered cultural conflicts and political persecution, but also got the message across and established churches in a contextualized way throughout these regions. What happened to Paul has been normal for church planting even today throughout the world, and in China in the last one hundred years in particular. David Aikman pointed out: "But China's forced exposure to the West ignited sparks of nativist antirealism, which surfaced again and again from the late nineteenth century onward until, most recently, the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the collapse of the leftist utopian Communism that he had championed at different times since 1949."³⁵

Churches gradually reopened in various areas throughout China and the number of churches, as well as Christians has increased rapidly. However, the political and

³⁵ Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, 41.

cultural situations are still far from being smooth. There are still various challenges similar to Paul's lying ahead.

Seeking to Present "Everyone Mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28-29)

When Paul first brought the Good News to the gentiles, his primary obstacle to delivering the Gospel was Jewish Christians who believed that all converts must become Jews via circumcision and obey Jewish law before becoming Christians. Paul intended to admonish and teach people obsessed with this idea. His desire, with all wisdom on these trips was "that we may present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col 1:28).

Since 1949, the Church in China has undergone such movements as sinicization and indigenization with a view to have the Church contextualized culturally in general, and politically in particular. It has been a political movement so as to make all Christians patriotic citizens of China first, who support the leadership of the Communist party, and then a person of faith. Contextualization is necessary so that the cultural layers of Christianity can be stripped off and the core of Christianity, which is faith only in Christ, can be presented. Though particular or extreme political situations must be taken into consideration, faith in Christ shall never be secondary or replaced by political allegiance. While planning the planting of Xi Sanqi Church, to "present everyone perfect in Christ" is the pivotal purpose.

Paul was determined to present those who were disputing over what to eat and which day was more special than the others as “perfect in Christ.” In Paul’s day, customary, traditional and even cultural differences all heavily played a role in trying to deviate committed believers from their faith. Paul however dealt with these problems clearly by saying “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:19).

Paul repeated emphatically some of these ideas. For example in 1 Corinthians 1:12 he writes, “What I mean is this: one of you says, ‘I follow Paul,’ another ‘I follow Apollos,’ another, ‘I follow Cephas,’ still another, ‘I follow Christ.’” Two chapters later he writes, “What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow” (1 Cor 3:5-6). Paul was likely anxious to strengthen these followers, immature in faith, that they could follow Jesus rather than men of flesh. Paul was eager to present those people “perfect in Christ.”

While traveling from one destination to another to expand the Kingdom, Paul did not forget the importance and significance of building the Body of Jesus Christ which is the Church by admonishing the weak in faith and encouraging the passionate for the Lord. He said, “Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the

Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:10-11). Elsewhere he writes, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12).

The leadership team of Haidian Church, while planning to establish a branch in the Xi Sanqi area, determined to “present everyone perfect in Christ” by preparing God’s people and encouraging them to participate in the building up of the Body of Christ. Xi Sanqi Church is expected to do ministry by praying, discipleship and having Bible studies primarily among migrant workers, students, local low- and middle-income residents, and even people who used to go to a local house church and are critical of three selves church due to misinformation in the Xi Sanqi area. The hope is to bring this people up in faith that they can become mature and perfect in Christ. In the meantime, the 327,000 non-believers in this area are the evangelical and church-planting target of Xi Sanqi Church with a view to glorify the name of God. The church believes

The heart of church planting (and pastoring) is to present everyone—everyone—mature in Christ. That means the heart of God is for everyone—believers and non-believers—to grow in knowledge of him, through faith in Jesus. Church planting is not just about reaching non-believers. Church planting is not just about reaching believers. Church planting is about presenting “everyone mature in Christ.” Church planting is about proclaiming him and “warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom” and doing so by “struggling with all his energy.” In other words, church planting is not only about regeneration (i.e. new

conversions). Church planting is ultimately about glorification (i.e. ultimate maturity in Christ).³⁶

Paul's Journey of Church Planting According to Acts 16-17

Paul never flinched from political persecution as he preached the Good News. In Philippi, Paul met a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future to earn money for her master. Paul commanded the spirit out of her. What he did offended the master of the slave girl. He then accused Paul on a political charge before the Roman authorities that Paul was “throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice” (Acts 16:21).

In Acts 17:6-7, Paul was accused of defying the emperor of the Roman Empire, “But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: ‘These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus’” (Acts 17:6-7). The purpose of these accusations was to launch an antichrist political movement so as to root out faith in Christ by the heavy hand of political force.

Though Paul never cringed from political persecution, he never hesitated “to understand the people he was reaching and relate to them in their cultural context.”³⁷

³⁶ Adam Sinnet, “The Apostle Paul and the Heart of Church Planting (and Pastoring),” *Life in the Story*, <http://lifeinthestory.com/lifeinthestory/2013/2/5/the-apostle-paul-and-the-heart-church-planting-and-pastoring> (accessed October 28, 2015).

³⁷ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 21.

Stetzer points out that “A Church becomes missional when it remains faithful to the Gospel and simultaneously seeks to contextualize the Gospel (to the degree it can) so the Gospel engages the worldview of its hearers.”

In Acts 17:22-23 Paul attempted to connect with the worldview of those he met in Athens, “Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: ‘Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.’” Stetzer points out that “Paul did four things in his effort to be culturally relevant: He understood the Athenian position on reality. He understood an underlying spiritual interest. He looked for positive points within their worldview. He encouraged them to find out true fulfillment in Christ.”³⁸

The overwhelming majority people in this area are either non-believers or atheists with over fifty years of atheistic national compulsory education. Newly graduated young employees and some migrant workers living in the area are struggling financially while trying to gain acknowledgement as an urbanite. Their economic and social statuses are of low and middle income. Therefore, the new church, which is expected to be missional, must start with helping improve the self-esteem of migrant workers. The church shall

³⁸ Ibid.

assure them that all are equal before God even amidst disparity. God is love, and God loves humanity so much that he sent his son to die for them.

The pastoral team should not hesitate in supporting the young hard-working employees to achieve their legitimate goal and expectation of becoming a Beijinger. They should be fully informed of two biblical teachings. First, from James 4:36: “Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.” The second is Romans 4:4: “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.” They should be encouraged that the city is not just for political elites, but for everyone who toils for it. The church shall form a network and have it involved in social justice to deal with the disappointment and despair of the retired caused by low pension and an unfair social income distribution structure. The church shall do this out of nothing but love of Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ and for their neighbors.

Meanwhile, the church should be going to extraordinary lengths to teach more foundational issues of resurrection, morality, sin, social justice, and judgment. No efforts should be spared in teaching the truth to non-believers and atheists in order to prepare them for discipleship later on. In doing so, however, Xi Sanqi Church must be a listener as well as an instructor.

Theological Implications of Church Planting in the Haidian District

Both Haidian Church and the church it desires to plant in the Xi Sanqi area are local churches. These local churches are part of the Universal Church. According to Acts this Universal Church began on the day of Pentecost, several days after Christ died and rose again. Paul confirmed this, “Paul affirms that the church consists of those who are baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body: ‘We were all baptized by one Spirit . . . and we were all given the one Spirit to drink’ (1 Cor. 12:13). He added, ‘Each member belongs to all the others’ (Rom. 12:5), which is, of course, by one Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27).”³⁹

By planting a church in the Xi Sanqi area as well as in other areas in the future, Haidian Church desires to, first of all, glorify God by manifesting proudly its relation to God. As Norman Geisler writes, “The church’s purpose is to glorify Him: ‘So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God’ (1 Cor. 10:31 NIV).”⁴⁰ The second desire is to be a local, visible expression of the Universal Church, “An outward expression of the inward character of Christ’s body, manifesting its recognition of His headship and our unity.”⁴¹

The third desire is to edify the Body of Christ by bringing up Christians in faith that they can be united as part of the Body and to do discipleship among believers of all

³⁹ Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House Publishing, 2011), 1083.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1127.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*,

ages that they can grow in the knowledge of the Son God and of this world and become mature. As it says in Ephesians 4:11-13, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Michael Lawrence emphasized:

The relationship between the promises made in the Old Testament and the promises kept in the New Testament brings us to the crucial problem we face if we are to read all of Scripture as Christian Scripture: how do we understand the biblical dynamic of prophetic promise and prophetic fulfillment? Understanding this relationship, and getting it right, is what allows us to read and teach every text as something written not just for those people back then, but for us today as well. It's what allows us to affirm that Paul had not just the New Testament in mind when he said, “all Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). He even meant the genealogies and lists.⁴²

Finally, the desire is to evangelize unbelievers, to proclaim the death of the Lord and embody the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom and the world until he returns. Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:18-20, “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

⁴² Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 70-71.

Furthermore, the leadership of Haidian Church understands “that Scripture is divine revelation given to us by God, not our human search for God. Theologies, then are our attempts to understand divine revelation in our particular historical and cultural contexts. . . . And our theologies are shaped by the times and contexts in which we live and the questions and methods we use.”⁴³ In non-theological jargon, theology is to be done missiologically, in times and contexts rather than researched in philosophical, historical, and topological study. Haidian Church intends itself and the churches it is going to plant to focus their resources on everyday life. It desires “to translate and communicate the gospel in the language and culture of real people in the particularity of people’s lives, so that it may transform them and their cultures into what God intends for them to be.”⁴⁴

Many at Haidian Church believe it to be an urgent calling from Christ to respond in planting churches that are guided by both the Holy Spirit and a missiological theology. The church is to “deal with matters of God and idols, salvation and damnation, life and death, and diseases, hunger, injustice, and oppression.”⁴⁵ Also, it should raise awareness of sin in lives and societies and provide biblical answers to human dilemmas.

⁴³ Conn and Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Mission*, 87.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Church Planting: Response to Jesus' Great Commission

To respond to “the Macedonian Call,” there were several small house churches in the Xi Sanqi area prior to planting a branch church there. The pastors and administrative teams of a few of those house churches did not get along very well due to different views about the relation of their church with the officially registered one. As a result, some pastors left churches leaving the churches to survive on their own. The pastors' resignations resulted in both pastoral and financial difficulty for those meeting points. Sunday preaching had to be shared by a few untrained Christian brothers and sisters. Property rental had to be delayed several times. Many congregations chose to leave.

Administrative teams contacted Haidian Church about taking over these meeting points both administratively and in terms of preaching and discipleship. Haidian Church decided to take over full responsibility as soon as the “Macedonian call” arrived. It was determined that a branch church should be planted based on these meeting points.

To participate in fulfilling the Great Commission of Christ it has been commonly understood that churches should teach the Word of God, disciple, nourish the souls of the young and do social justice. Many churches today, however, focus almost all of their resources inwardly on the construction of church buildings for corporate worship and children's school. They design children's programs to teach something about Jesus to guarantee a future for the church, cater to the need of the current congregation by caring

about and visiting them, teach to tithe, and are involved with a little bit of social justice to justify the existence of the church in modern human society.

Many churches today have forgotten the truth that church exists for evangelism. Fulfilling the Great Commission by discipling neighbors and nations existed prior to the first church being planted. Traditionally churches have always presented the Word of God to non-believers. George Peters says, “It must be kept in mind, however, that the so-called Great Commission as recorded in the various gospels belongs to the living tradition of the church of the apostles. . . . This, of course, includes the commission to evangelize the world.”⁴⁶

Haidian Church also must proclaim Christ’s Kingdom to the world. It intends to come to the Xi Sanqi area and eventually other areas to fulfill the focal point of Christ’s proclamation—the Kingdom of God—by planting a church where people love and care about each other, are sensitive to the needs of its neighbors, help the poor, feed the hungry, uphold social justice and proclaim the Kingdom of God in this world. According to Mark 1:14-15, Jesus’s proclamation and mission was this: “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’”

Haidian Church also should plant seeds of the kingdom where the Gospel has not yet reached. The church may be small in the beginning, but the Holy Spirit will empower

⁴⁶ Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 132.

it with power to change people's heart. Hirsch writes, "When Jesus likens the kingdom of God to seeds being sown, he is not kidding."⁴⁷ It may take time to nourish and plant seeds, but it is of utmost importance for Haidian Church.

Finally, Haidian Church must cultivate a spirit of apostolic vision. By planting the church, the leadership team desires to remind its members of the calling to be Jesus's witnesses throughout the world for God is the God of the cosmos. As Peters writes, "The fullest missionary presentation is made by John in the book of Revelation where most dramatically God is presented as the God of cosmos - the God of all the earth and of all the nations, no realm excluded."⁴⁸ He continues noting that John in Revelation, "Does not behold the Lamb as operating among the Jew and in Palestine; instead, the Lamb is walking among the churches in Asia and in Pagan cities."⁴⁹ Paul G. Hiebert concurs:

The first great church council, held in Jerusalem (Acts 15), was called to resolve the debate between missionaries Paul and Barnabas and the conservative wing of the established church. It is interesting that the council said more about the gospel is not (circumcision, diet, Mosaic laws) than about what it is. This does not mean that early church leaders were uninterested in theological orthodoxy. Paul (Gal. 4:9; 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3, 20; 2 Tim 4:3), Peter (2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:17), and John (1 John 2:18-23; 4:1) make correct doctrine a clear concern in their warnings against heresy. Rather, it reflects a willingness on their part to accept a range of theological interpretations (1 Cor. 1:11-12) centered around the key affirmation of the lordship of Christ (1 Cor. 12:3; 1 John 2:22-23), his death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), and the historicity of God's acts in human history.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 130.

⁴⁸ Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 144.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁵⁰ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker

Therefore, at Haidian Church an apostolic vision will be communicated humbly to all followers of Christ in the course of planting a church that they can be motivated to learn the teachings of Christ and share the Good News via modestly bearing witness to Jesus.

Existing for Others

It was expected that Xi Sanqi Church should be seeker sensitive as Haidian Church has tried to be.⁵¹ When a seeker comes to church for the first time, the worship would be their first encounter with the church. A church must make sure the worship style makes unbelievers understand and feel comfortable, while resolutely preaching the stumbling block that is the cross of Jesus Christ. In his book *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, Stetzer points out,

Seeker-sensitive worship asks, How can we make the unbeliever understand and feel as comfortable as possible in this context? We must remember that the unbeliever cannot be made completely comfortable because the cross is not seeker-sensitive, but the message of the cross still contains Good News. Seeker-sensitivity asks how to conduct worship and to communicate convictions in ways that welcome outsiders, yet simultaneously honor God, His Word, His directives, and Christian practices.⁵²

An atmosphere of acceptance must be created, as Stetzer writes, “Part of a church’s task of sensitivity toward unbelievers is simply making them feel wanted and welcomed.”⁵³

Books, 1994), 94-95.

⁵¹ Conn and Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Ministry*, 244.

⁵² Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 269.

⁵³ Ibid.

It is a challenge to follow up with unbelievers after their first experience in church. Many of these unbelievers come to church with needs to be met. The churches must walk alongside them by offering prayer for them, inviting them to welcoming small groups where they feel safe and at home as people share in a safe environment and keep in close touch thereafter so that they may become involved in church activities in the future.

In many churches, the leadership team tends to believe it is good enough to have programs run in the church by pastors and their professional assistants. That might be the case with established and self-contained churches that do not promote evangelistic efforts. They are satisfied with the service offered by a professional pastoral team which includes a senior pastor and a few of his assistants looking after the Sunday school program, taking care of finances, designing the worship style, selecting hymns for the coming Sunday and teaching Bible stories to the youth.

A Great Commission church, which desires to live for others, to be a lay ministry sensitive church, however, must be contagious from within first. One of the key discipleship principles of Haidian Church is to encourage all Christians who worship and fellowship to attend at least one Sunday service, one Bible study small group and one voluntary lay ministry. This will be promoted at Xi Sanqi Church to acknowledge the followers of Jesus's spiritual need of service, which comes out of gratitude for the salvation of Jesus Christ who died on the cross.

Through authentic Christian lives a lot of people and their families have come to know Jesus at Haidian Church. Therefore, it is also vital for the new church leadership team to live a contagious Christian life to steadily grow its members. They must witness about Christ, that more people would entrust their lives into the mighty hand of God and eventually join the lay ministry team.

The members of pastoral team of Xi Sanqi Church, as at Haidian Church, should take initiatives to build and deepen their relationships with members of the congregation as well as new comers and visitors by warmly welcoming them, making them feel at home. The pastors should make themselves available for home visits, conversations and questions and prayer to live out a living Christ so that lay members can submit to Christ by joining the ministry. Mark Mittelberg says, “Effective evangelism must flow out of who we are, not just what we say . . . evangelism is in its very essence ‘overflow.’ . . . What we experience on the inside of our hearts and souls eventually bubbles up to the surface and overflows to others.”⁵⁴ A lay ministry sensitive church must also, ensure follow-up and discipleship to make sure all members of the church are participating. Both churches’ slogan for lay ministry is, “Every Christian in the world is part of the Church to which Jesus gave the Great Commission.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church* (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 2001), 161.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

Xi Sanqi Church is determined to be a social justice sensitive church, as has been done at Haidian Church. There are many similarities in terms of demographic structure. There are many migrant workers, low-income survivors, young graduates struggling to find jobs to make ends meet, as well as decent income receivers such as IT white-collar employees and intellectuals. One question that must be asked is, “Is it through verbal proclamation of the Gospel or with social action? In truth, the two cannot be separated. Without both, there simply is no good news.”⁵⁶ Hirsch declares, “A true encounter with God in Jesus must result in Worship . . . Discipleship . . . Mission, defined as extending the mission (the redemptive purposes) of God through the activities of his people.”⁵⁷

Chapter 3 sought to present a theological justification for church planting in the current Chinese context. This chapter focused on theological themes from which church planting can gain the momentum. Meanwhile, this chapter also sought to demonstrate Paul’s ultimate purpose for church planting and his way of actively planting new churches by presenting a case study.

⁵⁶ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 145.

⁵⁷ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 41.

CHAPTER 4

GOALS AND PLANS

Chapter 4 seeks to work out the theological implications for planting a new church in the Haidian District based on the theological probing in Chapter 3. While articulating the goals of a new church planting initiative, a seven-step church-planting strategy will be discussed. A six-step training for leadership development will also be presented. Finally, the chapter identifies criteria for the new ministry leader, while testing the situation of the population to assist the spreading of the ministry in the area.

The Goals of the Strategy

The goal of the strategy is, first and foremost, to awaken the congregation of Haidian Church to the Great Commission, so that all of the church is expected to get involved. Then help must be given to the church to avoid being drowned by ever-present religious careerism. Eugene H. Peterson writes,

The drowning of religious careerism is followed by resurrection into a pastoral vocation. We become what we are called to be by praying. And we start out by praying from the belly of the fish. The belly of the fish is a place of confinement.

A tight, restricted place. . . . The belly of the fish was the unattractive opposite to everything Johan had set out for. The belly of the fish was a dark, dank, and probably stinking cell. The belly of the fish is Johan's introduction to *askesis*. *Askesis* is to spirituality what a training regimen is to an athlete. It is not the thing itself, but the means to maturity and excellence.¹

And then the best suitable model culturally and politically for the church being planted must be found. Meanwhile, a strategy for planting the new church based on local and current cultural and political atmospheres and background needs to be thought over and formulated. The key to successfully planting this new church is to prepare in spirit, in skill and in confidence a lead pastor and team who will be present in all church activities, in all situations and under all circumstances. Therefore, a way of training this new lead pastor for the church plant is one of the goals of the overall strategy.

Deepening the Understanding of "Great Commission" for the Congregation

Although the Church in China grew fast in the number of newly built churches and baptized Christians in the last thirty years, the focus or primary interest has been restoring old churches, building new church buildings and baptizing more Christians. This rapid growth is merely an accumulated springback from oppression and persecution of the Cultural Revolution. Unfortunately, not much attention has been paid to discipleship in the Church or to the significance of the Great Commission.

It did not do the best job upholding the momentum of the Church over the last thirty years—to turn the endocentric church toward extroversion, focusing its momentum

¹ Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, 74.

and resources to world evangelism. It has spent much less time equipping disciples to reach out to vast numbers of non-believers. Being concerned with presenting the Church as externally flourishing, a serious possibility of a forthcoming plateau period and gradual decline in number of baptized Christians in the next ten years is being ignored. Few have realized that there is a relatively small number of churches, though filled with worshippers. Therefore, awakening people in the Church to the Great Commission and having their hearts charged with the call to disciple the nations by reminding, training and inspiring the Church is necessary and important.

Following the Bible, the Church in China must be constantly fully informed of the fact that the apostles were commissioned by Jesus personally to receive his vision to transplant the whole church. The Church must be fully aware and confident in the mission of baptizing the nations and hold high the cross for churches in the twenty-first century in the midst of its resurrection from Cultural Revolution. The Church in China met Jesus Christ in its suffering, death and resurrection after the Cultural Revolution, and it is bestowed with the authority of being an apostle—a church of apostles.

It is important to realize what an apostle or church of apostles is supposed to do. The Church must be consistently educated to bless the world with the Good News, planting churches where the Word of God is preached, the name of God is worshipped and the relationships of people with God are restored. This is the focal service that an apostle or a church of apostles is supposed to do.

The Church in China also must be conscious of the significance of the Great Commission via education. Jesus says after the Great Commission, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). This is his commission and vision for the Universal Church as well as local churches. Though this is such a short sentence, it contains a few key aspect of the Gospel.

First, the “Holy spirit comes on you” indicates God’s empowerment for churches to be witnesses among non-believers, which gives the purpose for planting churches through the ministries of well-visioned and established churches. Second, “in Jerusalem” indicates that an apostolic church must come with missional and evangelical callings and impetus that it may train and equip disciples locally from which it may send apostles of Christ elsewhere. Finally, “in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” takes the Word of God to all who do not know Jesus in other places. Peters writes, “The Great Commission does not set forth the complete divine assignment to the church, as we will see later. This is found in the entire New Testament. But the Great Commission does set forth the basic framework and essentials of our missionary assignment.”²

To Enable the Establishment of a Missional, Incarnational and Contextual Church

In order for Haidian Church and the team selected for the new church to be biblically, theologically and theoretically ready for evangelism the concept of a missional

² Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 161.

church concept must be central. C. Peter Wagner, proposes a concept that includes three aspects as presence, proclamation and persuasion. He writes,

The three prominent ways of defining evangelism in the Christian world today can be labeled presence, proclamation and persuasion. Presence holds that evangelism is helping people to fulfill their needs. It is giving a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus. It is lending a helping hand. Proclamation recognizes that presence is necessary, but goes beyond it and says that evangelism is making known the message of Jesus so that people hear it and understand it. But once people are exposed to the gospel message they are evangelized whether they accept it or not according to a strict proclamation definition. Persuasion argues that presence and proclamation are both necessary, but that biblical evangelism goes beyond that and insists on making disciples.³

One measure Haidian Church used to implement the goal of establishing a missional church was redrafting the mission statement, which says, “To bring to the deep awareness of all followers the Great Commission via teaching and church planting.”⁴

Meanwhile, the significance of incarnational living has been emphasized with the congregation and selected team members. This has been especially important and necessary ministering in communities where the people are quite different from the new congregation being planted. Susan Baker says,

The primary reason for incarnational living is to better understand the community in which you minister. Incarnational living allows for bonding with neighbors. . . . Besides helping to build relationships, there are two other benefits that come from understanding your community. First, we know that to be holistic in a community, to minister in word and deed, one must know the needs of the community. . . . Second, in order to be relevant in our presentation of the gospel, again in both

³ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 532.

⁴ Mission statement redrafted in 2008: “To teach the Word in response to the spiritual need; to disciple every follower as an ambassador of Christ; to encourage all people to evangelize; to bring to the deep awareness of all followers the Great Commission via teaching and church planting.”

word and deed, we must contextualize all aspects of our presentation, and this requires an intimate knowledge of the community and its people.⁵

Jim Montgomery wrote that being incarnational is to have “His glory made visible.” He used a Spanish translation of John 17:10 to illustrate his belief, “all that is mine is yours, and that which is yours is mine; my glory is made visible in them.”⁶

Equipping the Church by Facilitating a Missional Environment and Culture

Each year since 2013, Haidian Church has offered a specialized training to all members that includes three sections. The first helps members understand the community and communities the church intends to reach with the Gospel. This calls on members to understand the needs of the community from the inside out. It also provides an understanding of Haidian Church as a sending church—a church living the Great Commission.

The training also promotes evangelism. Members should come to an understanding of how much of the congregation is willing to get involved with evangelism, while also encouraging more people to be part of the Great Commission. The pastoral staff of Haidian Church and volunteer leaders of the targeted area are encouraged to play a valuable and integral role among the Christians there. Then, support for the program may be adjusted according to the local situations.

⁵ Conn and Ortis, *The Urban Face of Mission*, 70.

⁶ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 606.

Finally, the training focuses on contextualization, or the training, first of all of selected members of the new leadership teams, to be faithful to the Word of God while understanding the historical and cultural context of the people hearing the message. Baker writes, “Theology must remain faithful to biblical truth—truth that is understood within a particular biblical, cultural, and historical context—while making that message relevant to the listener.”⁷ Meanwhile, the congregation and leadership teams must be connected with missionaries from church history to help them contextualize approaches that would benefit attempts in reaching out to non-believers. David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen say that contextualization has been constant in the attempt to expand the Kingdom by missionaries. They write:

The brief survey of the historical records has revealed the not so surprising fact that throughout the ages believers have, with varying degrees of success, struggled with the implications of a multicultural world. The missionary activity of the early postapostolic church consisted largely of one-on-one lay witnessing and apologetic disputations. In the Middle Ages well-educated missionaries sent out by the nobility took an aggressive, confrontational approach. The early Protestant missionaries began with European models but later searched for creative ways of making their message more relevant to the native culture.⁸

Training and Maturing Young Pastors and Lay Leaders to Fulfill the Great Commission

Currently, seventeen seminary-trained people from ages thirty to sixty-two are on staff at Haidian Church to pastor about 8,000 people. They all belong respectively to the

⁷ Conn and Ortis, *The Urban Face of Mission*, 75.

⁸ David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 27.

church, its four branches and fifty-eight meeting points where people gather for Bible study during the week. Learning from previous experience with establishing branch churches, church planting is first, evangelizing the unchurched, growing the Kingdom and transmitting a lasting legacy to glorify God. It is also facilitating the training and maturing of inexperienced church staff and pastors. Half of the staff of Haidian Church did not have much experience with evangelism nor church planting. Some might have learned some philosophical concepts from various schools of theology or some church history. The lack of practical experiences with a living and vibrant church as well as church planting hindered the growth of local churches. However, it was realized that church planting serves and contributes to the training and maturing of young, inexperienced pastors and other church staff.

Stetzer suggests a church planter's S.H.A.P.E should include:

Spiritual gifts: Gifts of ministry bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Heart or passion: a Burden to establish an outreach toward a specific people group, in a particular location, or through a specific type of ministry. Abilities: Entrepreneurial talents useful in planting . . . Personality type: Analysis of personality types often appearing in church planters. Experiences: Tools for describing experiences to help the planter understand when, where, and how to plant a church.⁹

Therefore, an effort of combining the training and equipping of young pastors as well as lay leaders and the church planting is made of the following.

Young pastors and lay leaders possibly involved in the church planting project are encouraged to participate in: a home Bible study initiating class; a small group leader

⁹ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 78.

training class and a leadership training Bible study fellowship. Through praying, counseling, teaching and walking alongside others and consulting on difficult life issues in the above mentioned training and classes, the essential gifts that the Lord has provided were acknowledged in the young potential leaders and lay leaders. Leaders were convinced that, “The gifts are divinely distributed (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4; 1 Pet 4:10) to all Christians at the time of regeneration. All Christians have a duty to exercise their gifts (1 Pet 4:10).”¹⁰

Second, Haidian Church will provide a special class on writing a spiritual autobiography¹¹ so that these leaders will be encouraged to recall their: personal calling from God for the ministry, personal conversion story and the formation of personal convictions. In the class, people are encouraged to figure out answers to such questions as “In the past, what has God called you to do or be;” “Now what is God asking of you;” “What is the price of obedience to this calling?”¹²

Haidian Church also has asked several questions in order to assess the passions of young pastors and lay leaders. This is done since they will then direct others in finding their spiritual gifts. Some of these questions are:

Are you satisfied with doing nothing but listening to the preaching of the Word of God? Do you feel set on fire with a passion for the Great Commission? What or

¹⁰ Conn and Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Ministry*, 461.

¹¹ Richard Peace, *Spiritual Autobiography: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Story* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996), 22.

¹² Ibid.

whom do you feel strongly about? What or whom do you care deeply about? In light of your spiritual gifts, how or with whom do you desire to use these gifts? If God gave you one wish for ministry, what would it be? In your quiet moments, what fire is God igniting in the deep recesses of your soul? What do you really want to do for God with your life?¹³

By finding answers to these questions in the deeper recesses of the heart, people are encouraged to walk on the path to which they are called and to reinforce commitment to the ministry to which they were called. As Paul commands in 2 Timothy 4:2: “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

The Content of the Strategy

Three Ways of Understanding Culture and Models for Church Planting

Before laying out strategic details, the cultural of the area surrounding the plant must be exegeted. As Stetzer writes, “By exegeting the culture, the planter learns the assumptions and patterns already at work in the culture.”¹⁴ The Church in China was reopened in the late-1970s. Generally speaking, it has gone through three stages since.

From 1979 to 1989, the model on and around which the church was doing various ministries was the following: Bible Study, worship, miracle sharing and storytelling. In Phase 1 there was Bible study at home and church during the weekdays. During Phase 2 there was worship on Sunday where the Lord enabled his followers to go through “the

¹³ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches in the 21st Century*, 86-87.

¹⁴ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 105.

valley of the shadow of death.” Finally, Phase 3 was miracle sharing and storytelling about life assurance from an eternal Kingdom point of view at the end of every gathering.

The model of this period was naturally formed around the participants who were born and became Christians before the Cultural Revolution. These people suffered and survived the persecution. They praised God for safeguarding them through the ordeal, though carefully and cautiously, in fear that freedom of worship might be taken away and persecution might happen someday again. They enjoyed reading the Bible and prayed regularly and were used to a traditional style of worship with pastor preaching and the believers listening quietly.

They did not hesitate to tell stories of their days of suffering and proudly shared the struggles they went through to justify claims of being a Christian of strong faith. They used life experience to exemplify that faith comes through hard situations. They, however, were inclined to invent rules regulating what people of younger generations should wear and of cosmetics and jewelry used. They were eager to keep younger followers somewhat decent and respectful toward the very things that seemed sacred and divine to them.

From 1990 to 2005, a new model naturally and gradually came into being as the Church in China boomed and the number of baptized Christians and newly constructed church buildings grew drastically. When some people came to church with their parents, many came because of physical illnesses, unemployment, uncertain futures, life struggles, or because of social upheaval as China underwent privatization and market economy

reform in the 1980s. While very little of the population was successful in doing business and willing to tithe, the majority of church comers came for help and support in one way or another. Church became something of a spiritual and practical asylum where many people sought cure, comfort. Some people sought to have the staff of the church listen to their struggles and hurts. Therefore, the model of the church of this period gradually developed as such: Asylum, Sanctuary, Dining room.

In Phase 1, the Church opened its door as an asylum where people with problems were welcome to come for help. The Church was eager to support them in active response to Christ's teaching, which was shared in everyday preaching. In Phase 2, asylum seekers were introduced to Jesus Christ with the aim of eventually getting them converted. After all, a personal relationship with the Christ as Savior leads to salvation, which is the end of the spiritual search. Seekers could then worship God together with other Christians in the church sanctuary. Finally, as people grew more mature in faith in Christ and felt accepted by the love of their local church, the Church began to encourage and motivate them to develop deep relationships with their local church by joining Bible study groups and various church-run fellowships and even lay ministries as volunteers where they could serve and lead.

The market economy developed and took root from 2006 to 2015 in China. Although a large portion of the population still barely made ends meet, the economic situation was getting better for both urban and rural populations. Many of them, in urban

areas in particular, were eager to promote social justice and advocate proper human rights. Many came to church because they identified with the social value promoted there. Facing a deteriorating human society of ever increasing divorce rates, unbearable and polluted living environments and an ever increasing greed to get rich over night due to a lack of faith and the demolition of traditional value systems, many people from almost all walks of life came to the Church for possible solutions. They trusted that the Church could be the moral and ethical shrine where the bottom line of moral conduct was still maintained and stood fast, where faith and values could be reconstructed and reinforced and where a proper human society could be reinvented.

In this system, the followers of Christ were encouraged to participate in at least one worship service, for God is both the creator and savior of the world and the highest ideal for human society. In Phase 2, the followers were required to take part in at least one small group in addition to Sunday worship. Participants shared their struggle and worries, while getting guidance for life via studying the Word of God. They also were reinforced in faith by testimonies shared in the group. These small groups were geared toward focusing on making sense of the Gospel for intellectuals; the upbringing of children; the significance of marriage, hurt and divorce, and commitment to the marriage; family life problems; housework commitment; workplace ethics; and collectivism versus individualism. Finally, people were invited to participate in one lay ministry activity.

The followers of Christ in urban churches in China in this period were eager to help the poor and the needy. Therefore, the Church inspired them with “The Good Samaritan” story. They also related teaching by Jesus himself to actively join the church as volunteers to serve and get involved in charity service initiated by the church.

The General Strategy for Planting a Church in the Xi Sanqi Area

First and foremost, a cultural exegesis and demographics of the population of the area must be under taken. Stetzer says, “Effective church planters need to examine carefully and strategize for all of the cultural nuances and distinctives that they identify in their ‘cultural exegesis.’”¹⁵

What has been made clear is that the Xi Sanqi area is a newly developed urban area. The area is about 72 square miles with a population of 327,000. It is a mixed population of young, IT professionals (15 percent) struggling to blend in with the glamorous urban life; middle-class business people (22 percent) who are well off financially; migrant workers (23 percent) who can barely make their ends meet; local residents (17 percent) who used to live downtown and moved here in recent years, barely making do with their pensions while being able to accumulate some savings; and lastly, local aborigines (23 percent) who used to be local farmers and now have become urban citizens. They might sometimes have a job, but mostly live off various kinds of government compensations and allowances.

¹⁵ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 106.

The most frequent traits of successful churches in this culture and time must also be explored. Some of the experiences of Haidian Church can be used. One of the most distinguished cultural traits of Haidian Church is being located in an area where young IT professionals, young students and high-tech dealers are the predominant population. Expats who teach in neighboring universities and live in adjacent neighborhoods are also much more visible than in other areas in Beijing. The number of believers grew quickly from about 1,000 in 2001 to 8,000 in 2015. Hence a multi-service arrangement including both traditional and contemporary worship styles in different languages is provided.

The preaching style is expository offering a yearlong, sermon serial process based on either topics or different books in the Bible. Meanwhile, both services are closely connected with modern technology, which visualizes the worship. The use of website, church apps and various other grouping tools make engagement with worshippers and the congregation more instant and convenient. Stetzer encourages church planters to expanding the Kingdom in all ways possible: “Being unashamedly spiritual, promoting incarnational ministry, engaging in service, valuing experiential praise, preaching narrative expository messages, appreciating and participating in ancient patterns visualizing worship, connecting with technology, living community, leading by transparency and team.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Ibid., 137.

While being unashamedly spiritual, Haidian Church has not hesitated in trying new ways of enriching the Kingdom. Although the majority of churches in China still insist on so-called principles such as the claim that the Church shall only marry baptized Christians, Haidian Church marries non-Christians in the church so long as they are willing to declare their wedding vows and make their promise solemnly before God. It is believed that there are many non-believers who participate in the wedding ceremony who come to church for the first time in their lives. And it is also believed that many of them will come back for worship sometime in the future. Indeed many people have come back and have become Christians.

Worship styles might have to be adjusted to the local culture. Key demographics and experience may also require change. Stetzer says, “New congregations are effectively reaching postmoderns. These may be new worship services within existing churches, intended to meet postmoderns’ needs, or entirely new congregations. Styles of expression change between eras, and new churches should reflect the change of style without any change of substance. Patterns are emerging that fit this changing yet unchanging paradigm.”¹⁷

Contextualized Seven Steps of Church Planting

Below is a seven-step proposal for planting the new church. The first step was pre-birth prayer inspiration. This started with a three-day prayer conference during the

¹⁷ Ibid., 131.

May holiday season. The first day of the conference involved a reconciliation prayer meeting and a Bible study gathering with people from the previous local meeting point. It was held after a series of intensive home visits and invitations for the people of the previous local meeting point leading toward acceptance of each other so that together a new church will be launched.

The second day involved casting the vision. As prayer continued the following day, vision for the new church was cast to participants for them to specifically pray about.

The vision cast was the following:

To plant a church in the Xi Sanqi area that is able to serve inclusively 800 worshipers from currently a handful of people by the end of 2015. To engage all comers in both traditional and contemporary worship and various forms of gatherings and events with the bravery and uncompromised sharing of the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and salvation for His followers. To cultivate a passionate professional pastoral team of three ordained pastors to reach with true and passionate sharing the Word of God, passion for the living and loving Jesus, equipping in all circumstances young professionals in three neighboring science parks and two software parks. To demonstrate before non-believers and believers the love of God via healings in the church, family relationships, marriage that everyone is forgiven, accepted, served, shepherded, and encouraged. To manifest the unending love of Christ through charities in a secular world. To create a youth ministry talent group so that their experiences and training here can benefit other churches throughout the city someday in the future. To disciple a well-mobilized lay army that they can be the hands and feet of the pastoral team to reach cordially to all members of the church through home visits, small groups, fellowships, Sunday school for adult and children. Our goal is that every member becomes an ambassador for Christ.¹⁸

¹⁸ This is not a published document, but was presented at the three-day prayer start of the church plant.

Day three was one of intensive prayer. All participants were encouraged and expected to pray hard for the new initiative of launching a new church. A dozen hard-praying people were singled out for the formation of the intercessory prayer team. Malphurs stresses, “We can’t place enough emphasis on prayer! It is best to view the church as an infant who is constantly dependent on and surrounded by the air of prayer. Just as a person needs a constant supply of oxygen throughout life to survive, so the new church will need a constant supply of prayer throughout its life if it is to survive.”¹⁹

Step 2 is the formation of a leadership team. E. Stanley Ott believes that:

The process of organizing a team involves a number of elements, which . . . often occur in an overlapping fashion. This is true because vision clarification, leadership identification and development, new team-member invitations, and discipleship, fellowship, and ministry are all ongoing processes in the life of a healthy team. Team life, like family life and the life of the entire congregation, is the group of individuals working to accomplish the tasks necessary to attain their vision while also working on the quality of their interpersonal relationships.²⁰

Therefore, the leadership team for Xi Sanqi Church is going to be formed based on the following two considerations.

The leadership team is intended to be comprised of one lead pastor, who is at least forty-five years of age, and two assistant pastors ranging from ages thirty to forty. They are respectively Zhang Bin, Shen Junwei and Zhang Tianhong. They are all married.

These three pastors are gifted teachers of the Word of God. They are good at sharing the

¹⁹ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 118.

²⁰ E. Stanley Ott, *Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 63.

Gospel and have built a certain degree of spiritual authority in the church. They show godly character which includes, being “above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not violent, not given to drunkenness, gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money . . . love what is good, holds firmly to the faith, is upright, and is holy. Leader-planters who are characterized by these qualities have trained themselves to ‘be godly.’”²¹

Meanwhile, they are spiritually gifted with “teaching, helps, exhortation, giving, leading, administration, and pastoring. We should also include preaching as a gift in light of Paul’s use of it in 2 Timothy 1:11.”²² Bin is gifted with preaching, teaching and exhortation. He is more of a thinker and influencer according to the DISC model. Junwei is able to preach and teach, help and quite capable of doing administration related work. Therefore, he is more of a doer and influencer. Tianhong is able to teach, exhort and pastor according to observation. Therefore, she is more of a relater, doer and influencer. They were chosen as members of the leadership team as they match one other in church planting according to the DISC model.

The lead pastor, Bin, normally is expected to be the primary teaching pastor, and responsible for 90 percent of Sunday service teaching. It would be extremely beneficial if the lead pastor could even lead worship and charity works when the church is planted.

²¹ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 84.

²² Ibid.

Christians in churches in China have much more respect for people who stand at the pulpit to teach than those who do not preach. They are thought to be closer to the power of God when they speak with biblical authority. They are trusted to have more power in prayer than average Christians.

One of these two assistant pastors must be a woman, in this case, Tianhong. She is available to all women, fellowships and small groups for women in the church. The majority of Christian congregations across China remain predominantly female and some times and in some places they have equal or more responsibilities than men. Mobilizing women in the church is vital to the planting and growth of the church. Pierson writes,

One of the most significant results of Christian missions in many societies came through their role in ministering to and raising the status of women. In many of the cultures women were relegated to a very low status and had almost no rights. Missionaries, usually single women, evangelized them, teaching them to see themselves as children of God. Then girls and women were encouraged to study, develop their gifts, and in some cases, enter professions such as education and medicine. . . . Focusing first on the evangelization of women in cultures where men could not have contact with most women, the missionaries soon branched out into educational and medical work with women. Soon women were employed as lay evangelists, called “Bible women, especially in China and Korea.”²³

Meanwhile, another young assistant pastor, Junwei, must be male, ideally with higher secular education and a theological training background. He is expected to assist the lead pastor in reaching young IT practitioners in neighboring science parks by paying visits, extending invitations and most importantly doing programming for the church according to the vision. He is to take on the role of coordinating different teams and

²³ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 267.

individuals to make church life smooth and vibrant. Malphurs offers similar approaches, “Lyle Schaller believes that all church planting teams should include at least three people—a pastor, an evangelism, and a music specialist. He also suggests a five-person team that would include, in addition to the three just mentioned, someone to minister to families with children and a person responsible for developing church life.”²⁴

The second consideration is that since Xi Sanqi Church is going to be planted from a previous house that was kind of taken over by Haidian Church, a prominent person from that house church must be included in the leadership team. He is expected to continue to serve together with the new leadership team, connecting the church being planted with other members of the previous house church. It may prove counter-productive. He must help unite members of the former church, while demonstrating that Haidian Church welcomes all followers and people of different opinions and attitudes. The church can be one in Christ as long as Christians theologically stand firm on the principle: “One Lord, one faith, and one baptism” (Eph 4:5).

The third step is establishing a support group. This includes the senior pastor of Haidian Church as convener, all committee members of Haidian Church and several key lay leaders required to join as well. In the meantime, people singled out due to their passionate prayer for the Great Commission from the three-day prayer conference are also part of the support team. A seasoned and established choir leader and a website

²⁴ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches in the 21st Century*, 159.

designer are to be on standby. It is most vital is that pastor's spouses, children and even their relatives and friends are expected to actively be involved in the ministries of this new church. The members of the support group are not just to come up with ideas or support for running the church well when needed; they sometimes must function as the hands, legs, ears and eyes to reach outsiders. They also must help the leadership team to think outside the box for pioneering and revolutionary thoughts for the church. Andy Stanley said the following to help people avoid this church-planting trap:

You probably drive by them every Sunday on your way to church. You also pass a number of churches along the way, most of which are not filled to capacity. So if a large portion of the population is not going to church and the majority of churches are not filled, that means there's a lot of room in the churches that exist for people who are not going. And yet most churches now being built are patterned after churches that already exist. Our point is that churches . . . are striving to reflect the interests, values, and needs of people who are already attending church. The church today is primarily characterized by insiders reaching insiders.²⁵

The fourth step is a disciple-making process. Stetzer points out, "Whatever approach the church chooses for disciple development, the pastor and other leaders must cultivate it in congregational culture. The pastor should decide before beginning the new work what disciple-development plan the congregation will follow. Without an intentional developmental approach, the church is likely to become 'a mile wide and an inch deep.'"²⁶ Since the "One service, One small group and One lay ministry" model for

²⁵ Stanley, *7 Practices of Effective Ministry*, 143.

²⁶ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 290.

Haidian Church resulted in remarkable effect and the vision for the new church is already formed, it is imperative to identify and develop a concrete and visible disciple-making process around the same church model or in another word, the same disciple-making process to mature believers and then communicate vision.

Though Jesus said in John 20:29, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed,” it still takes time, various works and effort for a seeker of truth to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the church will have both a traditional worship service to cater to middle-aged worshippers and a contemporary worship service to meet the needs of the younger generation. God expects the Church to worship and glorify him in all ways. The overall desire for the new church regarding worship experience is “Designing a guest-sensitive Service”²⁷ to walk alongside people who may come to worship the Lord or may come seeking help.

A Christian community of loving each other and bearing each other’s burden together is formed through praying for the weak in faith and for each other, by strengthening each other with experiences in Bible study classes and sharing the Word of God among the followers of Christ of all ages. This process is also a natural disciple-making process. It is hoped that believers of this church are guided to walk on two legs. They are expected to walk with one leg on the “power of the Spirit”²⁸ and on

²⁷ Ron Sylvia, *Starting Definition Churches: Leading Clear, Larger, and Brighter than Before* (New York: High Definition Resources, 2004), 158.

²⁸ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical*

“works of the Spirit”²⁹ while the other is on “careful attention to the biblical teaching.”³⁰

Consequently, there is no doubt that Bible study, prayer meeting and testimony sharing will be imperative for new church life during the weekdays.

Sunday schools for various age groups and youth ministry should not only be made available, but emphasized as a large part of the population are young people and young adults. They are the potential believers in the Lord. They are obviously part of the important evangelism target of the church as well.

By living out faith, Christians tell the world that they are followers of Jesus. Christians apply God’s truth to personal life, family, and jobs to assure the world that Christ is risen and God the Father is the living God, as to cultivate a lifestyle of service. In this new church, regular and irregular evangelism related events of any sort will be encouraged to try to reach out to people in the neighborhoods.

What needs to be pointed out are catechism classes for seekers and counseling classes over marriage and family related issues for both believers and non-believers. This could be especially important for this church. There may be many people coming to the church for the truth about life when it is launched. It can be imagined that many of them are struggling with marital and familial problems. It is vital to bring people to a basic understanding of the teaching of God via a catechism class in order to pave the way for

Truth (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 395.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

them to build a solid relationship with God. It is equally important for the new church to reach deep into the struggles of followers and reach out to non-believers by having counseling classes available to all in the neighborhood.

The catechism classes, however, will be delivered in conjunction with carefully-selected teachings of the faith of Chinese fathers, which would automatically lead to finding God in Ancient China as well as in Chinese history and in traditional culture. This process will enable newcomers to find a familiar God within their own culture. As he was studying the traditional Chinese sacrificial system, Chan Kei Tong came realize that:

It was as if God had gone before me and had set up signposts or historical markers to direct me on this journey of personal discovery. These were the signposts that I found, left by a faithful God who desires us to know him: 1. The composition of ancient Chinese characters suggests knowledge of the earliest events of human history as described in the Bible. 2. The Supreme Being venerated by the ancient Chinese as described in historical texts corresponds to the God revealed in the Bible.³¹

This approach or disciple-making process will be helpful in accomplishing these goals.

Step 5 is offering three current social issues related courses. As China is catching up with developed countries in economy and technology, it also suffers from the same problems as developed countries such as divorce, child upbringing issues and teen rebellion. It will be conducive to the growth of the church to provide help and support for married couples and families with children in the neighborhood and local communities.

Kenneth L. Swetland once emphasized one of the functions of the church as: “The church,

³¹ Chan Kei Thong, *Faith of Our Fathers: Finding God in Ancient China* (Shanghai: China Publishing Group, 2005), 9.

then, fulfills what Paul envisioned—a fellowship of people who come together to worship God, serve Him in the world, and be agents of healing in the lives of the broken people who make up the church.”³²

These courses, therefore, are expected to help open the doors for evangelism while growing the church. They are a steppingstone and steady bridge to cultivating healthy congregational life. John L. Amstutz points out that, “A church is, in a sense, an ‘extended family of families.’ Just as a Christian family is strengthened and established, so a church is strengthened and established. Healthy families make for healthy churches, churches characterized by a sense of community and loving unity.”³³ Therefore, in addition to the serial Bible study class offered by Bin, there will be a serial prayer meeting by Tianhong, and a serial evangelism class by Junwei,

Bin and his wife need to prepare courses on marriage counseling course and “How to be a parent,” based on biblical teaching and experience. These two courses will be offered to the targeted population of the pilot project before the instructors have refined their abilities to teach this course. Junwei together with his wife are required to teach a course on child upbringing and adolescent growth based on biblical teaching. These two courses must also be offered to the targeted population of the pilot project before they are delivered at the new church. Finally, Tianhong and her husband will offer

³² Kenneth L. Swetland, *Facing Messy Stuff in the Church: Case Studies for Pastors and Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 11.

³³ John L. Amstutz, *Disciples of all Nations: Continuous Mission until He Comes* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Missions International/Foursquare Media, 1984), 57.

two courses on traditional family systems and family peace making. As a female, she should always bring a more thorough understanding and more conducive ideas about strengths and weaknesses of human and family.

The sixth step is a series of goodwill visits to the Neighborhood Administrative Office, the local police station and the community police. The purpose of these meetings is to convince civil servants that Xi Sanqi Church is here to benefit the community and neighborhood by responding positively and actively to calls from local grassroots-level administrative units to get involved with charity related social services. The visit to the local police station is assurance that the existence of a three-self principle based church would help resist the disturbances caused by so-called house churches and bring stability and unity to the area. The church is a positive and beneficial social force. Above all, the three-self principle based church will provide lawful and legal religious services to the followers of Christian faith that is contrary to any cults and heresies. The meeting with community police is intended to avoid dreadful thoughts and worries that the gathering of worshippers and the contemporary worship service might trigger multiple complaints, which would lead to more administrative pressure.

The Church must get used to interacting with an atheistic government in China as well as in other places in the world. This requires churches in different political and cultural settings eventually to make some adjustments to methodology as they desire to expand the Kingdom. What works in America may fail elsewhere. Roger S. Greenway

once said, “David recognized that heavy armor did not fit the way he had learned to fight. David had to be free to engage the enemy in ways that were best suited him. . . . In order to defeat the giant, David had to use weapons with which he was proficient.”³⁴ It is important and pivotal to get David out of Saul’s armor so that he can fight with his own handy weapon to defeat the giant soldier Goliath.

The final step is finding a facility and securing finances. The preliminary or launching facility will be the place used by the previous house church and cost will be fully funded and paid for by Haidian Church. As the church gets strong enough that it can be financially independent, it has to provide its own finances.

Contextualized Six Steps of “The Path of Leadership Development”

In *From Followers to Leaders*, Logan and Miller draws a vivid picture of the path of developing emerging leaders by listing different stages of the training and equipping.

They write,

When people begin taking on new challenges and new roles, how do they learn best? Emerging leaders need support that is relational, hands-on, and skills-based. They need the freedom to both fail and succeed, then the time to reflect on their experience. They’ll also need to be growing in character—through engaging with others, through life situations as they arise, and through the examples set by others.³⁵

Then they vividly construct a training and equipping path:

³⁴ Conn and Ortis, *The Urban Face of Mission*, 225.

³⁵ Logan and Miller, *From Followers to Leaders*, 129

1. Parking lot: where people decide whether they move to the next level.
2. Trailhead: where new learners get a general overview of the process they will be engaging in.
3. Beginning of the trail: where ministry skills need to be learned: leading worship, preaching, facilitating the small groups, organizing ministry teams, and so on.³⁶
4. Along the trail: where the consistent support throughout the learning process forms the central thread of skill and leadership development.
5. Campfire: where people once in a while rest and get reoriented.
6. End of the trail: where people are to celebrate their confidence and competence gained and the new skills developed and their ability to serve other. It is also a moment to “look back and reflect, to glean learnings from the journey.”³⁷

While contemplating on this process of leadership equipping, I discovered the method offered in the book corresponded to the theory of “Taken captive by Jesus,”³⁸ presented by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. Of the entire process Hirsch said:

So what does it mean, then, to be taken captive by the agenda of the flesh-and-blood Jesus? We will argue that a rediscovery of the biblical Jesus will radically reshape our view of God, the church, and the world. . . . Obviously, this will involve a preparedness on our parts to resist capturing Jesus for our ends or molding him to our theological or political agendas . . . to see through his eyes.³⁹

Bin has been serving at Haidian Church for over ten years and the other two have been serving for over five years. They, however, have not had the precious opportunity to pastor a church independently of Haidian Church, let alone pioneer a certain unknown area and plant a church. It is therefore conducive to their new ministry to have a special step-by-step on-the-job monitoring and training.

³⁶ Ibid., 148.

³⁷ Ibid., 153.

³⁸ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2009), 23.

³⁹ Ibid.,23-24.

Though training for a pastor can be a life-long process, realistically a plan must be drawn up for training members of the leadership team. This will be done bearing in mind the local situation and with guidance of the six-step leadership training offered by Logan and Miller in *From Followers to Leaders*. Each of these six training sessions will be implemented in one week, which includes meeting with their mentors and a meeting with the leadership team of Haidian Church and the support group, and a time for personal review and thinking for the rest of the week.

The First Week Session (Parking Lot)

A meeting needs to be called by the leadership team of Haidian Church to appoint Bin, Junwei and Tianhong to be members of the leadership team. This meeting is intended to start with a short message on 1 Timothy 1:18: “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight.” The purpose of sharing is to recall initial calling and to remain passionate about the Great Commission of Christ.

Then, these three selected pastors will be told with authority that it is time for them to step out from under the umbrella. It is time for them to step out of the church hierarchy that serves as a safety net by pioneering and planting a church in a new territory. They need to be assured of the fact that it is beneficial for their growth in spirit and administration skills. They have to make the decisions on their own as the church grows

strong enough, while assuring them that Haidian Church will walk alongside them as they plant and serve in the new church. The leadership team of Haidian and the members of the support group will say a word of appreciation while naming their God-bestowing gifts and confirming them. For the rest of the week, each one of them needs to recall their own initial calling from Christ and rediscover their gifts with the guidance of the Spiritual Autobiography.

The Second Week Session (Trailhead)

By casting the vision of planting a church in the Xi Sanqi area, these three pastors need to be briefed about a general overview of the process they will be engaging in. They are expected to ask questions about the new church. Logan and Miller point out, “The trailhead is where many initial questions are answered: ‘what exactly am I going to be learning? What will that look like? What other people or team will I work with? What support will I get? What will it look like to succeed?’”⁴⁰ These questions must be explored rather than answered during the session.

What is important in this session is to clearly appoint someone to be the mentor for each one and get them connected that they can discuss matters regularly. The mentors also can function as a liaison between them and Haidian Church regarding matters about the planting of the new church. For the rest of the week, these three pastors are expected to have conversations with their appointed mentor so that they can be reassured of what

⁴⁰ Logan and Miller, *From Followers to Leaders*, 147.

they are required to achieve is also the wish of the Holy spirit, and so they can have a clarifying and screening process.

The Third Week Session (Beginning of the Trail)

Since the three pastors have served at Haidian Church for several years, they are to a certain degree experienced with the routines of a church. The mentors, however, still need to walk alongside them as they once again design methods related to “leading worship, preaching, facilitating small groups, organizing ministry teams, and so on.”⁴¹ This session allows them to demonstrate this type of training. What is equally important at this stage is that they need to master the skills of dealing with local government officials. Due to the rich contents for this session, it has to be subdivided into a few sessions. The process offered by Logan and Miller is very helpful: “You will need to get new learners started doing something right away. You will need to use show-how training. You will need to ensure that the learners take ownership (that is their ministry). You will need to provide encouragement. You will need to help them trouble shoot.”⁴² For the rest of the week, they are required to read chapters 3 to 6 of *Planting a New Church* to have a general idea about the process and approaches to planting a new church.

⁴¹ Ibid., 148.

⁴² Ibid., 149.

The Fourth Week Session (Along the Trail)

The pastors are required to discuss with their own individual mentors the details of feasible worship styles, Bible study methods and types of fellowship for the new church according to analyses of the local situation. Their mentors should meet them or have conversations on the phone on a daily basis to provide consistent relational support or mentoring, to provide resources on an as-needed basis, to mark and celebrate progress, to help with mid-course corrections. Logan and Miller point out that, “Consistent relational support throughout the learning process forms the central thread of the skill and leadership development. Having a guide matters.”⁴³

What is equally vital for them to achieve the goal is that their mentors should at this stage guide and strengthen them in preparation for marriage counseling, child upbringing and adolescence education classes. Their mentors should share their experiences and come up with ideas for how to can reach both non-believers and believers powerfully and confidently, which leads to the continued growth of the church.

They will work together to simulate a church the next three weekends. They shall take over the role at Haidian Church of what they are appointed for at the new church. Members of the support group shall gather together in the afternoons to offer feedback.

⁴³ Ibid.

The Fifth Week Session (Campfires)

A visit to churches in Hong Kong and South Korea will be made at this stage. Due to historical and political reasons, few churches in China have had the experience of planting new churches in urban areas since the Church in China reopened in the early-1980s. Churches in Hong Kong and South Korea have experienced ups and downs in expanding the Kingdom. Though there are political differences between these countries and territories, they do have something in common in culture and tradition. Therefore, churches in China have much to learn in terms of planting new churches from churches in this neighboring country and territory. This visit also serves as an opportunity to rest, reorient and reenergize. Logan and Miller point out, “All of us who are engaged in ministry—of whatever kind—need to sit down with some peers every once in a while to rest and reorient. . . . People need these times to connect with each other, celebrate, commiserate, and reenergize.”⁴⁴

The Sixth Week Session (End of the Trail)

A meeting needs to be called to look back and reflect, “to glean learnings from the journey.”⁴⁵ At this stage, Logan and Miller suggest these question shall be asked, “What was harder than we thought? What did we handle well? What do wish we had done differently? What did we miss? Where did we run into the unexpected? Where do we go

⁴⁴ Ibid., 151.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 153.

from here?”⁴⁶ The support group at this stage shall celebrate with them with what they have achieved while helping them reflect.

Population for the Pilot Project

Planting a church very often can be challenging and discouraging due to different internal ideas about direction and external obstacles and difficulties. It sometimes can get sidetracked or trapped in one place, losing direction for the next step. It is, therefore, necessary to press on in service of the Lord and the Church. Just as Peace says, “The Christian pilgrimage is characterized by two features: movement and goal. We are persons who press on in our spiritual lives, trying not to be stalled, side-tracked, or trapped in one place. And we have a clear sense of our goal: to be conformed to the image of Christ.”⁴⁷

One of the best ways to face frustrations resulting from a possibility of failure and to find problems and solutions is to run a pilot church-planting project among a population that consists of a certain “picky” group of people. These people would be positively “picky” about the project while encouraging the leadership team with their own church-planting experiences and good ideas. Their experiences and advice about planting a church would be precious to the leadership team by enabling them to avoid detours and shorten the time of trial and error while focusing on the goal. Their

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Peace, *Spiritual Autobiography*, 14.

contributions will serve as powerful encouragements and witness, just as a Christian forerunner said in Hebrews 12:1-2: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Therefore, a pilot project will be run with people of the meeting points in the area where the new church will be planted, about a dozen previous members of Xi Sanqi’s former meeting point and the members of the support group.

PART THREE

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

Chapter 5 presents a process of implementing planting a new church in Haidian District as a pilot project. It also presents a plan for assessing continued growth. Finally, it provides a plan to evaluate and assess the pilot project so as to refine it.

Pilot Project Implementation and Evaluation

The pilot project was presented at Haidian and Xi Sanqi churches and at people's homes in winter 2014 over the course of twelve weeks. In spring 2014, prior to implementing the pilot project, resources and models for possible strategies to plant a church in the Xi Sanqi area were developed and a leadership training approach was identified. Members of the leadership team were selected and trained in early fall 2014. Therefore, the pilot project was launched in later fall 2014. It is hopeful the project will launch around Thanksgiving 2014, about two months later.

The first step was a pre-birth prayer conference. The National Day of China falls on October 1. By law and long-held tradition, Chinese people normally have a seven-day

holiday starting this day. Many churches like to have either a weeklong evangelism meeting for believers or training for both church staff and other volunteers, dedicating a certain length of time to systematically learning more biblical teachings. These events are so popular and widespread that most people in the Church expect an event to take place during this period. More people are likely to come to church during the holidays.

Therefore, an announcement was made at Haidian Church that a three-day prayer conference would be held at the site of the previous Xi Sanqi meeting point on October 1. This would start the pilot church-planting project. The entire event was coordinated and prepared in advance by pastors Bin, Tianhong and Junwei.

People who lived in the area were contacted letting them know that they were welcome to participate in the prayer conference, while certain people from Haidian Church, such as the support group, were required to participate in the event. Meanwhile, many people who came to the Xi Sanqi meeting point for Sunday worship in the past were contacted about the event. Some of them were reluctant to have anything to do with the “Three-self” church.

Although this was supposed to be a pilot project, it in many ways was more like the real launch of a church plant. Even more surprising was that 127 people showed up for the conference, which included about fifty people from the previous meeting point. The prayer conference began with a message offered by the senior pastor of Haidian Church, which ended with vision casting for a new church in the area.

Chinese Christians normally are passionate about giving money to church construction projects and starting a new meeting point. Therefore, many participants were not only grateful for the decision to plant a new church but also prayed fervently in big gathering times and small group sessions. They were given a clear picture of what the new church would look like and a vision of what the new church would engage. Many were excited by the possibility of a spiritual home near their home or within their reach.

What was more exciting and significant about the prayer conference were the positive responses to a questionnaire for each of the seven strategies designed by the church. This questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. All 127 participants responded to the questions positively with many selecting to volunteer in more than one area. This three-day prayer conference resulted in more than the first phase of a pilot project; it also served as a spiritual awakening and encouragement for many participants.

The second step was formation of a leadership team. During the last session of the conference, on the evening of the third day of the prayer conference, a prayer initiative was once again called for by the senior pastor to pray for the formation of the leadership team of Xi Sanqi Church. A suggestion was made by the senior pastor of Haidian Church and seconded by committee members that Bin would lead the team with Tianhong, Junwei and Tan Yuezhen, a retired military service man who was from the previous meeting point as the members the leadership team. Though a passionate member of the former Xi Sanqi house church, Yuezhen does not show hostility or disaffection for a

“Three-Selves” principle based church. He believes all can be one united family so long as there is trust in the same Lord, a shared faith and that all are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. He refuses to be swayed or manipulated by political differences. More importantly, he was a leader in the previous Xi Sanqi meeting point and was willing to negotiate and talk about the church plant.

Each one was introduced; they all gave a short speech about their calling and expectations for the church to be and their appreciation of being selected by the church. Before the gathering ended with intercessory prayer for blessings upon the new leaders, participants were encouraged to ask questions about the recommended leaders’ service in the new church by referring to questions suggested by Malphurs for church planters:

“What or whom do you feel strongly about? What or whom do you care deeply about? In light of your spiritual gifts, how or with whom do you desire to use these gifts? If God gave you one wish for ministry, what would it be? In your quiet moments, what fire is God igniting in the deep recesses of your soul? What do you really want to do for God with your life?”¹

The questions from the meeting for the new leadership team were: Did you feel called to serve in this church? Has anyone of you come to this meeting point in any way before? Do you have experiences of pioneering a new territory for the Kingdom sake? Why do you feel important and obligatory to plant churches? What does Colossians 1:3-7

¹ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches in the 21st Century*, 86-87.

mean to you? Do you feel confident in planting a church in the area? What kind of services will you come up with? Do you play any musical instruments? Will your spouses play any role in the new church? Can I make a call to you when I am not feeling well?

Once the leadership team was presented, participants realized the real intention was to plant a church in the Xi Sanqi area. They were assured that a spiritual home would be established and their involvement was vitally important. While assuring participants that the pastors were capable of planting a church, Haidian Church declared that it would not leave these new leaders on their own to figure out what to do next. It promised to walk alongside them by providing a step-by-step, internship-like training with skilled pastors with whom they could receive counsel when necessary.

Step 3 included establishing a support group. An old famous Chinese saying goes: “Make hay while the sun shines.” Though it was Saturday, a special gathering was called at Haidian Church’s senior pastor’s home the day after the three-day prayer conference, with dinner provided. The appointed leaders of Xi Sanqi Church, their spouses, children and many other key leaders and volunteers of Haidian Church were invited. The purpose was for the leaders of Xi Sanqi Church to figure out what kind of support group they need with assistance from leaders of Haidian Church. Since the selected leaders were aware that their jobs would be strenuous and be in need the support from others, they each expressed a strong desire for support and assistance from other sources that would be vital for the success.

The gathering at the senior pastor's home was more than a gathering of friends or colleagues; it was an opportunity for the new leaders to raise questions. Also, it provided time for support group members to commit themselves to the church-planting effort. The following questions were raised: Will Haidian Church commit resources to planting Xi Sanqi Church? Will Haidian Church reach out to us when we are struggling? Will we be understood and accepted when we are failing? Will rent for the facility be paid by Haidian Church for one or two years? Can we make our own budget, which includes expenses for printing materials, buying projectors, a welcome DVD handout and brochure, musical instruments, such as keyboard and electric guitars and a sound system? Will we have approval to try new ways of ministry or new ministries? Could Haidian Church's choirs sing once in a while? Will we be able to invite some staff and their spouses and family members to join our core group even though they must be busy at Haidian Church already? Will we have the precious prayers from people who used to come to the Xi Sanqi meeting point when it was a house church? Could each one of us have our own mentor in this church-planting process? Will we be picked up on Sunday by the support group to make sure we can arrive at the church for the service?

As more people joined, the base and foundation for this particular mission was enlarged and strengthened. Both directly and indirectly their involvement in the project brought positive input and ideas from other perspectives. Meanwhile, each member of the support group functioned as an effective channel through which both positive and

negative feedback came so that the project could be adjusted accordingly. What was more important was that the new leadership team did not feel they were fighting a personal battle, but rather they were part of a strengthened and united group.

The fourth step was initiating a disciple-making process.² At the end of the support group formation gathering, a decision was made that the new church plant leaders should develop a list of the primary ministries that best accomplish the goals of the new church. They were required to investigate what and how worship services should be in the new church, and what other key ministries were needed to reach disciple-making goals. They were required to create a sanctification matrix that would result in the same goals of Haidian Church's disciple-making model: One Service, One Small Group, One Lay Ministry. This sanctification matrix happens to be similar to the one offered by Malphurs. They were required experiment with it the following four weeks at the Xi Sanqi meeting point. This way would allow them four Sundays and about twenty days to work on a more reasonable project, try it, assess it and then adjust it the following November according to new findings before the project would be officially launched.

² Ibid., 148-149.

Table 2. The Sanctification Matrix

| | Conversion | Commitment | Contribution | Community |
|---|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| Worship | | | | |
| Catechism versus Chinese Teachings on God | | | | |
| Sunday Schools for Adult and Children | | | | |
| Small Group and Fellowships | | | | |
| Counseling Class | | | | |
| Vacation Bible School | | | | |
| Wedding service | | | | |

The result was overwhelmingly positive. Many participants, particularly former members of the Xi Sanqi meeting point, responded to many of the ministries listed in the matrix positively and were eager to officially get involved. They were not satisfied with the trial version of the ministries; they were passionate about a church that makes commitments to caring for the soul and spiritual formation. They were eager to join the disciple-making church.

As they came back to the support group for discussion about possible ministries offered at Xi Sanqi Church, the new leaders had a beneficial and helpful time of brainstorming, as many questions were raised for them to answer. Among them were: What kind of church model did you follow as you were designing the ministries for this church? What specific ministry goal do you hope to reach within two years? What and how does the Bible say about becoming a mature Christian? Have you considered

opposing opinions against contemporary worship? Will the weekday Bible studies led by the pastors take place regularly? What will be the preaching style? Will it be primarily expository? Have you done more demographic research in terms of the population and social structures of the Xi Sanqi area? Have you identified anyone capable of assisting you in reaching young people working for the three science parks and two software parks? Do you have some concrete materials that you refer to when training and equipping lay leaders? Are you going to marry non-Christian couples at Xi Sanqi Xhurch? When will you implement these ministries?

Step 5 explored three current social issues and hot-topic related courses. Each of the three new pastors, together with their spouses, offered a course related to such topics as marriage, child upbringing, family systems and peace making during the following four weeks. They offered trial and short versions of their prepared courses. Bin and his wife taught courses on marriage counseling and “How to be a Dad” every Sunday afternoon. Junwei and his wife taught a course on child upbringing and adolescence growth every Tuesday evening. Meanwhile, Tianhong and her husband offered courses on traditional family systems and family peace making every Thursday.

Due to fresh perspectives and solutions to such social concerns as marriage and family, many believers, non-Christian spouses and non-Christian neighbors and friends attended the classes. Although it would take time for many of them to become interested in faith in Jesus, it was their first time to be exposed to Christ’s teachings on various

aspects of life and live. Support group members asked the following questions to help the pastors brainstorm the content and technical details of delivering the teachings: Have you been trained professionally? Do you encourage people to sign a prenuptial agreement? Do you think people should get divorced when a marriage seems to fail? Will you accept an unloving husband? Will you keep teaching Ephesians 5:21-23 since society has changed drastically? Do you agree with same sex marriage? Do you consider the course you are teaching an effective approach to reach non-believers? Will you promote such views as a single child being the sun of the entire family? Do you consider boy and girls equal? Do you think men are more capable than women in all ways? Do you believe you can reach non-believers through the courses you are prepared to provide? Are there any other better ways for the church to reach non-believers?

Step 6 included strategic goodwill visits. A well-known Chinese saying goes: “Friends shall frequently see each other.” The pastors of the new church and the key lay leader paid a goodwill visit to the local community office the first week of November 2014. The goal was to inform the local community office of the launching of Xi Sanqi Church at the former meeting point in the area. They were assured that the church would be in harmony with the neighborhood at all times. While letting them know that the church desires to work hand-in-hand with the local community office regarding social stability and social justice, Bin requested a list of the poor who need help that the church could support on special occasions and during Chinese holidays. Also, Yuezhen donated

five wheelchairs on behalf of the new church for the local community office to give to people in need of them. They were invited to attend the first worship service taking place later that month.

The following week, four leaders visited the local police station and paid a special visit to the community police. They went to the Xi Sanqi police station with written materials concerning the differences between a registered church and cults and heresies. The invitation also was extended to them and the community to attend the first worship service. The donations were accepted while the invitations were kindly refused with polite and reasonable excuses, which was expected.

Following these visits the following questions were raised when the leadership team reported to the support team: Why did you have to have these “goodwill visits? What are the general feelings of the police and local community office about the church? What are some of the concerns the police struggle with regarding the church? Do you have any knowledge if the owner of the property was threatened to not lease the building to the church? Do the local community office and police consider the church and Christians a threat to the social stability and rule of the communist party? Did the police station request a list of names of the key leaders and regular participants? Have you drawn up a backup plan if you have to move to another area in the future due to hostility from the local administrative departments? What are some of the frustrations you have with the administrative departments?

These visits reinforced an understanding that many hesitate to acknowledge. Possible support from local administrative departments is vital for the existence of a church. Misunderstanding can result in bias and spiteful interference, which would be detrimental to the existence of a church in the area.

The final step concerned both a facility and a plan for financing the church plant. As leadership met with the support group, they were once again promised that the new church would be fully financed by Haidian Church. Any costs for facilities, program costs and staff salary would be taken care of by Haidian Church. The desire of Haidian Church and the support group was to set the leadership team of the new church free from financial burden and struggles, so that they could fully pay attention to the growth of the new church in every way. They have to be financially independent in two years.

As the meeting continued, the pastors and key lay leader raised the following questions: Is the new church a sister church of Haidian Church or affiliated to it? Will there be regular meetings about the new church's progress in terms of finance? Will the offering received at Xi Sanqi Church be taken by Haidian? Will daily expenditures be paid directly by Haidian or from the offering of Xi Sanqi and then reimbursed? Will the new church require people to tithe or can people feel free to offer? Will there be an account appointed by Haidian? Will Haidian stop supporting Xi Sanqi financially as soon as it is capable of supporting itself? Will continuity of the pastoral team at Xi Sanqi be guaranteed or will other pastors take over at some point?

It was important and necessary to assure the leadership team of the new church of the full financial support of Haidian Church. This allowed the leadership team to concentrate on planting the church. Though it came at the end of the pilot project, all members of the new leadership team felt reassured and their minds' set at ease.

Adaption Based on Accomplishments and Shortcomings

The intended outcome of this project was planting and growing a new church to around 400 people at the former Xi Sanqi meeting point in a little over one year. The pilot strategy, though a test for future application, presented strengths and exposed weaknesses of the strategy. It paved the way to successfully begin a new church that would culturally and contextually adapt to local demographics. Through feedback and suggestions, it was quite clear that the strategy accomplished its initial goal of testing a suitable way to begin a new church in a contemporary, atheistic Chinese context. Five specific shortcomings needed to be adjusted to achieve a more effective strategy for planting a church that could serve as a model for future Chinese church plants. There, however were also five accomplishments to be celebrated.

The first accomplishment was arousing the average Christians' passion for fulfilling the Great Commission and involvement with vision casting as a result of the three-day prayer conference. The teaching of Jesus regarding the Great Commission was enforced as an unalterable calling for his followers to pursue. Second, it was made clear

that the appointed leadership team were not just the planters and the administrators, but also the spiritual leaders of the new congregation, with a threefold method. The leaders were given time to think about what godly character was based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They had opportunity to have their leadership skills assessed based on the DISC model and *Myers-Briggs type Indicator*, which showed them leadership capability and strengths and weaknesses. The results assisted them to more confidently achieve their goals: “These leaders have now become needed and very important. Their uniqueness is appreciated. They have now come to realize how important they really are and how gifted God has made them.”³ Also, by involving leaders of Haidian Church and family members the pastors realized they are not alone in planting the church.

Third, by being appointed as leaders of a new church plant, each of them had to know what their exact role and responsibilities were in the new church. This sense of call and responsibility helped them grow in a variety of aspects. Above all, by designing and implementing the disciple-making process for Xi Sanqi Church, they had a picture of what the church would be like in one or two years. The fourth accomplishment was the determination and decision that both contemporary and traditional worship services would be offered to meet the needs of people from all walks of life. This ensured that everyone’s talents and gifts would be fully devoted to the congregation and recognized and acknowledged by the church. Finally, there was that a seemingly smooth relationship

³ Conn and Ortiz, *The Urban Face of Ministry*, 390.

with the local administrative departments, this ensured that planting the church can go ahead without too much interference.

Though there were many affirmations while piloting the project's strategy, a few substantial shortcomings were noted. First, the intended training and equipping for the leadership team according to the contextualized six steps of *The Path of Leadership Development* started and ended almost at the same time. This left little time with the appointed leaders and their mentors to discuss and reflect fully and above all evaluate what the new leaders have achieved through the path. Although the leaders have begun to grow, the desire is to see them continually mature from the perspective of leadership. Nouwen writes: "Jesus has a different vision of maturity: It is the ability and willingness to be led where you would rather not go."⁴

Second, due to the nature of the project and limited time, Haidian Church did not hold an official ceremony to send the new leaders out on their mission so as to inspire people for the Great Commission and encourage more people to get involved in the mission. John Stott says, "The Conquest is extended as the church goes out on its mission, in the power of the Spirit, to preach Christ crucified as Lord and to Summon people to repent and believe in him."⁵ The third shortcoming was that the teachings on marriage and family systems should have been offered one-by-one rather than delivered all at the

⁴ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 83.

⁵ John R. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 236.

same time. Parts of the teaching should be vividly given as a drama. In other words, some of the teaching should have been dramatized.

The fourth shortcoming was that the church should have drawn up a concrete and long-term charity program and a social justice involvement plan. This shows the local government that it is indeed a force for social stability rather than a threat to the government. The fifth shortcoming was that a concrete and detailed budget was supposed to be made, which includes a prediction of possible spending.

More time to communicate with volunteers and coordinate with worship leaders and encourage all would have been useful. Also, due to limited time, more materials were needed to equip lay leaders. More time to train and encourage small group leaders and to talk with the key technicians was also needed. Meanwhile, more emphasis on the significance of small group Bible study and fellowship should have been made. An important piece missed in the process of piloting the project was a specially designed Bible study series on disciple-making.

Changes are to be Made Based on Accomplishments and Shortcomings

The official launching of the church plant will be postponed to the Easter season so that training for the new leaders can be implemented more thoroughly. A ceremony to send the new leaders and their support group will be the new starting part ahead of the prayer conference since they are already appointed. More visits shall be made to the

people who used to come the Xi Sanqi meeting point with news that a church will be established based at the former meeting point. A charity plan will be added to the goodwill visits so that the church can gain more trust from the local administrative departments.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Overall Impression

This church-planting project explored appropriate ways of expanding Haidian Church, awakening the congregation to the Great Commission and possibly uniting with members of a former Xi Sanqi house church. It explored demographics of the Haidian district and the situation of Christian churches in China from historical, social and political perspectives. Propelled by meeting a growing need in the Haidian district and encouraged by inspiration and faith, Haidian Church must consider itself in a mission field, as a missional church, and a “Moses’ tent,”¹ where missionaries are trained and equipped to witness to the living Christ everywhere, I observed dynamic patterns that led to a culturally contextualized approach to church planting. This Project identified Paul as one of the pioneers to contextualizing ways to fulfill the Great Commission. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:20-22:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

¹ McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 141. Moses’ tent meetings provided him not only instruction from Yahweh, but also sanctuary from the pressing needs associated with leading the emancipated Hebrew slaves. David forged his friendship with God in solitude while shepherding. Paul retreated to the desert to rethink his theology. Jesus withdrew often, not to escape people but to be available to the Father for instruction and nurture.

What Paul said corresponds with Stott's idea of Christ's heart for all human beings:

“When the mercies of God lay hold of us, all our relationships are radically transformed; we obey God, understand ourselves, love one another and serve our enemies.”²

This adventure went back to periods prior to the Cultural Revolution. It looked at the sacrifices that Chinese churches made to find reasons for the rapid growth of Christian community in China in the last thirty-five to forty years. It can be concluded that various persecutions during the Cultural Revolution, big social changes and continued pressure on Christians have contributed to church growth in China. While studying Chinese culture and the national administration to identify difficulties and obstacles to the growth of the Church, Confucians' teaching as a representative of current Chinese ethos seems to be conducive to evangelism in China. Guided by the authors of books such as *Life Together* and *Planting Growing Churches*, a suitable way was identified to missologically, theologically and contextually guide church planting in the Haidian District.

Three theological themes stood out as I thought about a theology for church planting in Beijing. They are suffering, forgiveness and life struggles. Christians in China who suffered from persecution would love to forgive those who persecuted them because of their Christian faith. These three main theological themes lead to the active planting of churches so that Christians can exist for others.

² Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 299.

After acknowledging the effectiveness and fruitfulness of methods of church planting offered by Stetzer, Conn and Ortiz and Malphurs, and Logan and Miller on leadership training, the theories must be adjusted into strategies that I can implement in the Chinese context. This is just the way Paul evangelized the Greco-Roman world with practicality and consideration. Storm highlighted this, saying, “Whatever importance the term (*ekklesia*) held for Paul, his understanding of the gathering drew deeply from his heritage in the Jewish Scripture. He understood the new people of God as being drawn from all nations to fulfill the ancient promises made to Abraham (Gal 3:6-4:31).”³

I envisioned a theology of church-planting ministry upheld by the entire pastoral team of Haidian Church. It would then be executed primarily through the appointed pastoral team. Finally, a support group, composed of key Haidian Church staff and lay ministry devotees, steadfastly undergirded the plant whenever and wherever possible.

The project concluded with an exploration of church planting in the Haidian District, summarizing the findings related to strategy. The strategy grounded in a three-day prayer conference, forming of a leadership team, establishing a support group, designing a new disciple-making process, offering teaching courses on related social issues, making goodwill visits to the local administrative departments and finally fully financing the project for years to come. Beyond the strategy, training and the equipping of the new leadership team was provided based on Logan and Miller.

³ Mark Storm, *Reframing Paul: Conversations in Grace & Community* (Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 170.

This seven-part strategy to plant a church in the Xi Sanqi area and the leadership-training program proved to be helpful implementing a pilot project. One of the former members of Xi Sanqi meeting point said:

Via your devoted project, we have seen the hope of having a spiritual home here, one that devotes itself fully to the preaching of the Gospel, one that has a committed professional team to care for the souls here, one that seriously involves inspired and passionate lay people, one that has the constant support from the beginning till its maturity, one that will deal with internal conflicts in a peaceful and loving way that the church can be kept united. I have hope for this church for it is Christ-centered, rather than personal power-centered. I have a passion for this church for I will have the precious opportunity to serve as one of those God's servants. I have a dream for this church that one day I can be the ambassador to the unchurched just as much as the pastors.⁴

Seven Steps of Church-planting for Expanding the Kingdom of God in China

In retrospect, a contextualized strategy of planting a new church was offered. In

Urban Ministry, Conn and Ortiz believe:

In church growth and church planting theory, a principle often referred to is contextualization. The gospel needs to be contextualized in order for the recipient to understand its significance with reference to his or her relationship with God. . . . This is not to disregard the work of the Holy Spirit; it is an issue of mission effectiveness. Simply put, the gospel needs to be translated into the language of the people in order to gain a hearing. This principle can help in evaluating the ongoing process of the ministry. A theory can be used to test your work.⁵

This strategy was contextually promoted through seven steps. The first was praying for vision. Praying exposes the heart to God and love for Christ. Praying reveals knowledge of the heart of Jesus that then casts vision of the love of Jesus to sinners who

⁴ Personal interview with anonymous woman, December 9, 2014.

⁵ Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 268.

need forgiveness and reconciliation with the Holy God. Nouwen thus describes praying, “From that heart come the words, ‘do you love me?’ Knowing the heart of Jesus and loving him are the same thing. The knowledge of Jesus’ heart is a knowledge of the heart. And when we live in the world with that knowledge, we cannot do other than bring healing, reconciliation, new life, and hope wherever we go.”⁶ This project having vision-casting go together with an intensive prayer conference that passion for the new church would be stirred. Churches in China are learning to form vision for the growth of their church. Once the followers of Christ know the vision, they will pray for it and serve hard towards its realization.

Forming the leadership team is the second step. People will follow a godly leader that has a clear vision for the new church. They can present a clear direction and as Malphurs writes, “Christian leaders are godly persons (character) who know where they are going (direction) and have followers (influence).”⁷ This step should benefit many churches in China as they open new churches. Many churches in China have outgrown small local meeting points. These often take years to grow strong in faith, leadership and administration. Many of them have disappeared due to a lack of strong leadership.

A support group can be vital for the success of church planting. The support group not only must walk alongside leaders, pray as they struggle with existing issues

⁶ Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, 42.

⁷ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, 97.

and difficulties, watch the implementation of the strategy, take an active part in the pilot project to personally experience strengths and weaknesses and provide ideas and advice. They also must encourage and motivate the church planters to help them gain momentum and confidence. While the support group bridges the gap between church planters and the mother church, it protects them from harm and setbacks that they can face along the way.

This is also a good opportunity to enlighten the support group about the Great Commission and to think about their becoming potential church planters. Often, churches in China tend to extend to another geographic area with the extension completely affiliating with the mother church. The senior pastor of the mother church takes full responsibility for the new church, and no other pastoral staff have the opportunity to be trained and equipped with on the job and gain hand's on experience. What is worse is that this hierarchical structure often results in lay people believing it is the senior pastor's job to enlarge the Kingdom and the pastoral staff's responsibility to plant a church. Therefore, involving a support group in church planting will benefit churches in China in a variety of positive ways.

It is vital for a church to have both traditional and contemporary services in China. Not only will congregations outgrow buildings, but younger generations and those of a different background are eager to know the truth about Jesus and frequently eager to worship Christ in more vibrant ways. Many churches in China tend to worship God with pastoral staff performing all of the worship duties, leaving no responsibilities for the

congregation other than listening to the teaching of Jesus. It seems that clergy performs worship of God on behalf of the congregation. This kind of traditional worship has led churches in China to more quietness and obedience than transforming, outreaching, impacting and empowering. Therefore, it is vital to have unchurched people “experience the presence of Jesus”⁸ through a vibrant and responsive contemporary worship service in which the Holy Spirit moves, Christ speaks and God empowers, and each participant takes on an active role of worshipping God.

While Sunday schools for both adults and children are important, and welcome cards, pamphlets on fundamental truths about Jesus and following up with new people is just as imperative, catechism class, in conjunction with teaching on the Chinese forefathers’ faith in God is vital for disciple-making. As more people come to the church for quick fixes for their problems and easy solutions for their life and financial success, many churches in the West, as well as in China, tend to become captive to a theology of success (or prosperity Gospel). Catechism class builds a foundation for mature and authentic faith in Christ and paves the way to a life of testimony for the risen Christ often proved in difficult times.

Fifth, this project promotes presence evangelism by having pastors and their spouses offer teaching on urgent issues that many families struggle with today. Johannes Verkuyl indicates, “It is worth noting that since the Second World War, a number of

⁸ Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 268.

missiologists have urged Christian presence as one of the leading methods of engaging in today's mission work. For a variety of reasons and in a variety of manners, they claim that the most suitable form of witness lies in simply being a specific kind of people while living among other people."⁹ Thus, husband and wife are serving together to advise others by using their own experience and care for both Christians and non-Christians who are struggling with various life problems.

Many churches in China have paid close attention to the Gospel and so-called Kingdom "rules." All the while they neglect the significance of Jesus' teaching in daily life. By offering three life-related courses to believers and non-believers and a listening ear, the door of the Church will be more widely open and Christians more welcoming.

This project advocates a series of visits to local administrative departments and offices that a culturally non-Chinese faith organization's beginning can be explained to them. Churches should be proud of the cross rather than hiding it from the world. The Church actively should take part in social activities to show the living and loving Jesus by living out their faith whenever possible. Paul said in Romans 13:3, "For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you." Paul encouraged Christian leaders in Crete to serve as examples for others regarding

⁹ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 29.

Christians' relation with the government. He said in Titus 3:1 "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good."

Norman L. Geisler wrote, "With regard to the relation of church and state, the early American position opts for cooperation between church and state, not a radical separation between or union of the two."¹⁰ Although many Christians hold a similar point of view to Geisler regarding the relation of church and state, a fairly large majority of Christians in China consider the atheistic government as wrong and evil. Many still insist that any cooperation with the government is like dancing with wolves. This opinion of many Chinese Christians results in a difficult and awkward relationship between the two. The goodwill visits will enhance mutual understanding and provide good opportunities to present Christianity to a non-Christian world. These visits are precious opportunities to open the door of the Church to non-Christians that they can come to know the loving heart of Christians toward other people.

Finally, free from fund raising and budgeting, this project surmises a pastoral church-planting team will be able to focus their energy on spiritual formation and growth and church development as well as discipleship for the Great Commission. The leaders of many churches in China tend to take on full responsibility for a newly planted church without giving opportunities to young pastors and local leaders to strive and grow. This project, however, intends for the so-called mother church to be responsible for church-

¹⁰ Geisler, *Systematic Theology in One Volume*.

planting logistically while the younger generation pastoral leaders and local leaders are given a chance to serve independently, to walk alongside Christ rather than depending on their worldly teachers at all times.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

When Joshua and the Israelites finished crossing the Jordan River, many Israelites wanted to march deep into the Promised Land to claim their possession as soon as they could. After all, they already had wandered in the wilderness for forty years. God, however, asked Joshua to send twelve people back to the river, which was in flood season to carefully choose twelve rocks. They carried the rocks on their shoulders to the west side of the river where they built a memorial to God in memory of his power, glory and faithfulness. Churches in China in the last two hundred years went through many seas and rivers of fire and flood. It survived persecution and hardships.

It has grown beyond the belief of many people. Each and every local church that has been restored and planted are memorials to God's faithfulness; God has never left China nor the followers of Christ on their own. God has encouraged Chinese Christians to go back to the flooded river of hardship and persecution to fix their eyes on his protecting power and loving heart that they may overcome adversities and flourish to the end. God intends Chinese Christians to pick up the rocks, representing God's saving deeds, with which they will build a memorial to God—the vibrant Church—to glorify

God and spread the Gospel. Though some attempts proved successful and others failed, many church planters have never stopped searching for better strategies to plant new churches by returning to the rivers of success and failure with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Once they find the rocks in the rivers of previous attempts of church planting, they carry them to the other side where they build memorials to God's faithfulness and his loving and protecting power.

A police officer that is responsible for public security in the Xi Sanqi area told me recently that his wife became a Christian just two months after the church officially started. He is now a secret Christian as well. I asked him how he became a follower of Christ. He said,

Because the church never give up on my prodigal son. Your people always forgave him when he broke the window and the smashed the door of the church. Your people never took him to the police station when he cut the tires of your cars. You simply prayed for him. When school and society gave up on him, your church took over the responsibility for counseling him. And now it seems he has found something in your church that can pacify and soothe his mind and soul. His mom had promised to follow any God or superpower that may change him. That is why.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you accept nothing but Jesus Christ as your Lord?
2. Will you come to this church to seek the truth and to worship and glorify the Lord who is also our Savior?
3. Will you pray for the pastoral team as they share the Word of God and guide us on our spiritual path?
4. Will you serve together with the pastoral team to support the vision?
5. Will you fight spiritual warfare together with the pastoral team by being a volunteer?
6. Will you have inspiration for reaching out to the people in the area?
7. Will you tithe at this church?
8. What are some of the services you are willing to getting involved with? Such as the following:
 - Cleaning the church after the Sunday service?
 - Being an usher or a security?
 - Serve at the bookstore?
 - Sing in the choir?
 - Being a small group leader?
 - Serve the children?
 - Picking up people for Sunday worship?
 - Maintaining the sanitation?
 - Visiting people with sicknesses?
 - Paying for the meals for the poor?

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